EarthScale

EarthScale Guidance pack

Contents

What is EarthScale?

Scaling today's climate innovations is vital in winning the fight against climate change. But, while considerable support exists for climate innovations at the initial startup stage, there is a marked lack of support for the innovations as they scale up their commercial deployment.

EarthScale offers a new 12-month programme supporting IP-rich climate tech startups and spinouts from across the UK to scale and create a lasting ecosystem for successful UK scale-ups, targeting innovators with demonstrated exposure to the market, including investment, grants and/or revenue.

The next EarthScale cohort will include about 25 ventures, including up to 5 software-led solutions.

Built around a network of university-led regional hubs for climate innovation, galvanising local innovators, corporations, investors, public sector actors and agencies, EarthScale's founding members include:

- Imperial College London (lead partner)
- Cranfield University
- University of Derby
- University of Exeter
- University of Leeds
- University of Nottingham

EarthScale is a 3-year project co-funded by the Research England Development fund, part of UK Research and Innovation.

What to expect from the programme?

Upon onboarding to the programme, a venture diagnostic will be completed to better understand each venture's needs to scale and assess what support is required. EarthScale will offer a holistic approach as part of its programme to bridge the funding gap.

- **Technical and Manufacturing Support**: access to expertise and facilities across the UK through Innovation Vouchers, including from participating universities, and introductions to manufacturers
- **Enterprise Development**: scaling advice, reviewing your get-to-market strategy, getting ready to raise Series A investment, exploring alternative funding options, introduction to investors and potential commercial partners through regional networks and events
- **Talent and Peer Engagement**: developing a company culture, building a hiring strategy, attracting the right talent and learning from peers with a focus on executive roles

- **Navigating Policy and Regulation**: engaging with policy makers, policy roundtables, and support with certifications

The programme will involve bespoke support such as access to technical expertise and facilities, advice from non-executive directors (softs) and experienced operators, as well as workshops, roundtables and events. Delivery will be online, in-person or hybrid depending on the type of activity. This is to ensure active participation with the programme from companies across the UK while also enabling connections between cohort members.

On average, we expect that each venture will have to commit the equivalent of 2 days per month for workshops, events (those may be divided into shorter sessions across multiple days depending on the format) and a 30-minute check-in call per month. Time commitment on bespoke support might vary depending on the venture's needs.

The above is not an exhaustive list. As EarthScale's network of regional hubs grows and more ventures join its programme, we will be able to tailor and extend our programme offer.

By the end of the 12-month programme, each venture should have advanced in their technology, manufacturing and commercial readiness levels and be ready to raise Series A investments.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for businesses to participate in the cohort:

The business

- Registered and operating in the UK
- Classified as in the LCEGS (Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services) sector i.e. developing a product or service that significantly reduces or removes greenhouse gas emissions, or operates in a sector that plays a vital role in climate change mitigation or adaptation.
- **Seed investment** raised
- Demonstrated **market and commercial readiness** (level 6), including a commercial model showing economic viability (includes data from test sales), and first commercial sales and implemented sales process (evidence of initial traction)[1]

[1] More information on readiness levels available in the Annex at the end of this document.

The solution

- Deep tech hardware, software or hybrid climate solutions
- Solution being at **Technology / Software Readiness** Levels 5 or 6 i.e. Technology validated or demonstrated in relevant environment / Software has early customer usage with repeat engagement or Production system with paying customers[1]
- **Manufacturing readiness** (for hardware and hybrid solutions) — Ready to consider manufacturing in relevant environment
- Company is founded on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) research
- Funded by UK research councils are preferred

We recognise the positive value of diversity in innovation and in society - we strive to uphold equality and aim to challenge discrimination. We recognise that we have an under-representation of women, black and other minority ethnic groups, and disabled persons, neurodivergent persons, and the LGBTQI+ community in our startup portfolios, and encourage more applications from people who identify as part of these groups.

We therefore welcome and encourage questions and applications from people of all backgrounds. You can come from any university (or none at all) and have any kind of educational or professional background.

