

Developing sustainable plastic packaging: apply for funding

Around 80 million tonnes of plastic packaging is produced each year, and this is expected to triple by 2050.

Most of it has a very short use, with 95% lost to the economy. Between 8 and 12 million tonnes ends up in the oceans and can remain there for centuries, harming wildlife and potentially entering the human food chain.

Governments have recognised the need to address this national and global challenge.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge seeks to dramatically reduce plastic waste by 2025. It has up to £60 million to invest in projects that aim to make the UK a leader in smart and sustainable plastic packaging.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £37 million from the fund to invest in demonstrators and early-stage projects investigating ways to reduce, reuse or recycle plastic packaging.

Aiming for a more circular economy in plastics

There are 3 competitions that aim to support a more circular economy for plastic packaging in the UK and to fund projects helping to meet the targets of the [UK Plastics Pact](#), which include for 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.

They are for early-stage projects, demonstrators and feasibility studies for demonstrators.

Projects should work across 1 or more themes:

- materials innovation, for example new recyclable polymer materials, biopolymers, making it easier to use more recycled content
- design innovation, for example design for recyclability or reuse
- technology or process innovation, for example reuse processes, collection, sorting and separation, mechanical recycling, chemical recycling, anaerobic digestion
- business model innovation, for example reusable packaging systems, zero packaging, behavioural change

The competition will support feasibility studies and more advanced industrial research projects.

Competition information for early-stage projects

- the competition opens on 13 January 2020, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 1 April 2020
- businesses of any size may apply but projects must include at least 1 SME
- projects could range in size between £30,000 and £100,000

Competition information for demonstrators

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 19 February 2020
- businesses of any size may apply but projects must include at least 1 SME
- we expect to invest in 3 projects ranging in size between £2 million and £48 million
- the competition will run over 3 rounds including 1 invitation-only round

Competition information for feasibility studies for demonstrators

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 19 February 2020
- businesses of any size may apply
- we expect projects to range in size between £25,000 and £50,000
- successful projects could be invited to enter a competition for funding for full demonstrators