

SPRINT GUIDE

SPRINT GUIDE – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

You can download this guide here: [SPRINT Guide](#)

The UK has a world-leading and growing space sector. In our modern society, space is integral to how we go about our daily lives, our understanding of how to protect and benefit the world we live in and pushes the boundaries of scientific discovery and technology development. The UK Government has set an ambitious target to the UK space sector to capture 10% of the global market by 2030 and you, supported by SPRINT, can help to make this a reality.

It's not all about the space sector, however. Technologies developed for space, and the data that is beamed back to Earth from satellites in orbit can have profound effects and benefits for products and services destined for other sectors. From agriculture to tourism, financial services to healthcare, space data and technologies can play their part in enabling innovation in the non-space sectors and SPRINT university partners have decades of experience in supporting these cross-sectoral initiatives.

This guide describes your journey through the SPRINT programme.

ENGAGE – discover SPRINT and join the Network

At its heart, SPRINT is a network of universities, businesses, government agencies, business support organisations and the investment community all working towards the goal of growing the UK space sector, and economy as a whole, through the commercial exploitation of space data and technologies.

As you are here, you've already discovered SPRINT and it is free and easy for you to become part of the Network. Simply by providing your contact details [here](#) and joining our mail list you will receive monthly newsletters showcasing our latest news and features, informing you of up-coming events and workshops and highlighting some of the world-leading expertise and facilities that you can access through SPRINT.

You can also investigate this website at anytime for all your SPRINT information needs and follow us on social media via [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to keep up-to-date with all the latest.

Once you have joined the Network the next stage in your SPRINT journey is to find out how SPRINT can help your business. This is best achieved by getting on touch with one of our SPRINT Innovation Advisers.

SPRINT Innovation Adviser

Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser is your key liaison for accessing the benefits of SPRINT. They will spend some time with you to understand your business, its products and services, the market(s) it operates in and your business growth needs. Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will then assess this information and then, working with you, try to identify expertise and capabilities from across the SPRINT partner universities and wider network that could benefit your business growth needs. It does not matter which SPRINT Innovation Adviser you first speak to as they are trained to represent all the SPRINT university partners. SPRINT support may come from more than one SPRINT university partner and so you may be referred to an additional/alternative SPRINT Innovation Adviser at another SPRINT partner university depending on your business need and identified SPRINT-enabled solution(s).

Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will also work with you, and their academic colleagues at the SPRINT university partner, to develop the idea of your SPRINT-enabled solution into a collaborative project between your business and the SPRINT university partner. Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will also guide you through the application process to apply for a SPRINT Innovation Voucher to enable that collaborative project to occur.

Find out more about our SPRINT Innovation Advisers [here](#).

Confidentiality and publicity

We understand the need for confidentiality when discussing your developing technologies and business needs with your SPRINT Innovation Adviser. For your SPRINT Innovation Adviser to be able to identify the most appropriate form of SPRINT support however some non-confidential business information and personal information may be shared with the SPRINT Innovation Advisers at other SPRINT university partners, non-university partners and the SPRINT Management Team at the University of Leicester. If your engagement with the SPRINT Innovation Adviser and/or academic expert requires the sharing of confidential information then non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) can be put in place.

SPRINT is a publicly funded innovation programme and as such we have reporting obligations to our funders, Research England and the Scottish Funding Council, and a need to maintain a public presence. As a participant in the programme your company should expect this to be public knowledge (and publishable).

If you have any queries on how we use the information you share with us, please direct them in the first instance to your SPRINT Innovation Adviser.

APPLY – develop project idea with SPRINT Innovation Adviser and academic and then apply for a SPRINT Innovation Voucher

When you have identified a way for you to collaborate with a SPRINT university partner on a collaborative project to support your business growth you can apply for a SPRINT Innovation Voucher to help fund the project. Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will supply the necessary application form and guidance and will help you and the academic team from the SPRINT university partner to complete and submit the form.

