eScalate Programme
Grants Competition

Guidance for applicants

1. Introduction

eScalate grants are available to any existing small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) located anywhere in England but must demonstrate an economic benefit within Oxfordshire, as long as the applicant fulfils the necessary criteria and conditions that appear later in this document.

The aim of the fund is to provide scale-up SMEs with revenue grants to enable them to access finance, where they may have found traditional methods difficult in the past. The fund will also provide social enterprise SMEs with revenue grants designed to assist SMEs to implement business process improvements or supply chain interventions and business development activities in order to create jobs and growth.

The fund has now been expanded to offer additional support to all SME's during COVID-19, as such the fund will also provide start-up and growth businesses with revenue grants designed to assist SMEs to implement business development, investment start-up and growth projects in order to create jobs and growth.

It is mandatory to have engaged with a member of the eScalate team to discuss your application prior to its submission in order to be deemed eligible.

This can be in the form of a one to one meeting (in person or by phone) with the eScalate Advisor, or a full discussion with the eScalate programme team.

The eScalate team is on hand to provide support and guidance throughout the process on eligibility, procurement and any other issues, but will not be able to write your application for you. To receive an application please contact the eScalate team on business@oxfordshirelep.com

Grants are funded through European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) program and will be allocated via a competitive grant competition at various dates across the length of the program, unless funding has been fully committed prior to that date.

Please note that this is a competitive grant competition and that submitting an application does not guarantee the awarding of funds

The grants are run on a rolling programme, and applications can be submitted at any time. We aim to review applications twice monthly, based on a cut-off date at midday on the first and third Fridays of the month. Applications received after that will be

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held and considered after the next cut-off date. We aim to let applicants know within 21 days of the cut-off date on whether or not their application has been successful. You will be advised as early as possible if there is likely to be a delay.

Timetable for applications:

Cut-off date	Notified by
16th October 2020, 12 midday	6th November 2020
6th November 2020, 12 midday	27th November 2020
20th November 2020, 12 midday	11th December 2020
4th December 2020, 12 midday	18th December 2020
8th January 2021, 12 midday	29th January 2021
22nd January 2021, 12 midday	12th February 2021

Please contact the eScalate team on 01865 897 181 or business@oxfordshirelep.com with queries or for more information.

2. What's available
Revenue grants of at least £1,000 are available for SMEs.

Applications must be matched on a 1:1 basis.

For example: in order to receive a grant of £1,000 you would need to spend a total of £2,000 excluding VAT.

Applications may be viewed more favourably if they offer the following outcomes:

- Introduction of new to firm products
- Employment increase in the applicant enterprise

Applicants should only offer these outcomes where they are possible and realistic.

Revenue expenditure can include assets up to a value of £4,999 each (mobile assets) which are still classed as revenue items. Any items above £1,000 will need to be entered onto the eScalate project asset register and details such as their serial number, value, depreciation, etc., will need to be provided. These mobile assets cannot be disposed of until they have depreciated and must be used for the purpose for which they were purchased up to that point. Assets above £5,000 are fixed assets and are not revenue costs. Applications consisting solely of assets are strongly discouraged and are unlikely to be recommended for funding by the selection panel.

Please note that evidence of match funding will need to be included with the application. Grant projects will be paid in arrears, so applicants must be comfortable

that they can cash flow the project pending reimbursement. We will accept two claims from grant projects lasting more than five months. No more than one claim per quarter can be made. There is no set length for eScalate Grant projects. However, we anticipate that most projects will be complete within six months of the grant award and all activity, expenditure should be achieved, reported and evidenced by December 2021

If you believe your project will last longer than six months, please contact the eScalate team prior to submitting your application to discuss.

All eScalate grants are awarded on the basis of *De Minimis* State Aid and are subject to your *De Minimis* limit not being exceeded. If a company has already received €200,000 of State Aid within a three-year fiscal period, it is ineligible to receive further financial support within that three-year period.

There is no upper limit for grants, however we consider it unlikely that any grants will exceed £25,000. In any case, the *De Minimis* State Aid thresholds described above must be complied with.

