

## SPRINT Mini Innovation Vouchers – General Guidance

SPRINT (the SPace Research and Innovation Network for Technology) seeks to enable collaborations between universities and innovative UK companies that lead to the economic growth of the UK Space Sector. SPRINT is delivered by a consortium (<https://www.sprint.ac.uk/partners>) including founder members - led by University of Leicester, University of Edinburgh, The Open University, University of Southampton and University of Surrey – and associate members including City, University of London, Durham University, Kingston University, University of Bristol, University of Exeter, University of Glasgow, University of Leeds and University of Strathclyde. It is supported by other key UK Space Sector stakeholders (<https://www.sprint.ac.uk/collaborating-partners>) from the public and private sectors and the SpaceTech investment community.

SPRINT has secured funding from the UK Space Agency and Research England to support innovative UK companies to develop short collaborations with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from all parts of the UK.

### The funding is time-limited

This document details general guidance for the SPRINT Mini-Innovation Vouchers.

### General Guidance

**SPRINT Mini Innovation Vouchers** The Mini Innovation Voucher can be used to fund activities supporting UK SME growth through the exploitation of space technologies, space data and space know-how. Activities should aim to tackle genuine challenges faced by SMEs, for example, how to develop or improve products, services or processes. Projects should be collaborative and innovative and should harness the latest academic expertise and know-how. Mini Innovation Vouchers will be used to fund the cost of such activities and are expected to involve mainly exploratory consultancy and technical services.

Applications for these Mini Innovation Vouchers will be launched on **Monday 28 February 2022**, with a closing date of **Monday 11 April 2022 at 12 noon**.

A total fund size of £60k will be available. There is no match-funding requirement, but we expect companies to commit resources for their part of the project. SPRINT will provide Mini Innovation Vouchers up to £7k and it is expected that a minimum of eight Mini Innovation Vouchers will be awarded to SME/university collaborations. Four Mini Innovation Vouchers will be prioritised for devolved nations applications with SPRINT allocating at least one Mini Innovation Voucher per devolved nation<sup>1</sup> Proposals requiring funding above £7k may be considered but strong justification will be required.

SPRINT will only award Mini Innovation Vouchers for proposals judged to be of sufficient quality. SPRINT reserves the right to re-issue the call if all allocated funds are not utilised due to an insufficient number of applications of the requisite standard.

**Who can apply** **The lead organisation (Company)** is the beneficiary of the outputs of the project and receives a Mini Innovation Voucher from SPRINT to redeem at the Partner University. The Company must:

- be a UK-registered business
- be carrying out staffed R&D activity in the UK
- be a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) as defined here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-of-a-company-annual-requirements/life-of-a-company-part-1-accounts#contents>
- intend to commercially exploit the project results from or in the UK

<sup>1</sup> Should any devolved nation fail to submit an application of the requisite standard for funding then SPRINT reserves the right to allocate to a higher-ranking application the innovation voucher funding reserved for that nation.

- not have received Innovation Voucher funding from SPRINT before

**The Partner University** is the provider of the expertise required by the Company. The Partner University must:

- be a university registered in the UK and eligible to receive funding from the UK Space Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-space-agency>) or Research England (<https://re.ukri.org>)

## Your project

### Space-link

The SPRINT Mini Innovation Voucher enables companies to accelerate product and service development through **the commercial exploitation of space technologies and/or data**. A SPRINT project therefore must be able to clearly determine a space-link to one or more of these elements. The space-link can be attributed to **the Company, the university or both** (apart from know-how, which can only be attributed to the HEI).

- **Space technologies** - Space technologies are typically associated with the upstream element of the space sector. They can incorporate both space-based technologies and ground-based technologies designed to support space-based technologies (i.e. ground segment). When referencing 'generic' technologies that are used in both the space sector and in other sectors there must be clear distinctions as to the space link for that technology.  
For example, many sectors use Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) to control electronic sub-systems. Some FPGAs have been developed specifically for spaceflight; these would be considered a space technology. FPGAs generally however would not be a space technology. Therefore, if a project wanted to claim its space-link via its use of FPGAs then it would need to be using the spaceflight version of the FPGA technology and justify why the spaceflight version (as opposed to a non-spaceflight version) is the enabling factor for the project.
- **Space data** - This is the use of satellite data such as Earth Observation, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and space-based telecommunications. Many different applications and services apply space data across many different sectors. For SPRINT projects, the focus should be on the innovative use of space data for new applications and services, in new sectors or if new to the company. It can also include the innovative future use of space data where the project is assessing the feasibility of using space data using analogous ground/airborne-based datasets.  
For example, fitness trackers use GPS data to determine the location of the wearer and therefore are using space data. When fitness trackers first incorporated GPS data this would have been a potential SPRINT project as it was an innovative use of the technology. However, if a company wanted to develop a new fitness tracker, then by virtue of its incorporation of GPS data alone would not qualify it for SPRINT, as this would not be an innovative use of the technology. For SPRINT projects the focus should be on **the innovative use of space data** for new applications and services and/or in new sectors and/or if new to the Company.
- **Space know-how** - This is the knowledge and expertise of the academic community within the university where that knowledge and know-how has been:
  - Developed and applied specifically within a space-related research discipline
  - Developed outside of a space-related discipline but the academic has applied this know-how in a space-related discipline
 The application should evidence the space link to the know-how with links to relevant refereed publications.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Applicants must outline the ways in which they can show that they are committed to EDI and widening participation as part of their organisation's policy. It is also valid, if appropriate, to

mention any ways in which the outcomes from the project might create a societal benefit in terms of EDI.