EarthScale values equity, diversity, and inclusion to improve representation across all its activities.

Application and Selection Process

Ventures wishing to join EarthScale can do so by completing the application form.

The selection process will be the following:

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of people with expertise in climate innovation, including research, manufacturing and investment.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an online interview to further discuss the venture's needs and motivation to join EarthScale.

The selection committee will decide on the final selection for the cohort (about 25 ventures).

Key dates

Application round opens	26 February 2026
Q&A sessions	19 and 26 March 2026. Registration is available on our website.
Deadline for application forms to Cohort 2	13 April 2026 at 23.59 pm (UK time)
Shortlisted applicants notified	6 May 2026
Interviews for shortlisted applicants	Between 7 May and 20 May 2026
Application outcome	25 May 2026
Anticipated programme start and onboarding	1 June 2026
Cohort 2 Kick-Off in Nottingham	9 June 2026
Overall Programme Completion	May 2027
This timeline is preliminary and subject to change.	

FAQ

Can I save or edit my response?

No, this option is not currently available. We advise you to prepare your responses on a separate document and copy and paste them onto the form before submitting your application. A copy of the form in Word format is available on our website.

What do you mean by 'deep tech'?

We define deep tech broadly: science-based solutions grounded in significant research or engineering innovation. Software solutions are eligible for this cohort provided that they are founded on STEM research.

What kind of solutions are eligible?

EarthScale is primarily supporting deep tech solutions addressing climate change. Due to the nature of the programme, which has a focus on manufacturing, we are prioritising hardware and hybrid solutions over software-only solutions. However, we are opening this cohort up to 5 software-only solutions.

What stage does my venture have to be at to take part?

Your solution should be:

- At Technology Readiness Level (TRL) or Software Readiness Level (SwRL) 5 or 6.
- At a stage where **seed investment** has been secured and you are aiming to raise Series A investment by the end of the programme.

- At a stage where you can demonstrate market traction, including key assumptions of commercial model tested on market and, customers in extended testing, first test sales or small number of active users.

We recommend you check the Eligibility Criteria section to ensure your business profile fits the EarthScale programme.

More information on readiness levels is available in the Annex at the end of this document.

Do you take a stake in my technology?

Neither the programme nor its affiliated partners are seeking an equity stake.

Do I need to be connected to a university?

No. While some startups may be based on university research, it is not required. Many UK innovations emerge from a variety of research organisations and independent founders, from whom we welcome applications.

What kind of support do I get from EarthScale? Is there a cash award involved?

EarthScale is offering in-kind support as outlined in the 'What to expect from the programme?' section. The estimated value of this support is around £25,000. EarthScale does not provide any grant or cash award.

What facilities and experts can I access?

Participants will have access to a broad network of academic and industry contacts, as well as specialised facilities and resources. Access to specific academic experts or facilities is managed through our innovation voucher mechanism, which forms part of the overall programme support, up to a maximum estimated value of £14,000 and may depend on availability and funding. We will work closely with each venture to identify and connect you with the most relevant support where possible.

How can I find out more about the regional hubs involved in EarthScale?
EarthScale's support programme is powered by a UK-wide network of universities led by Imperial College London. Besides Imperial, EarthScale's founding members are Cranfield University, University of Derby, University of Exeter, University of Leeds and University of Nottingham.

Our unique model includes a network of regional university-led hubs, designed to connect local businesses, innovators, investors, and public sector partners. Each hub is embedded in a thriving local ecosystem, offering tailored support and deep sector expertise. Find out more about Partner hubs here.

Can we participate in other support programmes while participating in EarthScale?

Participation in this programme does not preclude you from participation in wider support programmes. However, the programme requires commitment from all its participants. It may be time consuming to be involved in too many programmes. We

will discuss this with participants, though generally, we are open to startups also being able to receive support through other avenues.

If I'm not yet eligible or my application is unsuccessful, will I be able to apply at a later stage?