3. Eligibility
Eligible projects - Examples of what the grant **CAN** support for SME's

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Revenue projects

Specialist consultancy and support related to:

Access to finance consultancy

- Preparation for access to finance sector focused events
- Analysis of potential financing routes for businesses
- Investment readiness reviews and action plans
- Accountancy advice incl. SEIS, EIS to help access finance

Specialist consultancy to help get business investment ready

- Business plan
- Feasibility study
- Market research
- Competitor analysis
- Partners and suppliers research
- Viable growth-forecasts and research
- Robust cash-flow projections
- Legal Advice incl. company structure, employment law, GDPR, IP
- Coaching/mentoring support to build an investment ready leadership team

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Specialist consultancy, projects and / or support related to:

Increasing sales
- Consultancy/design of a new website;
- Website search engine optimisation;
- Business strategy to improve sales and commercial performance;
- Company branding, logo design and marketing collateral, including brochures, leaflets, etc.
- Market research and data management, including purchase of CRM database;
- Fit-out costs for vehicles and showrooms to increase sales potential and product range.

Improving productivity and profitability
- New software or hardware to speed up productivity and performance, e.g. CRM systems and accounting packages;
- Purchase of equipment aimed at improving productivity.

Improving business processes
- Software that will improve business processes, e.g. CRM systems, accounting packages, business planning packages and operational software specific to an industry.

Creating jobs

- Advertising for hard-to-fill posts;
- Costs associated with working with a specialist recruitment consultant;
- Psychometric profiling and recruitment software.

Ineligible projects

Examples of what the grant **CANNOT** support:
- VAT payments;
- Paying off debts or refinancing;
- Purchase of land or buildings or financial investments;
- Repairs to equipment or buildings;
- Preventative and remedial maintenance of assets or equipment;
- Training, including in the use of assets and equipment;
- Purchasing of vehicles
- Salaries, travel or subsistence;
- Any statutory or legislative obligations, duties or requirements

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- Hire purchases and/or asset finance arrangements;
- Routine expenditure relating to new employees (e.g. office furniture, ICT and training);
- "Like-for-like" replacement of obsolete equipment with little or no added value

- The grant cannot support the purchase of fixed assets or equipment (i.e. items costing over £4,999); assets above £5,000 are fixed assets and are not revenue costs.

Ineligible sectors

A number of sectors are ineligible for grant support under *De Minimis*. These are:
- **Fishery and** aquaculture sectors
- Primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products
- Road Freight
- Services of general economic interest
- Export related activities **and activities favouring domestic over imported goods**

A number of additional sectors are ineligible for grant support under ERDF. These are:
- Coal, steel and shipbuilding sectors
- The synthetic fibres sector
- Generalised (school age) education
- Banking and insurance companies
- Retail businesses (ineligible for capital expenditure only)
- Social Care Services & Social Welfare (hospitals, housing associations, sports facilities)
- Child-minding facilities

4. VAT

<u>VAT is potentially an eligible cost for eScalate grant projects, however, this will vary on a case by case basis and OxLEP cannot give VAT advice to applicants.</u>

Your total project costs can include VAT if you are not VAT registered or if you are unable to recover VAT from HMRC; however if you are VAT registered and can recover VAT from HMRC, you will not be able to also recover the VAT through the grant.

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We recommend that you seek VAT advice if you are unsure of the treatment of VAT in your grant application as it is your responsibility to ensure VAT is treated correctly. when drafting your application.. Incorrect VAT treatment could lead to penalties from HMRC and you having to repay the VAT element of the grant that should not have been claimed.

<u>If you do not include eligible VAT at the time of applying, the grant will be awarded based on net costs and VAT cannot be claimed</u>.

5. Procurement

Please read this question carefully

A condition of ERDF is that you are required to demonstrate you are procuring products or services in line with EU Procurement regulations as follows:

- **For individual** purchases/procurement activities of up to £24,999 (total value excluding VAT), you must provide 3 written quotations per individual item to be purchased. You are not obliged to accept the lowest quotation received, but a written explanation of the rationale behind any such decision will be required which demonstrates the supplier's experience and/or value for money.

- For smaller or generic goods/services, it is acceptable to use print-outs from websites. Please complete the Procurements table in Section D: Planned Expenditure in the application form with the details of any quotations obtained.

