

## Bridging for Innovators Overview and Application guidance

Description	<p>Bridging for Innovators (B4I) is an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) programme run by the Science &amp; Technology Facilities Council (STFC) to support UK industry. Funding is available to specifically help companies overcome difficult product, manufacturing or process performance issues by leveraging more than £2billion worth of Government investment in large-scale scientific infrastructure. The B4I programme aligns with the government’s Industrial Strategy to boost productivity and earning power throughout the UK.</p> <p>The programme provides access to advanced analytical technologies, supporting expertise and capabilities to companies through STFC’s large scale science facilities located around the UK including Harwell, Daresbury and the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh.</p>															
Funding type	<p>B4I will fund all of STFC’s contribution to the total project cost and companies are expected to provide a contribution that is dependent on company size.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Company Size</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Company Size Criteria</th> <th style="text-align: center;">B4I contribution of STFC Costs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Micro</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Staff headcount &lt;10 Turnover ≤ €2m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €2m</td> <td style="text-align: center;">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Small</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Staff headcount &lt;50 Turnover ≤ €10m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €10m</td> <td style="text-align: center;">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Medium</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Staff headcount &lt;250 Turnover ≤ €50m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €43m</td> <td style="text-align: center;">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Large</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Staff headcount &gt;250 Turnover &gt; €50m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of &gt; €43m</td> <td style="text-align: center;">50%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This may be an in-kind or direct contribution to the project cost. Companies may also apply under <i>de-minimis</i> rules, where B4I will fund 100% of STFC project costs (maximum £50,000) and no company contribution is required.</p>	Company Size	Company Size Criteria	B4I contribution of STFC Costs	Micro	Staff headcount <10 Turnover ≤ €2m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €2m	70%	Small	Staff headcount <50 Turnover ≤ €10m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €10m	70%	Medium	Staff headcount <250 Turnover ≤ €50m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of ≤ €43m	60%	Large	Staff headcount >250 Turnover > €50m <b>OR</b> Balance sheet total of > €43m	50%
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Project Size	<p>Most projects are expected to cost up to £50,000 and last between 3 and 12 months. High potential projects, those that demonstrate substantial productivity benefits to the participating company, may be eligible for more funding.</p>															
Eligibility	<p>To be eligible for funding you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a UK based business of any size registered at Companies House;</li> </ul>															

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a manufacturing base for the relevant product in the UK or provide the relevant service in the UK;</li> <li>• Intend to exploit the results in the UK.</li> </ul>
<p>Projects that we won't fund</p>	<p>In this competition we are not funding projects that are related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental research;</li> <li>• Early applied R&amp;D activities;</li> <li>• Market analysis;</li> <li>• Testing and measurement services.</li> </ul>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>The programme is intended to help companies, through access to advanced analytical technologies and supporting expertise, overcome intractable product or process performance problems in manufacturing or services which have a high impact on UK productivity. Projects are selected where there is evidence that UK economic growth will result from participation in the programme.</p> <p>There are multiple, often inter-related, factors that influence national productivity. In the case of the B4I programme, companies regularly seek growth and profitability via innovation and new technology development. This can create a number of positive outcomes (efficiency improvements, better or new products and services) which will often stimulate company growth and impact UK productivity (see diagram below).</p> <div data-bbox="475 1144 1342 1646" data-label="Diagram"> <pre> graph TD     A[New technology and innovation] --&gt; B[Efficiency improvement of delivering product/service]     A --&gt; C[Quality improvement of the product/service]     A --&gt; D[New product/service/business or management practice]     B --&gt; E[Improved competitiveness in local, national and international marketplace]     C --&gt; E     D --&gt; F[Entry into new markets]     E --&gt; G[Increased company profitability]     F --&gt; G     G --&gt; H[Increased company growth]     G --&gt; I[Increased UK productivity]     H --&gt; I   </pre> </div> <p>There are multiple ways in which a company can innovate to stimulate growth, increase profitability and contribute to improving UK productivity. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the efficiency of a manufacturing process;</li> <li>• Improving product quality to reduce wastage or increase value;</li> <li>• Developing automated business processes;</li> <li>• Creating new innovative technology;</li> <li>• Removing bottlenecks in business processes;</li> <li>• Increasing cost competitiveness;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerating the route to market for new or improved products/services.</li> <li>• Creating or developing new business.</li> </ul> <p>The Bridging for Innovators programme is setup specifically to assist companies:</p> <p>Improve commercially deployed products/services; or Accelerate the development of new products/services that are in, or close to, the implementation stages of deployment.</p> <p>It is encouraged that applying companies clearly describe how solving their problem will positively impact the competitiveness, growth or profitability of the company.</p>
Application process	<p>The initial application process requires companies to submit a concise (approx. 500 words) ‘Challenge Statement’ describing their problem. Companies are not required to describe the project they want to do; instead they will need to describe the problem: its nature, any techniques already tried and the value of solving it.</p> <p>If approved, companies will work together with STFC scientists to develop a fully costed project proposal. Projects will be selected on the greatest impact to productivity, the value to the company and the availability of a suitable technique or expertise within STFC to address the problem.</p>
Selection criteria	<p>Projects are selected on basis of greatest impact to productivity and the availability of a suitable technique or expertise within STFC to address the problem. More details of the selection criteria is provided in <i>Framework for assessment of B4I project applications</i>.</p> <p>In the final year of the B4I programme constraints on resources and budget have made it necessary to use additional selection criteria including availability of staff resource and project duration to ensure that projects chosen are fulfilled within the given timeframe. All B4I project work will be completed by 31st March 2021.</p>
Dates	The competition will run from 2017 to April 2021.