Yes, EarthScale is initially funded until March 2028 and we are planning to recruit another cohort towards the end of 2026.

Is the support from EarthScale categorised as Subsidy control?
Yes, it is. EarthScale is co-funded by the Research England fund, part of UKRI. The support provided under the programme counts as subsidy under the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) category.

You can find further information on subsidy control on pages 17-18 of this guidance.

Do you sponsor visas?

Unfortunately, we are not able to sponsor visas at this time.

When can I expect a reply regarding my application?

Applicants will be notified of their status at different stages. Outcomes of the pre-selection for interview are expected on 6th May, and final selection outcomes are expected on 25th May.

For the full timeline, check the Key Dates section of this guidance.

How can I request reasonable adjustments?

We're committed to accessibility. If you require reasonable adjustments for the application process, please email us at EarthScale@imperial.ac.uk.

I have more questions. Who can I contact?
Reach out to us at EarthScale@imperial.ac.uk. We're here to help!

Guidance on Application Form Questions

In this section you will find additional information to guide you through specific questions.

Please note we strongly advise that you draft your application in advance on a separate document and paste your responses into the form.

We are using Airtable, and you will need to complete the form in a single pass. A copy of the form in Word format is available on our website. Further information is available in the FAQ.

If you require reasonable adjustments for the application process, please contact: EarthScale@imperial.ac.uk.

Word Count

Please make sure you address the questions fully. However, please note, the word count is only a guide, you do not have to write to the maximum word count if it is not necessary.

Eligibility Section

Q2. Is the company a subsidiary of another company?

If the company is owned by a non-SME or SME, you will be subject to additional eligibility checks, including amount of Minimal Financial Assistance under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 for the parent company. You must ensure that you have this information readily available, even if your parent company is registered outside the UK.

Business Information

We understand that sharing this information can feel sensitive, and we want to reassure you that the details you provide will remain strictly confidential and only be shared with the application review panel. These questions help us gain a clearer picture of your startup's current stage and financial journey, enabling us to tailor our support effectively. They are intended to better understand how we can support your growth and success.

Q17. How much public funding have you received in GBP (£) in the past 3 years (2023-2026)?

UK Subsidy Control Guidance

As of 2023, under the Subsidy Control Act the UK has its own subsidy control rules, replacing the old EU State Aid regulations. You can find more detailed guidance here. You will need to assess whether you have met the criteria for subsidy control independently.

Funding Limits: Your business can receive up to £315,000 in subsidies over a three-year period. This includes any aid received under previous EU rules and the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. If you receive support from this programme provided by Imperial College London, funded by Research Development England (RED) it counts towards this £315,000 limit. The expected value is about £25,000, but it may vary depending on your needs.

You must declare all the aid your business has received in the last three years to ensure you don't exceed the £315,000 limit.

Types of Aid: Aid can come in many forms, such as grants, loans, tax benefits, training, consultancy, and more. If you're unsure whether something counts as aid, check with the organisation that provided it.

Examples of Aid:

- Grants from public bodies
- Loans at favourable rates

- Tax benefits
- Free or discounted consultancy and training
- Environmental project funding
- Infrastructure benefits

For more detail, please refer to the list of examples in the Annex.

Q19. Please share a link to your pitch deck.

This might include an overview of your plans/ progress/ milestones, evidence of your technology, further financial information, visuals of your product, details of test installations/beta testing. Please make sure the link is open access.

Q20. Please input an open access link to a spreadsheet document of your capitalisation table.

You can find the template here.

A Capitalisation Table is a table providing an analysis of a company's percentages of ownership, equity dilution, and value of equity in each round of investment by founders, investors, and other owners. Please list all founders (active and non-active), investors and any other relevant person in your venture according to the specifications below:

(1) Level of commitment: time commitment to the start-up in percentage. E.g. 100% = 1 FTE i.e. 40h/week, 50% = 0.5 FTE i.e. 20h/ week, etc.

(2) Active founders should have a large majority share with a reasonably equal distribution. Please use this Excel template here and save the file as “Business Name_Cap Table_EarthScale26.”