Duration Your project activities must end **no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Project costs **SPRINT Mini-Innovation Vouchers**

- You may apply for a Mini-Innovation Voucher up to a value of £7k
- The Mini Innovation Voucher can reimburse some or all of the Partner University's eligible costs in delivering the project. The university may contribute an additional in-kind contribution
- The Company funds its own eligible costs
- The Partner University or another 3<sup>rd</sup> party may also contribute to the project. These contributions can be in the form of **new resources** purchased for the purposes of the project, costs associated to assigning **existing resources** i.e. staff/facilities/equipment etc... for the purposes of the project or a combination of both.
- Applicants must fill in the SPRINT Mini Innovation Voucher Application Finance Spreadsheet. The Mini Innovation Voucher funds the Partner University's eligible project costs at **up to 100% fEC**.
- The university cannot charge output VAT to its costings as the SPRINT grant is considered outside of the scope of VAT
- SPRINT will reimburse up to £7k of the Partner University project costs. Any costs incurred above this threshold will be recorded as Partner University in-kind contribution to the project.

**If there is a Company contribution towards project costs:**

- Company contribution, **new resources** purchased for the purposes of the project or because of the project can include:
  - the purchase of equipment, consumables, software and/or data for the purposes of the project
  - the hiring of **new** staff to work on the project
  - sub-contracting/consultancy costs in support of the project
  - travel and subsistence incurred for the purposes of the project
  - a cash contribution to the Partner University to part-fund some of the Partner University costs
- Company contribution, costs associated to assigning **existing resources** i.e. staff/facilities/equipment etc... for the purposes of the project can include:
  - direct costs of staff assigned to the project
  - staffing overhead of new and existing staff assigned to the project (calculated at a fixed 20% of the direct staff costs)
  - pro rata cost to use existing Company equipment, data, software and facilities (cost calculated based on existing Company depreciation policy for each item used)

Recoverable input VAT costs are ineligible for inclusion as part of the Company contribution. Output VAT is ineligible for inclusion as part of the Company contribution.

A minimum match contribution is not required from the Company partner. However, it is assumed that the Company shall support the project in collaboration with the HEI partner. The information provided by the Company regarding its contribution to the project shall be used to assess the overall value for money provided by the proposed project.

**Cost Recovery** - SPRINT Mini Innovation Voucher funding is on a cost recovery basis. Funding is solely intended to cover the cost of delivering the agreed activity or goal. Any surplus funds not spent will not be reimbursed.

**Pay and Overheads** - Pay costs are calculated based on PAYE records. They should include gross salary, employer National Insurance (NI) contributions and employer pension contributions. Pay costs must not include:

- Any profit margins
- Commercial charge-out rates
- Allowances for bonuses and benefits in kind
- Business development
- Travel and Subsistence

Company overheads (if the company are contributing) should be stated separately from the pay costs, charged at no more than 20%.

It is recognised that invoices may differ from project forecasts at application. Nonetheless, should actual costs incurred be greater than the value of the project proposal, the excess cost shall be borne by the funding recipient.

Applicants should note that SPRINT will not refund any of the costs associated with preparing the application to this competition. Applicant preparation costs and (for successful applicants) non-project costs incurred in delivering the project should also be captured and estimated.

**All project costs** should be accurately captured in the ‘SPRINT Mini Innovation Vouchers Application Finance Spreadsheet’.

Subsidy Control	<p>SPRINT supports UK businesses to invest in research, development and innovation through collaboration with university partners. Some of the support we provide operates under the UK’s subsidy control regulations.</p> <p>SPRINT collaborative projects are awarded under the Small Amounts of Funding Exemption of the EU-UK Trade Cooperation Agreement. Under these regulations, companies cannot accept subsidies totalling more than 325,000 SDR (the current value is £312,000) in any rolling 3 yr. period.</p> <p><b>It is the responsibility of the applicant to accurately declare all relevant previous funding received under de minimis and/or SDR regulations as part of the application process</b></p>
Confidentiality	<p>If you submit an application to SPRINT for a Mini Innovation Voucher the details held within that application are considered ‘confidential information’. Your application paperwork will be shared with the Head of the SPRINT Programme, SPRINT Programme Executive and a selected representative from UKSA who will form the application review panel. All participants of the application review panel will be subject to fully executed confidentiality agreements with the SPRINT lead organisation, the University of Leicester, as a condition of being a member of the review panel.</p>
Intellectual Property	<p>SPRINT seeks to support collaborative activities that lead 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 scope of potential projects and Company business need, the consideration of Intellectual Property rights arising from collaborative projects funded by SPRINT Mini Innovation Vouchers should be agreed between the Lead Organisation and the Partner University prior to submission of application. The general principle</p>

of SPRINT is **to ensure the Company is well placed to commercially exploit the outputs of any SPRINT-funded project.**

**The agreed IP position between the Company and the Partner University must be included in the application form in a form that can be incorporated, as written, into the Project Collaboration Agreement. *Suggested clauses* for such wording are provided in the Project Collaboration Agreement and in the Application Form.**

Project  
Collaboration  
Agreement

Should an award be made, the applicants will be required to enter into a **Project Collaboration Agreement** with the University of Leicester (who will contractually administer this competition on behalf of SPRINT).