SPRINT Innovation Vouchers

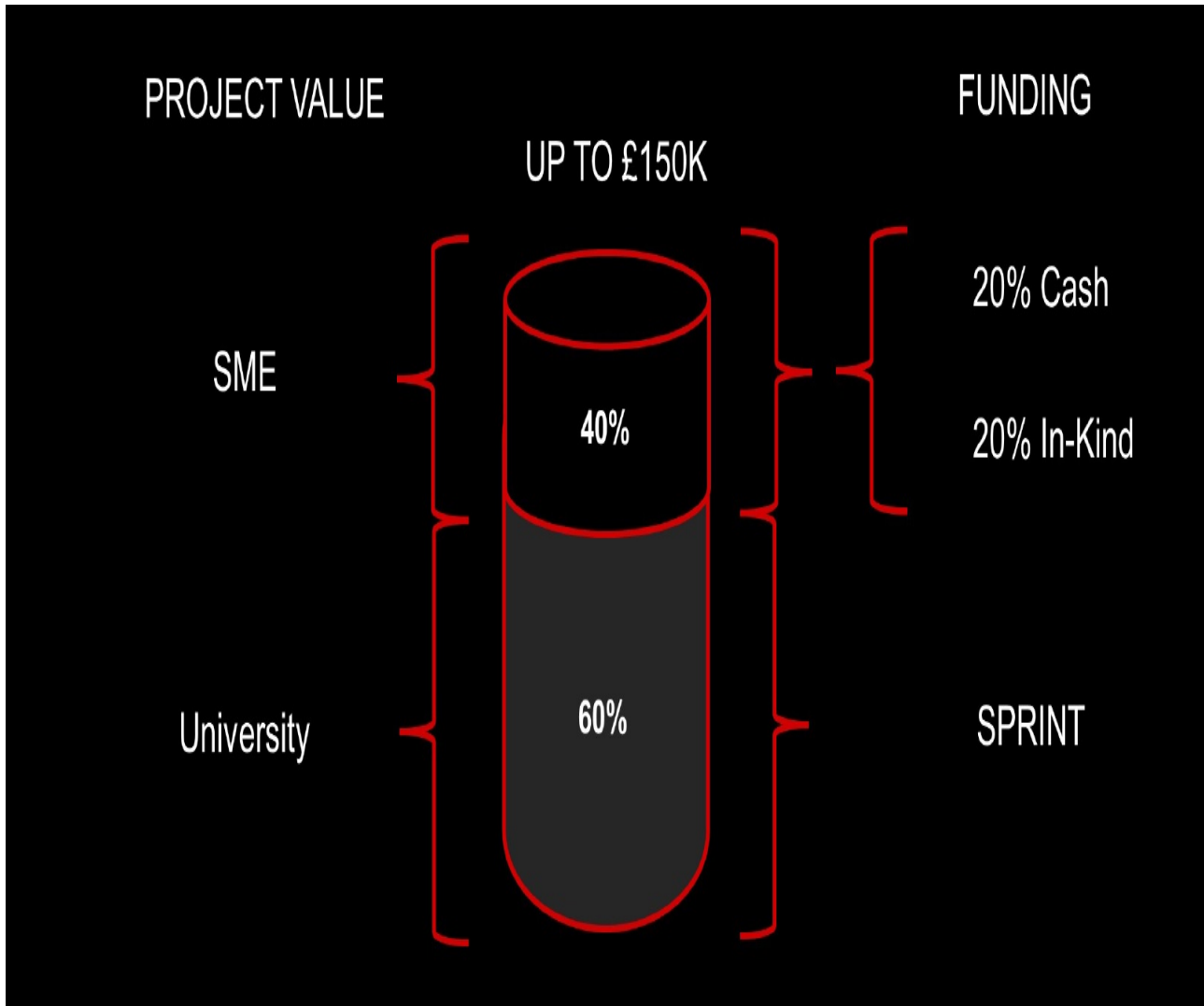
SPRINT provides Innovation Vouchers to help fund collaborative projects between your company and the SPRINT university partner(s). These projects can enable you to exploit space technologies and data in a wide range of commercial activities including:

- Space products / technologies to the space sector
- Space technologies and data deployed in non-space markets and applications
- Commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) and non-space technologies deployed in space markets

SPRINT Innovation Vouchers can also be used to support feasibility studies, business planning, market analysis and other non-technical activities vital in product development cycle. SPRINT Innovation Vouchers can help fund projects in two types:

- **‘Entry Point’**: Short projects up to a total project value of £50,000 in which SMEs can access the space expertise capabilities of one or more of the partner universities to address key challenges on the trajectory to full commercialisation of their product or service. Typically these projects are for earlier stage development and feasibility studies. Higher technical risk is acceptable as long as the appropriate efforts in business plan development and market assessment are demonstrated (or are incorporated as part of the project).
- **‘Lift Off’**: An intensive programme of support to help bring products and services to market in shorter timescales. With support for project values up to £150,000, SMEs can access the expertise, facilities, knowledge, technology and training of the partner universities to shorten technical development, testing, and production engineering timescales. These projects are to accelerate the development of products and services, bringing them quicker to the market than would otherwise be possible.

