

News story: New investment to support early-stage immersive businesses

It's estimated that the UK's immersive industry [generates £660 million in sales every year](#), and that as many as half a million people are employed by companies participating in the immersive economy. Despite this, there is currently a gap in angel and early-seed investment into immersive businesses – a critical point of a new business's growth.

To help businesses overcome this barrier and boost the UK economy, Innovate UK is working with 11 investor partners to offer simultaneous grant funding and venture capital investment in early-stage projects led by UK companies.

Up to £2 million is available in grant funding, alongside equity investment from the following investor partners:

- Creative England
- GC Angels (GC Business Finance)
- HTC Europe (Vive X)
- London Venture Partners LLP
- Mercia Technologies PLC
- Northstar Ventures Ltd
- Oxford Sciences Innovation PLC
- R/GA
- Station 12
- Techstart Ventures LLP
- Warner Music UK

Helping innovative businesses succeed

This competition aims to support early stage immersive companies by:

- encouraging early-stage private investment in small and medium sized immersive businesses
- removing the need to find match funding
- giving companies direct access to investment partners' commercial skills, knowledge and market opportunities

Grant funding is provided through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's audience of the future programme, delivered by UK Research and Innovation. By bringing together creative businesses, researchers and technology experts to adopt, exploit and develop immersive technologies, the challenge is growing the UK's leading market position in creative content.

Transforming audience experiences

This competition is open to companies engaged in producing immersive content, delivering new immersive products, services or platforms, or developing novel

immersive software, hardware or devices.

Projects can focus on one or more of the following:

- enhancing, extending or transforming the immersive audience experience
- new immersive content production tools, software and systems
- VR, AR and other digital technologies to deepen and enrich the immersive experience

Innovate UK will fund up to 70% of projects for micro or small businesses, and up to 60% for medium-sized businesses. The remaining project costs need to come from one of this competition's investor partners.

Competition information

- the competition will open on 20 May 2019
- the competition will close on 3 July 2019
- up to £2 million including VAT in grant funding is available
- your project's total eligible costs must be between £150,000 and £300,000
- you must be a UK-based micro, small or medium-sized enterprise working in immersive technology, and carry out your project in the UK
- applicants must commit to co-investment from one of the investor partners