- A copy of the Project Collaboration Agreement is included for reference in the application pack
- The terms and conditions of the Project Collaboration Agreement **are not subject to negotiation** (apart from Clause relating to Intellectual Property – see above)
- In submitting an application, applicants agree that they are accepting the terms and conditions of the Project Collaboration Agreement on behalf of their organisation. **Please ensure that authorisation is obtained from your organisation.** This will facilitate smooth delivery of the Mini Innovation Voucher Award.

Submission  
Information

Only the lead applicants should submit an application. **The application should preferably be presented as a single PDF file and accompanied by the completed Application Finance Spreadsheet.**

Proposals which do not include completion of all the mandated sections may be rejected.

All queries should be emailed to [info@sprint.ac.uk](mailto:info@sprint.ac.uk) .

Assessment of  
Proposals

The Review Panel will consist of the SPRINT Head of Programme, and a representative from the UK Space Agency. Applications shall be assessed according to the criteria listed below

1. **Activity Details:** Is the applicant business clearly explained. Is the partnership with the HEI clear and appropriate?
2. **Innovation related to Space:** Is the space link clear?
3. **Benefits to all Parties:** Have these been clearly outlined?
4. **Impact** (inc. value for money): Has this been made clear in the proposal? Has the way that it represents value for money been explained?
5. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** In what ways do the applicants, and (if appropriate) the proposal, demonstrate a commitment to EDI?
6. Has the application kept within the word count for each section?

A review panel shall be convened to conduct a fair and impartial assessment of the Innovation Voucher applications according to the criteria above. The panel shall rank the applications on the basis of the review criteria above. The highest-ranking projects within the fund budget shall be awarded Mini Innovation Vouchers.

Successful  
applicants

Successful applicants will be notified by the end of **April 2022**.

Applicants will be expected to enter into a Project Collaboration Agreement between the applicants (lead organisation and Partner University) and the University of Leicester (who administer SPRINT). A copy of the Project Collaboration Agreement is included in the application documentation for information. The Project Collaboration Agreement must be fully executed by

all Parties **by early May 2022**, with projects starting **week commencing Monday 16 May 2022 at the latest**. SPRINT reserves the right to withdraw the award should these dates not be achieved.

Contractual Information

- Mini Innovation Vouchers will take the form of a **Project Collaboration Agreement** between the applicants and the University of Leicester.
- Full payment of the award will be made to the Partner University upon completion of the project and the project completion declaration.
- The award will be made on a firm fixed price basis.

Publicity

Successful applicants will be expected to participate with SPRINT communications activity related to the awarded project. Typically, this will be in the form of a press release announcing the successful award of the Mini Innovation Voucher at the beginning of the project and the possible development of a case study following the completion of the project. Examples of such activities for previous projects can be found on the SPRINT website (<https://www.sprint.ac.uk/news-stories> and <https://www.sprint.ac.uk/case-studies> ). Development of all publicity material is managed by SPRINT with the applicants expected to provide supplementary information via short telephone interviews.

As a minimum, the public summary information provided on the application form will be published for successful projects along with the names of the organisations involved. Individuals must not be identified in the public summary description.

Project monitoring and reporting Successful applicants will be expected to co-operate with SPRINT reporting activities related to the awarded project.

The lead organisation and partner university are responsible for the delivery of the project within the scope, timescales and budget detailed in the project application. If a change happens, the university partner must report this to SPRINT immediately by emailing [info@sprint.ac.uk](mailto:info@sprint.ac.uk)

Following completion of the project the lead organisation and partner university shall be required to participate with SPRINT impact monitoring and reporting activity related to the awarded project. This is in the form of the completion of an online survey and (potentially) the development of a case study following the completion of the project as mentioned above. Examples of such activities for previous projects can be found on the SPRINT website ([www.sprint.ac.uk/case-studies](http://www.sprint.ac.uk/case-studies)) and ([www.sprint.ac.uk/statistics](http://www.sprint.ac.uk/statistics)). Online surveys relating to the impact and outputs of the project must be completed by each project partner before final payments can be received.

Upon request, the lead organisation and partner university is also expected to re-engage with the online survey and any case study work (at no more than 6 monthly intervals) to capture follow-up actions and outcomes resulting from the project.

Questions

Please email any questions during the application process to [info@sprint.ac.uk](mailto:info@sprint.ac.uk)