SPRINT funds the university's costs in delivering the collaborative project whilst your company funds your own costs. For any collaborative project to be funded by SPRINT Innovation Vouchers the company is expected to contribute at least 40% of the total combined costs of delivering the project whilst SPRINT funds up to 60% of the project costs.



At least 20% of the total cost must come from the company as a cash contribution. This can be a combination of a cash payment (via an invoice from the university to the company) and/or purchases the company makes themselves that count towards the cash contribution. These payments must be evidenced by the company at the end of the project via receipts. Examples of such purchases include, as follows:

- Subcontract costs (work carried out by a 3rd-party in relation to the project and charged to the company).
- Staff directly employed by, or because of, the project but funded by the company. Note: existing company employees cannot count towards this contribution (this is in-kind contribution)
- Purchase of equipment, software, licences, data etc. by the company
- Consumables (value of materials used during the project)

Up to 20% of the total cost may come from the company as an in-kind contribution. Eligible costs incurred for this in-kind contribution are as follows:

- Cost of existing staff including overhead working on a project. Overhead is calculated at a flat rate of 20% on top of the worker's hourly or daily rate.
- Facilities made available (meeting room, lab space, factory space...)
- Equipment made available
- Specialist software made available

Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will work with you and the University academic(s) to design your collaborative project within the SPRINT funding guidelines.

Eligibility

Any UK-registered SME is eligible to receive Innovation Vouchers from SPRINT.

Some company structures can be complex and include involvement of non-UK entities. The outcomes of a collaboration project funded by a SPRINT Innovation Voucher should contribute to an increase in growth (i.e. in GVA and jobs) in the UK operations of the business. Therefore, only UK-registered companies with active R&D activities based in the UK will be considered eligible .

SPRINT has been designed to support growth in SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises). We use the European Union definition of an SME which can be found here: bit.ly/whatisanSME. For companies under part-ownership from larger firms it is particularly important to follow the guidance in the link above to ensure you meet the SME eligibility criteria.

Any questions you may have on your business's eligibility to receive funded support from SPRINT should be directed to your SPRINT Innovation Adviser.

Intellectual Property

SPRINT has been designed to support activities that leads to business growth in the UK. Intellectual Property, its development and its commercial exploitation is an important factor in achieving this. Due to the breadth and diversity of the SPRINT capability portfolio and company business need, the consideration of Intellectual Property rights arising from collaborative projects funded by SPRINT Innovation Vouchers is on a project-by-project basis. However, the general principle of SPRINT is to ensure the company is best placed to commercially exploit the outputs of any collaborative project.

It is advised that you discuss and agree early on with your SPRINT Innovation Adviser any Intellectual Property considerations prior to submitting an application for a SPRINT Innovation Voucher.

State aid

SPRINT supports UK businesses to invest in research, development and

try to ensure that the information published in this guidance is up-to-date and accurate. However, the information given is not a substitute for taking legal or professional advice, which is the responsibility of the applicant. *We cannot accept any liability for actions arising from the use of our guidance. SPRINT, its partner universities and its funders cannot be held responsible for the contents of any pages referenced by an external link.* It is important to note that state aid policy is currently the responsibility of the European Union. The European Court of Justice holds sole competence over the presence of state aid or otherwise.

What is state aid?

State aid is a term used by the European Commission. It describes assistance given by a public body or publicly-funded body to organisations on a selective basis that take part in commercial activity which could distort competition and trade within the European Union. The state aid rules are designed to prevent unfair subsidies.

Further information on state aid

The state aid branch of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has lead responsibility within the UK for coordination and development of state aid policy. The [BEIS state aid guidance](#) has further information. You can also visit the [European Commission's information](#) on state aid.

State aid eligibility

SPRINT is registered to provide State Aid under the [General Block Exemption Regulation](#) (GBER) which covers a range of types of state aid that, provided certain conditions are met, do not require individual approval from the European Commission in advance of being granted. Specifically SPRINT provides its GBER State Aid only for research and development. *Before submitting an application to SPRINT, you must accept the terms and conditions of State Aid.* If you are in any doubt, you should seek independent professional advice about your eligibility. If the European Commission considers a business or any undertaking to have been in receipt of state aid due to ineligibility for exemption under GBER, that undertaking is likely to be required to repay any aid received to the value of the gross grant equivalent. The SPRINT website provides information on state aid but should not be seen as a substitute for taking legal advice, which remains the responsibility of the applicant.