The Problem

Q22. What specific climate problems does your innovation address? (Max 300 words).

Be precise about the climate/environmental issue your solution targets. Avoid general statements about climate change. Instead, focus on measurable problems like carbon emissions, energy inefficiency, water scarcity, waste management, or biodiversity loss. Quantify the scale of the specific climate problem and how much your solution will tackle. (i.e. carbon savings, reduction by x in specific harmful gases or materials, removal of x tonnes of specific material or dirty technology from cycle, reduction by x of energy consumption etc.)? Please include a comparison of how your product or service improves on the impact of the standard industry solution where relevant (i.e. x % reduction in carbon emissions as compared to a standard y).

Q23. Does your solution mitigate climate change and/or support adaptation to its effects?

Options:

• Adaptation

- Mitigation
- GHG removal/reduction
- None

Climate adaptation refers to the ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences. The IPCC defines adaptation as the “adjustment in natural or human systems to a new or changing environment. Adaptation to climate change refers to adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory and reactive adaptation, private and public adaptation, and autonomous and planned adaptation."

Climate mitigation is any action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce the long-term risk and hazards of climate change to human life, property etc. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines mitigation as: “An anthropogenic intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases."

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Removal/Reduction refers to removal techniques that capture greenhouse gases from the air and store or chemically convert them with some degree of permanence and to reduction techniques that prevent greenhouse gases from entering the air.

The Solution

Q24. What is your solution and value proposition? (Max 300 words)

Clearly articulate the value your solution provides to customers. Explain what sets your innovation apart from existing technologies or solutions. Highlight the unique features, advantages, or breakthroughs that distinguish your approach. Provide specific comparisons to industry standards, emphasising how your technology is more efficient, cost-effective, sustainable, or groundbreaking.

Q26. Please provide a justification of your current level of readiness (Max 300 words).

Describe the current stage of your technology development. Provide evidence of testing, validation, certifications and any prototypes through open access links. Mention any relevant research or experiments that support your TRL or SwRL level. You can refer to the Annex for further information about readiness levels.

Q27. What stage is your climate tech solution at in terms of manufacturing readiness? (Max 300 words)

We want to understand how prepared your business is to manufacture your climate tech solution at scale. Please describe your current manufacturing stage. For example, whether you’re at the prototype stage, have conducted pilot manufacturing, have manufacturing partners identified, or are already in limited or full-scale production.

Include any relevant supply chain arrangements, manufacturing challenges you've encountered or anticipate, and your plans or needs to move toward production readiness. This helps us assess how best to support your path to market.

If your solution is solely a software, this question will not appear.

Impact

Q35. If applicable, please state how you have estimated the metrics of impact listed in questions 29 to 34, i.e. GHG, energy and/or water. (Max 300 words).

Describe the methods and assumptions used to estimate the outcomes of your impact metrics. Include any supporting evidence, such as lifecycle assessments, pilot data, or independent reports, and provide open-access links where available to help validate your claim. If full deployment of your solution is expected to be beyond 2030, do include estimations at full deployment.

35. Please describe any additional impact outside of the water, energy and GHG from your solution and state (Max 300 words)

Consider broader sustainability benefits, including biodiversity protection, waste reduction, circular economy contributions, and social or economic advantages. Clearly state how these impacts are measured or validated, using qualitative and quantitative indicators, case studies, comparative assessments, or industry certifications where relevant.

Commercial Strategy

Q38. Explain your business model. (Max 300 words)

Describe how your business creates, delivers, and captures value. Focus on your revenue streams—how you charge customers, who pays, and what they pay for. Mention your pricing strategy, customer segments, and any recurring or scalable income models. Also include key commercial/technology partners who are a part of the business model.

Q39. What/who is your target market and what markets do you operate in? (Max 300 words)

Clearly define who your target market is and the markets in which you operate. This should include evidence collected to demonstrate how your solution aligns with the needs and characteristics of your market and key competitors or alternative customers use today.