- For goods and services costing over £25,000 (total value excluding VAT), you must undertake an open procurement exercise and provide evidence to demonstrate that you have done so. This would include a specification document, open advertisement of the opportunity (e.g. through Contracts Finder) and evidence of scoring and selection process. We would advise grant applicants to avoid goods and services costing £25,000 or more each, however if you want to include them and are in any doubt about how to meet these **requirements, you must speak to the eScalate team.**

The evidence that you need to provide for all procurement is:
- Copies of all quotations/screen shots or copies of the advertised procurement opportunities you have published on the portal(s) (such as Contract Finder), together with details of the assessment criteria used for each purchase and how you selected the winning bidder based on these criteria (e.g. scoresheet).
- Quotations/screenshots must be clearly identifiable to the supplier and include the supplier name, a date, price per item to be purchased/procured, if the

amount is inclusive or exclusive of VAT and (where possible) the supplier letterhead/logo.

If you cannot demonstrate that you have assessed the quotations or tenders received in accordance with EU Procurement regulations as outlined above, we will not be able to consider your grant application.

We do not anticipate that any individual procurement under an eScalate Grant project will exceed £24,999. If you think that one might, you **MUST** contact the eScalate team prior to submitting your application.

We STRONGLY advise you to speak with a member of the eScalate team for help in completing this section.

6. Decision-making process

The grants are run on a rolling programme, and applications can be submitted at any time. We aim to review applications twice monthly, based on a cut-off date at **midday on the first and third Fridays of the month**. Late applications will be held and considered after the next cut-off date. We aim to let applicants know within 21 days of the cut-off date on whether or not the application has been successful. Applicants will be advised as early as possible if there is likely to be a delay.

As soon as your application is received the eScalate team will send an email to confirm this.

> Please note that in the current exceptional circumstances (COVID-19) we can accept **email applications only** together with any supporting documentation. Applicants are asked to retain a hard copy to provide to OxLEP on a later date when asked to do so by the eScalate team.

All applications will be submitted to the eScalate grant review panel for assessment. The panel will assess grant applications against the grant criteria and the other applicants.

Membership of the grant review panel is drawn from across the business support architecture of Oxfordshire. Membership is kept confidential to avoid the risk of applicants attempting to contact the members to influence their decision, either before or after a panel meeting. Any applicant found to have attempted to unduly influence a panel member by contacting them to discuss an application will be disqualified from the process. It is crucial to ensure that grants are given in a fair and transparent way and that no applicant has an advantage over any other.

The final grant award decision is made by a senior member of the eScalate team, based on the panel's recommendations. This decision is final.

We aim to ensure that applicants will receive email confirmation of the decision from the eScalate team within 21 days of the cut-off date by which we had received your application. You will be advised as early as possible if there is likely to be a delay. If successful, you will be invited to attend a meeting with the eScalate team within two weeks of this confirmation to discuss your grant offer and answer any additional questions you may have.

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We will not issue a formal Grant Offer Letter until this meeting has taken place. **Any expenditure incurred before receipt of the formal offer letter is deemed to be ineligible expenditure for grant assistance**.

The eScalate Grants have limited availability and applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria:
- Eligible to receive ERDF grant as an SME?
- Compliant with De Minimis rules?
- Compliant with procurement rules?
- Proposing a revenue project related to access to finance or investment readiness?
- Has not already received a grant under this programme?

Scoring criteria:

Assessment criteria
Quality of application – is the business idea clear and well structured? Does the application give enough detail to understand the proposed grant project?
Viability – are the business idea and grant project viable? Does the application demonstrate that the project can be delivered and will achieve its ends?
Sustainability - to what extent is the business idea sustainable? To what extent will the proposed grant project contribute to the ongoing survival and growth of the business?
Jobs potential - to what extent does the proposed project deliver against the required targets for jobs created?
Growth potential – to what extent does the proposed project deliver against the required targets for new products?
For enterprises for social good ONLY - *the positive social and environmental impacts that will result from the funding if successful*
For scale up ONLY - *how this grant project will help you to become investment ready or access finance*

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7. Nature of grant offer

The grant cannot contribute to projects that are already underway. Any grant offer will be invalid if work commences prior to the date of the eScalate grant offer letter and retrospective grant applications are not permitted.

An offer of an eScalate grant is time limited and will expire 14 days after the date the Grant Offer Letter is issued. Although the eScalate team will endeavour to follow up Grant Offer Letter which have not been returned by applicants, it is your responsibility to ensure that the Grant Offer Letter is signed and returned to the eScalate team within the deadline.

If you are able to do so please sign and scan your Grant Offer Letter for email, however if you do not have access to a scanner, an e-signature or typed signature is acceptable with a statement confirming your authority to sign on the company's behalf.

