

# **UKSA Grants Request for Information**

Document Version: 1.0

Date: 12/03/2024

## Executive Summary:

The UK Space Agency plays a major role in delivering the government's National Space Strategy.

We support a thriving space sector in the UK, which generates an annual income of £16.5 billion and employs 47,000 people across the country.

Our staff includes scientists, engineers, commercial experts, project managers and policy officials who help to:

- catalyse investment to support projects that drive investment and generate contracts for the UK space sector
- deliver missions and capabilities that meet public needs and advance our understanding of the Universe
- champion the power of space to inspire people, offer greener, smarter solutions, and support a sustainable future.

We are an executive agency of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

In 2022/23, we awarded around £34 million in grants to organisations to pursue projects aligned to our core objectives. We awarded grants across a wide range of sizes, from early-stage feasibility projects through to complex multi-year projects to support pioneering international missions.

As a delivery-focused government agency, we want to ensure our future offering is best in class and better supports the needs of our unique sector. To meet these ambitions, we are consulting on a range of flexibilities we could consider deploying as part of our future grants offer. This is an early-stage consultation to gather feedback and this Request for Information exercise makes no commitment to pursuing any of these options.

If you believe this opportunity will be of interest to you or your organisation, please complete the questionnaire below by 00.00 on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May to [commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk). Applicants can answer as many or as few questions as they feel are relevant to their organisation.

I am grateful in advance for the time and effort taken in replying to this request for information.

Yours sincerely,

Susie Lewinska

Assistant Director Commercial  
UK Space Agency

### How the information you provide will be used and treated:

- Responses received together with wider available information will be used to guide UKSA's development of future funding opportunities and to gain an understanding of potential mechanisms the sector would be interested in exploring with us
- Information that you provide, not already in the public domain, will be treated as commercially sensitive information. This means that access to this information will be stored in a protected digital folder restricted to UKSA staff involved with the purpose of this RFI.
- The RFI participation process, including how to send your response appears in the section directly after the questionnaire below. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with UKSA via the following email if you would like us to take additional steps to receive or store your response: [commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk)
- All personal data will be protected according to UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) rules.
- All responses collected will be deleted by 31 December 2028 when we expect all initial activities regarding the purpose would have expired. The information gathered will not be used beyond the stated purpose without explicit permission.

### RFI Terms:

- This RFI is intended to be a request for information only. No contractual obligation is expected to arise from this RFI process.
- This RFI does not commit the UK Space Agency to pay any cost incurred in the preparation or submission of any response to the RFI.
- Responding (or failing to respond) to this RFI will not prejudice you from participating in any future calls for information or to tender proposals.

### RFI Participation Process:

- Please provide answers to the below RFI questions on a submission – there is no word limit and respondents are welcome to include supplementary annexes if this would be helpful
- Submissions should be sent as either a Microsoft Word or PDF (Portable Document Format) to: [commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk) with "UKSA Grants RFI" as the subject line.
- The deadline for responses is 00.00, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May.
- If you have any questions/queries about the process, please contact [commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@ukspaceagency.gov.uk)
- An email confirmation of receipt from UKSA will be sent within a one-week period to the designated point of contact.

IBF RFI Timings	
RFI Issued	9 April 2024
RFI Deadline	13 May 2024

### Questionnaire:

Please provide answers to the following questions in your submission:

- 1. Please provide a single point of contact for your company / organisation, as well as basic details about your company/organisation, including:**

- a. Location of company/organisation/institution
- b. Approximate number of employees in the company/organisation/institution
- c. Primary activities (e.g. component manufacturers, academia, space applications etc.)
- d. If you have applied for UKSA grant funding in the past
- e. If you have received any UKSA grant funding in the past – if so, please provide brief details of the project

## **2. Grants, match funding and intervention rates**

UKSA currently offers grants across a range of thematic areas, with sizes from £3,000 up to £10,000,000. We are interested to hear from applicants and the sector about whether our current offer effectively meets your needs. Please provide a response to the following questions:

- a. Does the size of grants and frequency of grant calls on offer currently meet your needs?
- b. Are you able to meet the match funding requirements requested?
- c. Are there any grant funding opportunities offered by UKSA you have ultimately not applied for? If so, why was this?
- d. Would you like to see UKSA explore a rolling funding call that is open for applications throughout the year?
- e. Would you support the use of 'pipeline' competitions, where a large number of applicants are awarded seed funding for an initial phase of work, leading into a second competition for larger envelopes of funding?
- f. Is there any other feedback on our approach to Subsidy Control and match funding you would like to share with us?

## **3. Grant Terms and Conditions**

UKSA Grant Funding Agreements flow down from the Model Grant Funding Agreement that is set by the Cabinet Office Government Grants Management Function. We are interested in feedback on any particular elements of our terms and conditions that are challenging for the sector.

- a. Are there any terms and conditions within our Grant Funding Agreements that are difficult for your organisation to accept? Please explain why.
- b. Grant funding is paid upon successful delivery of milestones. It is not possible to do payments in advance of the point of need. Are there other flexibilities we could extend, such as monthly milestone payments rather than quarterly, that would be beneficial?