You should also provide a description of your current level of market penetration, including key metrics or achievements, and outlining your 12-36 months commercialisation plan towards revenue growth and profitability.

Consider including:

- Market definition: industry & sector, geographical scope (regions and countries), market type (e.g. B2B, B2C, public sector), customer profile and behaviours (needs, pain points, habits, decision-making factors

- Market Validation Evidence: Include research, surveys, pilot studies, letters of intent, customer feedback, competitor analysis, or market trends to support your claims.
- Market penetration: key metrics that demonstrate traction, adoption, or sales performance i.e. customer base growth, revenue figures, geographical expansion, partnerships, or competitive positioning to showcase market presence.
- Commercial Development: roadmap for scaling operations, securing funding, expanding into new markets, and enhancing product offerings

Your response should articulate why your solution fits within the chosen market, demonstrating demand and potential growth opportunities.

Q42. What is your IP strategy? (Max 300 words)

Explain your approach to protecting and managing your intellectual property, detailing any registered or pending patents, trademarks, or proprietary technology. Discuss how trade secrets or innovative methods are safeguarded internally, ensuring long-term competitiveness. If applicable, describe any licensing or commercialisation strategies that allow your intellectual property to generate revenue or expand market reach. Additionally, outline any future plans for securing additional IP, including potential filings or strategic partnerships aimed at strengthening protection. This section should clearly communicate how your innovation is secured, demonstrating foresight and commitment to maintaining a competitive advantage.

Motivation for joining the programme

Q43. What is your or your team's motivation for joining the EarthScale programme? (Max 300 words)

Provide a compelling explanation of why you are interested in participating in the EarthScale programme and how it aligns with your mission, goals, and business strategy. If relevant, describe any past engagement with similar programmes and the benefits you have gained. Ensure your response clearly demonstrates your commitment to scaling impactful solutions while contributing to EarthScale's mission.

Q44. Describe any scaling challenges you have and the next steps in addressing these challenges. Please include challenges you face in advancing the readiness level of your solution (Max 300 words).

Highlight the specific challenges your company is addressing and how the programme can support your growth, whether through mentorship, funding, networking, or technical expertise. When describing scaling challenges, focus on both technical and operational aspects, highlighting difficulties in advancing the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) or Software Readiness Level (SwRL) of your solutions. Key technical hurdles include integration complexity, performance optimisation, and resource management. Operational obstacles encompass production capacity, supply chain management, and regulatory compliance.

Team and Expertise

Q49. Describe your team's expertise (including advisors) in this domain, why you work well together and how you build an inclusive team (Max 300 words).

Provide a clear overview of your team's expertise and how their skills align with your company's mission. Highlight key qualifications, industry experience, and specialist knowledge that make your team well-equipped to execute your business strategy. If applicable, include details about advisors, mentors, or external experts who contribute valuable insights to your team.

Additionally, describe how your team works effectively together, emphasising collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving approaches. If relevant, discuss team dynamics, communication styles, or shared values that enhance productivity. This response does not impact application results but helps with diagnostic to assess how we can help with culture and senior team recruitment.

Finally, describe your company’s diversity and inclusion strategies. How do you create an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered? Discuss initiatives and show how these contribute to a positive and equitable work environment.

Q50. What critical skill gaps exist within your team, and how are you addressing these to ensure successful delivery? (Max 300 words)

Identify any critical skill gaps within your team that could impact your business success. These could relate to technical expertise, leadership, financial management, product development, commercialization, or other strategic areas.

Explain how you are addressing these gaps—whether through hiring plans, training programs, external advisory support, partnerships, or professional development initiatives. Show how these efforts ensure successful delivery of your solution. Like the team expertise question, this response will not affect application results but helps assess how the programme can provide the necessary support if selected.

Further Information

EarthScale

A collaborative initiative between UK universities which currently includes.

