

Press release: Nationwide competition brings 5G one step closer

The “5G Testbeds and Trials” competition is part of the UK Government’s £740m National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to support the next generation of digital infrastructure, including 5G and full fibre broadband.

New test locations are being sought all across the UK to support the future rollout of 5G – ‘fifth generation’ – technology. Government is now encouraging interested parties from all around the UK to come forward with project proposals for match funded grants of up to £5 million.

This 5G innovation boost also comes on the back of the announcement that by the end of this year a government investment of £1.7 billion will have supported the rollout of superfast broadband to 95% of the UK.

5G will enable internet speeds to keep up with the increasing numbers of devices that require a connection, in particular the explosion of smart devices in the home and the ‘internet of things’. With potential speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second, it will also make it easier for people to rapidly download and upload ultra HD and 3D video.

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock said:

To stay competitive we must be at the cutting edge of new technology and we are determined to be one of the first countries in the world to use 5G. In these very early stages we want all ideas, from all parts of the country, that will help us get the technology and the roll-out right to have a nationwide network of 5G innovators.

It’s all part of our determination to make Britain the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business, and deliver for all citizens now and in the years to come.

In the 2016 Autumn Statement, the Government announced its intention to invest in a nationally coordinated programme of 5G testbed facilities and application trials, as part of a £1bn package of announcements made to boost the UK’s digital infrastructure. The Future Connectivity Challenge Group report suggests that UK leadership in 5G could result in the opportunity to create £173 billion of incremental UK GDP growth over a ten year period from 2020 to 2030

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Jones, MP said:

Improving productivity requires targeted and sustained investment, which is why we are backing the UK’s digital infrastructure with

over a billion pounds of government funding. Whether we are doing business online or the weekly grocery shop online, strong and reliable connections are crucial to this.

Today's announcement is a big step forward in bringing 5G to the UK and ensuring our digital infrastructure is fit for the future.

Projects are expected to be industry-led or have a strong industry component and funding will only be available to UK registered organisations, carrying out projects in the UK and working in collaboration with others.

Details on how to apply are available [online](#)

Notes to Editors

1. IHS Economics / IHS Technology estimated by modelling industry investment and impacts on total factor productivity from expected use cases that 5G will enable USD\$12.3 trillion of global economic output in 2035.
2. This first funding competition is for Phase 1 of initial testbeds and trials projects that will help to develop the UK's "5G ecosystem" whether by exploring the potential for 5G to deliver benefits for businesses; developing new 5G applications and services; developing and exploring new business models around key 5G technologies; or reducing the commercial risks associated with investment in 5G.
3. Details of future funding opportunities for additional testbeds and trials will be available as the programme develops. It is likely that future funding will also include large multi-year projects that could be focused in areas that align with the Government's strategic priorities or which help to address deployment or technical challenges that help to deliver the objectives of the Government's 5G strategy.