



Innovation Support

Q & A

Q) When looking at ideas that involve technology, what sort of criteria are applied?

A) Generally, the criteria is around 1) Your geographical location, 2) The size of your business (do you fit the definition of an SME?). The projects are predominately around business growth rather than business as usual.

Q) What activities is the region particularly keen to promote within the professional services sector?

A) The number one priority is economic growth – looking at things such as increased GVA, new products and services, etc. that these projects are helping you to achieve. It is absolutely about where you are with your business, your aspirations and visions, and which of those we can help you convert to real deliverables. Beyond that, it can be anything in your business that can get you across the line in that way.

The barrier to accessing this is very low. It's there to de-risk your investment in innovation – to lower the cost, stress, and help you through the very early stages to the more challenging stages. It's free, predominately, and there for the taking.

These programmes are available for a limited time frame – perhaps for the next 2 to 3 years; at the moment it's unclear what this will look like after that.

Q) On Innovate UK, in the past, some of the grants that have been given out have been to professional services like Wakeman, Withers, etc. So there are some very large firms who need this support less – so it's a real shame if SME firms who could benefit more aren't participating.

A) Absolutely. There are different eligibility criteria for this, but most of them do specify that there has to be at least **one** SME in the programme.

Q) How long is the submission process? How complicated a process is it?

A) Take out KTPs you'll not be looking at more than a day. In fact it might just be a telephone call in the first instance. Often the only barrier to be able to access this stuff is your geographical location and whether or not you're meeting the criteria of an SME.

Advanced Services Group make sure the company is eligible (employs no more than 250, and is based in Birmingham); do a quick cross check on country, and then have online calls

with people to find out more about the programme to make sure you understand it and feel that it's right for you. There's usually forms to fill in, but these days we're pretty smart about keep things as painless as possible.

Most initiatives, if you're applying for something very specific, then the application will be quite short and small. If you're looking at something that's a larger scale, you're looking at something a little bit longer. If not, it's about half a day – if that.