

Innovate UK

Technology Strategy Board

Competition for funding

**Better interactions between
people and machines**

DEADLINE

**25 March
2015**



Feasibility Studies



Innovate UK is to invest up to £500,000 in feasibility studies in the area of user experience (UX). The aim is to encourage new and improved ways for machines, their computing systems and people to interact.

Proposals may address technologies that contribute to these new approaches, such as sensing information about the user, or they may address technologies that help with specific types of experience, such as mobile or wearable devices.

Projects must be collaborative and business-led. The competition is open only to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, with the option to collaborate with one additional SME or research organisation/academic partner.

Small businesses could receive up to 70% of their eligible project costs and medium-sized businesses up to 60%.

We expect projects to last between 3 and 12 months and to have total project costs of up to £50,000.

The feasibility studies are part of a £1.5m Innovate UK programme to stimulate innovations in user experience (UX). This competition runs in parallel with a £1m Knowledge Transfer Partnership competition. For details, visit interact.innovateuk.org and look under Competitions.

This competition opens on 16 February 2015 and the deadline for registration is noon on 25 March 2015. The deadline for applications is noon on 1 April 2015. A briefing day (with webinar option) for potential applicants will be held in London on 18 February 2015.

Background

Computer systems and devices often present impractical, confusing or time-consuming experiences for users. Innovative technologies and approaches are needed to address these issues with the aim of improving:

- user satisfaction
- user engagement
- use of computing systems.

As computing devices and software systems become increasingly widespread, simply using a keyboard, mouse and screen is becoming outdated.

New devices and embedded software systems are making the way we use computers a more immersive experience. This makes it easier for people and machines to interact and simpler for people to adopt new systems and processes more quickly.

Greater computer power can now enhance, enrich and optimise how the machine and user interact.

Advanced UX technologies have the potential to revolutionise the way computing systems are used in every sector and application area. Perfecting these technologies so that they are exploitable and practicable will improve the effectiveness and ease with which everyone can use computer technology.

Scope

This competition encourages innovation in improving the interaction between people and computer devices and systems, with the aim of enhancing the overall UX.

That innovation could be in underlying technologies, in combining emerging technologies or in employing tools to improve the UX.

We will consider proposals which may include, but are not limited to, these areas:

Sensors and interactions

Eye tracking, emotion sensing, advanced gesture tracking, haptic interfaces, expression analysis, voice/speech interaction.

Better interactions between people and machines



Wearable technology

Devices/clothing worn outside or on the body, in contact with the skin or embedded within the body.

Mobile user experience

Supporting natural and easy interactions on the move.

Multiple device user experience

How seamless co-operation among various devices can enhance the user experience.

Multi-disciplinary approaches

Methods and tools to involve non-ICT experts in user experience design, including artists, anthropologists and psychologists.

Brain-controlled computing

Innovative solutions are needed for devices that people would be able to wear and use in a practical way, such as protective headgear in sport, construction and cycling.

Combinations of emerging technologies

Short-range, ad-hoc wireless technologies or application performance management tools.

Innovate UK is running a parallel Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) competition with the same name, Better interactions between people and machines. For more information and how to apply, see the Competitions pages on interact.innovateuk.org

Out of scope are innovations where the user experience is influenced by the content itself or other social trends and fashions.

Funding allocation and project details

We have allocated up to £500,000 to fund feasibility study projects that address the technical challenges outlined in the scope.

Successful applicants can attract grant funding towards their eligible project costs. The percentage of costs that we pay varies, depending on the type of research being carried out and the size and type of organisation involved.

Projects must be led by an SME. They have the option to collaborate with one additional organisation which may be another SME or an academic/research partner. The amount of funding you can receive varies according to the size and type of organisation and type of research being done. Small businesses are eligible to receive up to 70% of their project costs as grant and medium-sized businesses up to 60%.

For further information see <http://interact.innovateuk.org/funding-rules>

We expect total project costs to be up to £50,000. Projects should last between 3 and 12 months.

To find out whether your business fits the EU definition of an SME, see: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/index_en.htm

Innovate UK also runs regular Collaboration Nation events. They enable companies that have been successful in feasibility studies competitions to showcase the results of their projects to their peers and others, with a view to finding new partners to collaborate with and new sources of funding. For more information search for 'Collaboration Nation directories' on www.innovateuk.gov.uk

Looking for partners to work on your project? Go to connect.innovateuk.org

Each partner in a project can receive funding towards their project costs – the funding is a percentage of the total eligible project costs and varies, depending on the size and type of organisation and the type of research.

For general guidance on how projects are funded see interact.innovateuk.org/funding-rules

Application process

This competition will open on **16 February 2015**. Applicants must first register via our website, and the deadline for registration is at noon on **25 March 2015**. The deadline for applications is at noon on **1 April 2015**.

A briefing will be held in London on **18 February 2015** to highlight the main features of the competition and explain the application process. Applicants are strongly recommended to attend this event.

A number of workshops/events will be organised to explore scope and possible collaborations. Details of these and their outcomes will be made available at connect.innovateuk.org/web/user-experience-ux/overview

Please note: all deadlines are at noon.

More information

For more information and all the documents you need to read before you apply, including the *Guidance for Applicants*, go to the web page for this competition at interact.innovateuk.org/

To apply you must first register with us through the competition page on the website. Registration opens when the competition opens and closes a week before the deadline for applications.

Competition helpline: 0300 321 4357
Email: support@innovateuk.gov.uk

Help for SMEs to grow faster

Small businesses that combine the funding they receive from us with additional business support are more likely to grow faster. If you are an SME and receive funding through this competition, you will automatically gain access to a growth workshop, an online diagnostic and a growth expert to help you develop a growth plan. This may include coaching, mentoring, entrepreneurial skills training.

Publicity

As part of the application process all applicants are asked to submit a public description of the project. This should adequately describe the project but not disclose any information that may impact on intellectual property, is confidential or commercially sensitive. The titles of successful projects, names of organisations, amounts awarded and the public description will be published once the decision to offer an award has been communicated to applicants by email. Information about unsuccessful project applications will remain confidential and will not be made public. E-mail pressoffice@innovateuk.gov.uk with any queries.

Key dates

Competition opens	16 February 2015
Briefing event	18 February 2015
Registration deadline	25 March 2015 noon
Deadline for receipt of applications	1 April 2015 noon

For events and partners
join the _connect group
[connect.innovateuk.org/
web/user-experience-
ux/overview](http://connect.innovateuk.org/web/user-experience-ux/overview)

Competition helpline
0300 321 4357
Email
**support@
innovateuk.
gov.uk**

Innovate UK is the new name for the Technology Strategy Board – the UK's innovation agency. We know that taking a new idea to market is a challenge. We fund, support and connect innovative businesses through a unique mix of people and programmes to accelerate sustainable economic growth.

The Technology Strategy Board is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and is incorporated by Royal Charter in England and Wales with company number RC000818. Registered office: North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1UE

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