Categories of research and development

Under GBER, research and development is categorised as follows:

- *fundamental research* – this means experimental or theoretical work primarily to gain new knowledge of underlying phenomena and visible facts, without any direct practical application or usage. This type of research is usually undertaken by a research organisation.

achieved by uncovering its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as identifying resources needed and the prospects for success. Feasibility studies will usually help businesses decide to work either individually or collaboratively with other industrial or research organisations, before conducting a subsequent larger project.

- *industrial research* – this means planned research or critical investigation to gain new knowledge and skills. This should be for the purpose of product development, processes or services that lead to an improvement in existing products, processes or services. It can include the creation of component parts to complex systems and may include prototypes in a laboratory or environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems, particularly for generic technology validation.
- *experimental development* – this means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services. This may also include, for example, activities aimed at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services. Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real life operating conditions. The primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

As SPRINT is focused on bringing new products and services to market, 'fundamental research' is out of scope of SPRINT funding.

De minimis aid

Some SPRINT supported activity will not fall within the bounds set by the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). In these cases then SPRINT support can be provided under the *de minimis* aid rules. *De minimis* aid is a term used to describe small amounts of state aid that the European Commission expects will have a negligible impact on trade and competition. These do not require Commission approval. The total *de minimis* aid which can be given to each organisation is €200,000 over a 3-year fiscal period. This is for all project types and for most purposes. You

De minimis aid cannot be used for:

- purchase of road freight transport vehicles
- undertakings in fishery and aquaculture
- undertakings in the processing and marketing of agricultural products where:
 - the amount of aid is fixed to the price or quantity of products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertaking
 - the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers
- aid for export to third countries or EU member states, meaning the establishment and operation of a distribution network or expenditure linked to the export activity

What happens after you have submitted your application?

SPRINT is an 'always open' call however we do have monthly application deadlines falling on the 3rd Friday of every month. Applications are submitted for review by your SPRINT Innovation Adviser. From time-to-time SPRINT reserves the right to change these deadlines, your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will inform you of this should it occur.

How your application is assessed?

After the deadline, applications will be sent for assessment. All applications are assessed on individual merit and are assessed against the same set of scoring criteria.

Where the value of the project is less than £50,001, the application is reviewed and assessed by a panel of SPRINT Innovation Advisers. Within two weeks of submitting your application you may receive questions from the panel seeking further clarification on your application. A final application review will be held within 3 weeks of submitting your application. Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will keep you informed of your application progress throughout the review.

Where the value of the project is greater than £50,001, the *draft* application is first reviewed by a panel of SPRINT Innovation Advisers and within two weeks of submitting your application you will receive questions from the panel seeking further clarification on your application. Answers to these questions should be incorporated into a *final* version of your application and re-submitted within one week. This revised application is then reviewed and assessed by a panel of independent assessors drawn from business and academia. You may be asked to attend, via telecon, part of the application review meeting to answer directly any further questions the panel may have. We seek to complete the review process within one

Once your application has been assessed, you will be informed of the final decision by your SPRINT Innovation Adviser.

What happens if you are successful?

If your application is successful then you will need to enter into the SPRINT Collaboration Agreement directly with the (lead) SPRINT university partner supporting your project. Your SPRINT Innovation Adviser will facilitate this and you should expect, and aim, to enter into this Agreement within one month of receiving notification of the success of your application.

Once the Agreement is signed, SPRINT will seek to make a public announcement about the commencement of the project. This will either take the form of the ‘public description of the project’ supplied in the application via social media and the SPRINT website or a more considered press release written by the SPRINT communications team. The latter option is by agreement with the company and the SPRINT university partner, both having full editorial and approval oversight.

DELIVER – collaborate on the project with the academic team

Once the SPRINT Collaboration Agreement is in place then you are free to commence the project with your SPRINT university partner and should do so following the project schedule set out in the Agreement. The project lead from the SPRINT university partner will be expected to complete a brief monthly progress report to help your SPRINT Innovation Adviser monitor the progress of the project. Any challenges, and successes, encountered should be reported to your SPRINT Innovation Adviser and, especially for longer projects, SPRINT may wish to may public announcements, by agreement, of any major milestones passed.

PROGRESS – use output to drive business growth

We hope that your SPRINT collaborative project with your SPRINT university partner helps to accelerate the development of your new products and services. But that’s not the end of the journey. Remaining in the Network will ensure that SPRINT can continue to signpost you to the support you need to further develop you business and launch new products and services to market. This could be in the form of further SPRINT Innovation Vouchers, grant funding from UK and European agencies or examining investment opportunities. Through your Innovation Adviser we’ll remain in periodic contact to monitor your business progress and offer support.



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