

[News story: Future manufacturing and infrastructure systems: apply for funds](#)

Innovate UK is to invest up to £19 million in innovation projects across the manufacturing and materials and infrastructure systems industry sectors.

You can apply in either area, depending on your idea. Your project will need to fit the competition scope and improve business growth and productivity or create export opportunities for at least one UK small to medium-sized enterprise (SME).

Additional funding of up to £16 million is being made available for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), which help businesses to recruit a suitable graduate to work on an innovation project.

Innovations in infrastructure systems

The market for systems that ensure smart and resilient infrastructure is expanding.

It is driven by a global urban population that is growing by almost 60 million every year, and a demand for more adaptable infrastructure that is better integrated with social systems.

There is also £425 billion of planned UK public and private infrastructure investment through the [National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 to 2021](#). This will help to support disruptive ideas come to market more quickly.

Competition focus

In this competition we are looking for innovation projects in:

- smart infrastructure, which adds intelligence to physical infrastructure or the design process and create improvements in wholelife cost and performance, or resilience, security and sustainability
- urban living solutions that tackle the challenges people face in urban areas, improve user experience and lower costs. This could be:
 - 'hard' systems, including energy, transport, waste, water and communication
 - 'soft' systems, including security, law and justice (such as public order and safety), health, wellbeing, social care and education
 - 'environmental' systems, including green spaces and waterways
- energy supply and systems, to improve the value, affordability and security, and reduce emissions
- connected transport that moves people and goods more efficiently, and makes transport more secure, user-centric and accessible

The details

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is 31 January 2018
- projects should range from total costs of £25,000 to £3 million, and last between 3 months and 3 years
- UK-based businesses of any size or research and technology organisations can lead a project
- you could get up to 70% of your eligible project costs
- there is a briefing event on 12 December 2017

Opportunities in manufacturing

There is a huge opportunity for businesses working on manufactured products, materials and associated services.

The UK is the ninth largest producer in the world. We have an output of \$247 billion, which accounts for 3% of global manufacturing output and 11% of the nation's GVA (gross value added). It represents 50% of exports and 69% of business research and development.

New manufacturing technologies and materials can enable new types of products or services. This can grow UK manufacturing productivity, increase material efficiency and sustain our competitiveness in the long term.

Competition focus

The aim of this competition is to encourage and broaden innovation in the manufacturing and materials sector. This may include:

- developing more flexible and efficient processes
- developing processes that enable faster and greater customisation of products
- developing materials for ease of manufacture
- addressing the manufacturing readiness of growing sectors
- developing materials to targeted performance specifications
- diversifying product and service lines
- developing novel services or business models that open up new sources of revenue

It incorporates a wide range of manufacturing and materials technologies.

The details

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is 31 January 2018
- we expect projects to range between 6 months and 3 years. They should range in size from total costs of £50,000 to £2 million
- UK-based businesses of any size or research and technology organisations can lead a project
- you could get up to 70% of your eligible project costs
- there is a briefing event on 12 December 2017

Applying for a KTP

There is up to £16 million available for businesses to set up KTPs across the 2 sector areas.

All disciplines and applications within infrastructure systems and manufacturing and materials will be considered for a KTP. That includes applications beyond the scope of the competitions.

As in the 2 competitions, the deadline is 31 January 2018, but the application process is different. You should speak to your local knowledge adviser, who will help you to apply.