Imperial College London

Imperial is the lead partner of the EarthScale project co-funded by Research England. It is powered by:

- **Undaunted**

Undaunted is a partnership between Imperial's Grantham Institute and The Royal Institution, based in Scale Space within London's White City Innovation District. It's a hub for the UK's climate innovation community, creating new routes into green entrepreneurship and supporting the acceleration of startups and SMEs tackling climate change. Since 2012, they have supported over 175 companies from across the UK, who have raised over $1bn, created 2000 jobs and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30MtCO2eq (by 2030).

undaunted-hq.org

- **Imperial Enterprise Lab**

Imperial Enterprise Lab is a dedicated hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, that boasts a vibrant network of over 200 experts and mentors and an 800-strong investor community. It offers dynamic support for students, staff and alumni, including expert mentorship, training, community events, and access to funding and co-working space. Flagship programmes include WE Innovate, the UK's first university-based women's entrepreneurship programme, and the Venture Catalyst Challenge, which boasts the largest prize fund of any UK university pre-accelerator, which have supported over 1,000 participants across more than 10 years.

imperialenterpriselab.com

Cranfield University

Cranfield is a specialist postgraduate university with globally renowned expertise in science, technology, engineering and management.

Cranfield delivers applied research that has real-world impact — 88% of its research is world-leading or internationally excellent (REF2021).

Large-scale facilities and global industry partnerships enhance their innovative education. Cranfield is one of the few universities in the world to have its own airport, a unique environment for research. They are a six-time winner of the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize, the highest national honour for educational institutions.

www.cranfield.ac.uk

University of Derby

Accelerating small-business growth, breaking down barriers and creating unrivalled opportunities for entrepreneurs to innovate and thrive. The University of Derby are closing the gap between research and impact, tackling issues that matter to the city, region, businesses and industry.

The Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Engineering focuses on sustainable engineering solutions across multiple sectors. The Institute supports innovation in design, manufacturing, product lifecycle management, and the application of new and smart materials, thereby supporting skills development and industrial growth in the region.

Here, businesses can access knowledge, funding, expertise, and technology to develop products and processes, driving innovation while always keeping sustainability in mind.

www.derby.ac.uk

University of Exeter

Home to 1500 climate and sustainability experts across 34 specialist environmental institutes and centres of excellence, including many of the world's most influential climate scientists.

The University of Exeter has developed expertise in areas such as ocean carbon capture, carbon storage through ecological restoration, the circular economy, food systems/Agri-tech and whole of life/systems thinking.

The university also has various facilities in areas such as bioimaging, cytomics, and testing in marine environments.

www.exeter.ac.uk

University of Leeds

The Priestley Centre for Climate Futures is a world-leading climate centre based at the University of Leeds. From local to global, we ensure that climate action is informed by the latest research, collaborating with organisations and individuals to transform our expertise into real-world impact. They bring together a community of experts from across disciplines including engineering, environment, finance, health, economics, cultural studies, law, and atmospheric sciences. They connect these climate experts to businesses, policymakers, communities, and other researchers, working collaboratively in integrated networks to transform how we address climate change.

The Centre actively promotes climate innovations and climate-related entrepreneurship in partnership with Nexus, The University of Leeds' innovation hub, and brings together the ecosystem to accelerate regional climate tech.

www.leeds.ac.uk/

University of Nottingham

Known for its research-led teaching and international outlook, the University is a member of the Russell Group and is ranked among the top 20 in the UK.

The University of Nottingham is a major international centre for energy research, renowned for its excellence across a broad range of research and technology-based activities.

The University of Nottingham Energy Institute boasts an impressive portfolio of research, development and demonstration built up over 25 years, attracting significant funding from government and industry to deliver high-profile impact.