## **4. Overhead Recovery**

UKSA's current approach to overhead recovery mirrors that taken by many other government funders, offering three approaches:

- No overheads, for applicants not claiming or incurring overheads
- 20% of labour costs, covering both direct and indirect overhead
- Calculated overheads, for claiming both direct and indirect overheads

We are not proposing to remove the calculated overheads option at this time, but would be interested to hear from organisations who currently use this method about whether an uplift in overheads around labour costs would reduce your reliance on calculated overheads.

For academic institutions, we are interested to know if our current approach to overheads is sufficiently flexible to meet your needs or whether we could provide further guidance.

- a. For organisations who have previously claimed calculated overheads, please briefly explain why.
- b. Would an uplift in our core overhead recovery rates on labour costs be beneficial to your organisation?
- c. For academic organisations, is there any further guidance we could provide on overheads that would be helpful in our future funding calls (e.g. whether guidance on estates and indirects could be clearer)?

## 5. Alternative funding options

We are aware that some Government funders offer alternative financing options beyond grants. We are interested to understand appetite within the sector around these options. Please provide a response on whether access to the following funding mechanisms would be of interest:

- a. Royalty Financing: facilitated by Commercialisation or Exploitation Agreements, whereby the recipient is offered an arrangement where initial funding is recouped over a time period from revenues generated by a project. This could be used to support projects with high upfront costs and potential long-term commercial returns that may take time to materialise.
- b. Loans: Innovation loans are typically offered for up to five years and can be drawn down in instalments as required by a project. Interest typically accrues on any amounts drawn down. Loans are repayable to the funder, including interest on the amount borrowed. These typically have favourable terms such as a below-market rate of interest which is treated as a grant.
- c. Small Business Research Initiatives: The procurement of R&D services at a fair market value, outside the scope of Subsidy Control. SBRI's offer organisations the opportunity to work directly with the public sector to develop new technologies and processes. They are open to any organisation, regardless of size. Typically, at least 50% of the budget must be spent on research and development activities.
- d. Challenge Prizes: Challenge Prizes are competitions that offer funding to winners, who are required to then use that prize funding to advance the development of their proposed solution. Challenge Prizes can include initial rounds of competition to provide seed funding to promising ideas, as well as non-financial support for applicants around commercialising their solutions.
- e. Government-backed investment initiatives: Such as the Future Fund offered by the British Business Bank, which offers support to UK-based companies with at least equal match funding from private investors.
- f. Other alternative funding mechanisms: If you have applied for funding from other government departments or agencies and would like to suggest other alternative funding mechanisms that would be of interest, please feel free to do so.

## 6. Processes, Systems and Assessment Criteria

We are aware that many of our current funding calls rely on different application forms and budget templates that are less accessible to applicants than we would wish them to be. We are undertaking work internally to improve our systems and processes but would particularly welcome feedback on the following questions:

- a. Based on your experiences applying for funding, are there any particular systems or best practice examples you would particularly wish to highlight to us? What specific aspects would you like to highlight?

## Privacy Notice:

This notice sets out how we will use your personal data, and your rights. It is made under Articles 13 and/or 14 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

### YOUR DATA

#### The data

We will process the following personal data:

Names and contact details of employees involved in preparing and submitting responses to the Request for Information.

#### Purpose

We are processing your personal data for the purposes of the Request for Information (RFI) described within the accompanying RFI.

#### Legal basis of processing

The legal basis for processing your personal data is Consent.

#### Recipients

Your personal data may be shared by us with other Government Departments or public authorities where necessary as part of the RFI exercise. We may share your data if we are required to do so by law, for example by court order or to prevent fraud or other crime.

As your personal data will be stored on our IT infrastructure it will also be shared with our data processors Microsoft and Amazon Web Services.

#### Retention

All responses collected including personal data will be deleted by 31 December 2028 when we expect all initial activities regarding the purpose would have expired. The information gathered will not be used beyond the stated purpose without explicit permission.

#### Automated decision making

Your personal data will not be subject to automated decision making.

### YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to request information about how your personal data are processed, and to request a copy of that personal data.

You have the right to request that any inaccuracies in your personal data are rectified without delay.

You have the right to request that any incomplete personal data are completed, including by means of a supplementary statement.

You have the right to request that your personal data are erased if there is no longer a justification for them to be processed.

You have the right in certain circumstances (for example, where accuracy is contested) to request that the processing of your personal data is restricted.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data where it is processed for direct

marketing purposes.

You have the right to withdraw consent to the processing of your personal data at any time.

You have the right to request a copy of any personal data you have provided, and for this to be provided in a structured, commonly used, and machine-readable format.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you consider that your personal data has been misused or mishandled, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner, who is an UK independent regulator. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
0303 123 1113  
[casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

Any complaint to the Information Commissioner is without prejudice to your right to seek redress through the courts.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

The data controller for your personal data is the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. You can contact the DSIT Data Protection Officer at:

DSIT Data Protection Officer  
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Email: [dataprotection@dsit.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@dsit.gov.uk)

**END**