

Help find new ways to ease global disruption: apply for funding

Businesses and individuals across the world are facing huge challenges in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

The requirement to stay at home and to social distance or self-isolate presents new threats to a wide range of businesses and services, from delivery businesses to food manufacturers, entertainment, financial services, healthcare, hospitality, retail, transport and community support.

Business innovation can play a significant role in developing ways to ease the disruption from COVID-19 and any future global disruption.

Innovate UK is investing up to £20 million in business projects to develop innovative and ambitious ideas to significantly address the needs of society or industry resulting from the coronavirus outbreak.

Business can develop ambitious solutions to society's needs

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The response of researchers and businesses to the coronavirus outbreak have been remarkable. This new investment will support the development of technologies that can help industries, communities and individuals adapt to new ways of working when situations like this, and other incidents, arise.

Dr Ian Campbell Interim Executive Chair, Innovate UK, said:

The Covid-19 situation is not just a health emergency, but also one that affects the economy and society. With that in mind, Innovate UK has launched this rapid response competition today seeking smart ideas from innovators.

These could be proposals to help the distribution of goods, educate children remotely, keep families digitally connected and even new ideas to stream music and entertainment. The UK needs a great national effort and Innovate UK is helping by unleashing the power of innovation for people and businesses in need.

Help key industries and services disrupted by pandemic

This fast-track competition is open for 10 working days.

Businesses can attract up to £50,000 as an upfront grant payment to cover the full costs of a project lasting up to 6 months.

Projects with strong potential could attract follow-on funding.

Ideas should aim to help key industries and services disrupted by the pandemic and its aftermath. For example, this could include:

- new platforms and software for music artists to stream live performances, connect remotely to their fan-base and allow global audiences to enjoy their live experience
- new ways for families to connect with and remotely monitor their elderly or vulnerable relatives and ensure they are receiving what they need, including food deliveries, doctor appointments and help to pay bills
- technology to help retailers to better respond better to spikes in customer demand, including to ensure they can deliver country-wide
- new education tools that allow teachers to remotely set tasks that keep the whole class together, support vulnerable children and ensure no-one is left behind

Competition information

- the competition opens today Friday 3 April 2020, and the closing date is at midday on Friday 17 April 2020
- businesses of any size may apply
- we expect projects to be awarded grants of up to £50,000 and for them to last up to 6 months
- businesses can attract 100% of their project costs
- projects must start by June 2020