Energy activities focus on the key societal challenges of 'Transport and Mobility', 'Energy Generation and Management', and 'Communities and the Built Environment'.

www.nottingham.ac.uk

Annex

UK Subsidy Control Guidance

Following Brexit, the UK has established its own subsidy control regime, replacing the European Commission's State Aid regulations. Under the new UK rules, businesses can receive up to £315,000 of Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) over a rolling three-year period, as stipulated by the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

The support from the Research Development England (RED), provided by Imperial College London, falls under the MFA category of the Subsidy Control Rule. This support may affect your SEIS capacity. Teams are required to submit a declaration confirming that the support from the Research Development England (RED) will not result in exceeding £315,000 in Subsidy Control Support over a three-year rolling period. Note that this includes any aid given under the EU state aid de minimis regulations and subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance under the UK—EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement after 31 December 2020 but before this section of the Act came into force.

To confirm your eligibility for this assistance, you must declare the full amount of aid received over the last three fiscal years, including any aid applied for or due to receive.

The following list provides examples of common forms of aid you may have received in the past three years. Any assistance from a public body could potentially be considered aid. If you have any doubts, please contact the body from which the assistance was received.

- Grants from public bodies
- Loans from public bodies at favourable rates

- Loan guarantees from public bodies
- Differential tax benefits
- Grants from investment trusts (including charities) that may have received funds from a public body
- Grants from part publicly funded venture capital funds
- Publicly administered funds, even if originally not public, such as the National Lottery
- Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due to a public body, such as rent deferral or waiver of interest on late payment of taxes
- Monopoly licences or guarantees of market share
- Advertising via public channels such as tourist boards or state-owned television
- Consultancy advice provided free or at a reduced rate
- Training provided free or at a reduced rate
- Aid for investment in environmental projects
- Provision of free or reduced rate feasibility studies for research and development or other assistance with R&D
- Purchase of public land or property at below market rates
- Benefiting from infrastructure provision where your organisation was pre-identified as a beneficiary

These types of aid may have been provided under De Minimis or another subsidy regulation. If you are unsure whether aid received was De Minimis or about its value, check with the organisation that provided it. If they are unable to confirm or there is uncertainty, assume it was De Minimis aid unless its value exceeded £315,000, in which case it cannot have been De Minimis. Any subsidy awarded to you under this project must be declared if you apply for or have applied for any other De Minimis or Innovation Aid.

Technology Readiness Levels

Levels	Technology readiness descriptor
1	Basic principles observed and reported
2	Technology concept formulated
3	Analytical and experimental critical function or characteristic proof-of-concept
4	Technology validated in a lab
5	Technology validated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
6	Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
7	Technology prototype demonstration in an operational environment

8	Actual technology complete and qualified through test and demonstration
9	Actual technology proven in an operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies.

Guidance from UKRI can be found here.

Software Readiness Levels

Levels	Technology readiness descriptor
1	Concept defined, problem-solution fit hypothesised
2	Core functionality prototyped (alpha)
3	Functional Minimum Viable Product (MVP) built and tested internally
4	MVP deployed with pilot users
5	Early customer usage with repeat engagement
6	Production system with paying customers
7	Scalable architecture demonstrated
8	Proven reliability, security, and performance at scale
9	Commercially mature, mission-critical deployment

Market Readiness Levels

Levels	Market readiness descriptor
1	Hypothesis of possible market needs
2	Identified specific market needs
3	Market/Industry research & first direct market feedback
4	Confirmed problem/needs from primary research & understanding of the value chain
5	Established interest and relations with customers
6	Benefits confirmed by first customer testing
7	Customers in extended testing, first test sales or small number of active users
8	First commercial sales and implemented sales process - evidence of initial traction

9	Widespread sales and scaling - significant customer traction

Commercial Readiness Levels

Levels	Commercial readiness descriptor
1	Unclear hypothesis of possible business idea, market potential, and competition
2	First hypothesis of possible business concept and identified overall market potential and competition
3	Description of sustainable business model and target market(s) (including competition)
4	Economically viable business model Initial assessment of environmental and social sustainability
5	Key assumptions of commercial model tested on market
6	Commercial model shows economic viability (includes data from test sales)
7	Viability of commercial model validated by initial commercial sales
8	Sales and metrics confirm a viable commercial model with reliable margin estimates
9	Commercial model proven to meet expectations on profit, scalability and impact over time