



OxLEP Kickstart Grant Q&As

Last updated: 18th September 2020

1. Can grants be used for marketing, e.g. Facebook advertising campaigns?

Yes, however the grant cannot only cover an advertising campaign. The grants will typically support 1-2-1 specialist advice which SMEs could use to address their immediate needs in response to the impact of COVID-19, and the examples we have given include HR, accountants, legal, financial, H&S, IT / digital or sector specialists, however specialist marketing advice, a component of which could be a Facebook advertising, would be eligible. Please note that you should not quote for the marketing support and the advertising separately.

2. What if we do not have accounts for a previous year as we are in our first year of trading?

You should provide a forecast for your first year of trading in place of accounts.

3. Do suppliers have to be paid before the grant can be paid? What if supplier payment terms are 90 days?

Yes. We can only pay the grant based on defrayed expenditure, i.e. costs you have paid out of your bank account. Until this happens the costs cannot be claimed. This means that if your payment terms are 90 days you cannot submit a claim until after the 90 days have elapsed, i.e. once the supplier has been paid. In any case, you must have defrayed your expenditure and submitted your grant claim to OxLEP within two months of signing the Grant Offer Letter or by 29th January 2021, whichever event comes earliest.

4. Do we need to get three quotes for the project like we need for other OxLEP ERDF grants?

No, unlike our other grant schemes there is no requirement for written quotes. As grants will not exceed £5,000 and only exceeding £3,000 in exceptional circumstances, and none of the grant recipients will be contracting authorities, ERDF procurement rules allow expenditure up to this level to be directly awarded by the SMEs.

5. Can we apply for more than one grant?

No. You can only apply for a single grant under either the Visitor Economy or the Wider Economy elements of the scheme.

6. We have previously received a Business resilience, eScalate and/or an ISfB Go-Create grant, can we receive one of these grants?

Yes, these grants are open to all eligible SMEs whether or not you have previously received a grant from OxLEP.

7. Can we start working on the project before we are notified, providing we do not pay any subcontractors or third parties?

No. Activity, including signing contracts and starting work, cannot commence before the grant is awarded. If you are willing to start working without the grant, it is questionable whether the grant is needed for the activity. From the point at which we notify you that you have been awarded the grant and with our approval, you can commence working. However, this will be at your own risk until the Grant Offer Letter is issued and signed.

8. We are not based in Oxfordshire, is there any funding we can access?

Every LEP area has been allocated Kickstart grant funding, please contact your local LEP for more information.

9. What are my chances of being successful?

We are expecting this grant scheme to be very popular and over-subscribed. In order to manage the process within a reasonable timeframe, we plan to limit the number of applications we receive to 250. This will be the first 250 received after the web portal for grant applications goes live at 10am on 1st October. The web portal will stay live until either we receive 250 submissions or the end of the day (5pm), whichever comes first.

Even with this restriction on the number of applications, the funding we have available in Oxfordshire means that we expect to be able to fund between 68 – 120 applications. The exact number of applications which we can fund will depend on how much grant individual applicants request.

Please note that we will be unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants due the high volume of submissions this grant scheme will generate.

Please ensure you read the Guidance Notes carefully and complete the application form as fully as possible. Incomplete forms will not be considered.

Please note that we cannot guarantee the compatibility of the online application platform with mobile technology (e.g. tablets and phones) so we suggest that you arrange to have access to a laptop or computer on 1st October.

10. Where the guidance states staff costs are not eligible, it is not clear whether this includes consultancy?

Sub-contracted consultants are not staff costs and consultancy costs are therefore eligible.

11. Do my suppliers need to be registered and/or trading in the UK?

No, suppliers can be based overseas. You will need to demonstrate that they have been selected on merit in exactly the same way as any other supplier.

12. Can you clarify what the grants for the Visitor Economy and Wider Economy can be used for?

Kickstart grants will typically support:

- i) 1-2-1 specialist advice which SMEs could use to address their immediate needs in response to the impact of COVID-19 e.g. HR, accountants, legal, financial, H&S, IT / digital or sector specialists, etc. In addition, SMEs from the visitor economy, could also use grant funding to support productivity improvements, e.g. enhanced use of digital tools such as yield management software, mentoring, networking, etc.; and development of innovative delivery in a socially distanced economy – e.g. new ways to deliver cultural events and festivals.
- ii) purchase of minor equipment to adapt or adopt new technology in order to continue to deliver business activity or diversify in response to COVID-19 (N.B. This cannot include “purchase of equipment and consumables associated with PPE and social distancing measures”).

13. The guidance says that grants of up to £5,000 can be awarded in exceptional cases, can you clarify what qualifies as an exceptional case?

Exceptional cases will be those where an SME has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 (for example a business that can only be delivered face to face will have suffered more than businesses that can continue to work virtually).

Applicant organisations will be given the opportunity to justify why they believe they qualify for exceptional circumstances within the application form and, where necessary, these justifications will be reviewed as part of the assessment process. Where assessors agree that the exceptional circumstances criteria have been met, an exceptional grant of up to £5,000 will be awarded.

14. If my total project cost exceeds the grant approved will that be acceptable?

We can only reimburse a claim of £3000 or less. If your total project claim exceeds the grant requested and approved, we will be unable to pay the approved grant as we cannot part-fund a project. Therefore, we strongly advise that you obtain quotes in advance.

Please note that we do not expect more than 10% of grants awarded to fall into the exceptional category, including those where cost increases are outside of the grant recipient's control.

15. Is the Kickstart grant funding in any way regarded as State Aid?

The ERDF funded Kickstart support is a State Aid but is managed as a De Minimis aid and will count towards your De Minimis limit (200,000 euros over a rolling three financial year period).

16. Can the grants be used to support a pre-start?

No, we can only award a grant to an existing undertaking (e.g. a limited company, sole trader, etc.).

17. What reporting do you require on this funding?

We require a grant claim supported by evidence of defrayal, e.g. invoices and bank statements, and reporting on the output and impact deliverables achieved, e.g. employment increase, new products to firm and to market, etc. There are templates for the reporting and the team will be able to guide you through the process if your application is awarded a grant.

Claims and evidence of spend and defrayal should be provided within two months of the signed Grant Offer Letter. The absolute deadline for submission of grant claim and evidence is 29th January 2021. However, we would strongly encourage the earlier submission of claims to ensure a prompt payment.

18. We note in the guidance that businesses engaged in the 'primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products' are not eligible. How do we know whether our business falls into that category?

This is a complicated area, although it seems simple. You will need to work out whether you produce an Annex 1 product. Annex 1 products are not eligible for support under these projects. Each type of product has a number according to the Combined Nomenclature. To work out whether a particular product is Annex 1:

1. Go to <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/TradeTools/ICN/Pages/ICNBySection.aspx>
2. Enter your product type and you will be given a code.



3. Your code is Annex 1 if it begins with any of the following numbers: 01, 02, 03, 04, 0504, 0515, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 1302, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1507, 1512, 1513, 1517, 16, 1701, 1702, 1703, 1705, 1801, 1802, 20, 2204, 2205, 2207, ex 2208, ex 2209, 2210, 23, 2401, 4501, 5401, 5701.

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid-for-agriculture-and-fisheries#what-constitutes-an-agricultural-product> gives more information on State Aid for agriculture and fisheries.)

If you have read both the Kickstart Grant Guidance Notes and the FAQs above, and watched the accompanying webinar, and still have a clarification question on the application process or the eligibility of your business, please submit your query via email to business@oxfordshirelep.com by the 25th September 2020.