Signed letters must be received by email within 14 days of the Grant Offer Letter issue date.

Please note that in the current exceptional circumstances (COVID-19) we can accept returned Grant Offer Letters **by email only**. Applicants are asked to retain a hard copy to provide to OxLEP on a later date when contacted to do so by the eScalate team.

8. Making your grant claim

Any grant that is approved is only for the purpose stated in the grant offer letter.

Should the circumstances on which a grant application was based change, you must contact the eScalate team to discuss before committing to making any payments. This may include, but is not limited to, a change of expected completion date, change of supplier, change to the project value, expected project outcomes, or cancellation of the project. If you are in any doubt, please contact the eScalate team to discuss.

Grants should be claimed in line with the dates set out in Section D: Planned Expenditure – 'Spend Profile' with your application form and no more frequently than at quarterly milestones. Please contact the eScalate team at the earliest opportunity if your project is delayed and you are unlikely to claim within the timescale of the grant offer. All extensions to grant claims will need to be agreed by the eScalate team and it must not be assumed that funds will be available if the deadline is missed.

For all expenditure on your project (regardless of whether this is grant or match funding) you will need to meet the ERDF audit trail requirements including evidence of defrayal (monies leaving your bank account).

Please note that staff costs cannot be included in your application.

For other expenditure:

- Invoices/receipts

- Evidence of defrayal of expenditure

To claim the grant, you must provide the eScalate team with a signed Claim Form (which we will provide with your Grant Offer Letter), along with evidence of defrayal of the costs. This would include a copy of any supplier invoice(s) and proof of payment, namely a redacted business bank statement showing the relevant payment(s). If a credit card has been used, the minimum payment paid, must be <u>at least the value</u> of the item being claimed and we need to see evidence of this via bank statement etc. Payment of supplier invoices <u>cannot be</u> made by cash or contra arrangements.

All bank statements and payment evidence will need to be signed, dated and labelled with the statement:

''**<u>All documents are true copies of originals'</u>.**

If you are unable to sign and scan your certified documents, electronic copies are acceptable in the current circumstances (COVID-19) together with a statement confirming your authority to certify documents on the company's behalf.

SMEs must retain a certified copy of the original invoice for the procured services and goods. Certification occurs when the SME stamp the invoice with the above statement and sign. This evidence will be required for future possible audit purpose.

If you cannot provide this evidence, we will not be able to process your grant claim.

Funding **cannot be** awarded as retrospective payment for goods or services procured **before** a formal offer of grant has been received and accepted.

You should submit your grant claim to the eScalate team as soon as possible, however please note that claims received by the 10th will be paid at the end of the month, subject to compliance checks.

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Your grant claim is time limited, and you will only be able to reclaim your grant within 30 days of the grant claim date that you specify in your application and which is set out in the Grant Offer Letter. Any extension to the grant claim date must be agreed with the eScalate team in advance. Although the eScalate team will endeavour to follow up a grant claim which has not been submitted, it is your responsibility to ensure that the grant claim is returned to the eScalate team within the deadline.

9. Impact Deliverables

In Section C: Costs and Deliverables of the grant application form, you will need to provide details of any Impact Deliverables (i.e. new products to the firm, or employment increase) to be achieved. Once you have claimed your grant, eScalate will provide you with 'Form eScalate-04B Impact Declaration' which you must use to confirm the details of the impacts achieved. A member of the eScalate team will follow up with you if you have indicated that you will be able to achieve an impact deliverable from the support of the grant.

As you will see from the scoring matrix, applications which offer impact deliverables will score more highly than those which do not. However, you must ensure that any deliverables promised are realistic as these are commitments not aspirations and we reserve the <u>right to</u> claim the grant funding back from you if you do not achieve the impact deliverables.
If you experience difficulties in creating the impact deliverables as outlined in the Grant Offer Letter, please contact us at your earliest convenience so that we can understand and discuss the options in relation to the grant payment. Please note that we reserve the right to claim the grant funding back from you if you do not achieve the impact deliverables.

If you experience difficulties in creating the impact deliverables as outlined in the Grant Offer Letter, please contact us at your earliest convenience so that we can understand and discuss the options in relation to the grant payment. Please note that we reserve the right to claim the grant funding back from you if you do not achieve the impact deliverables.

New to firm products

A new to the firm product that you develop, as a result of your support from eScalate, and introduce to your business.

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The indicator measures if an enterprise is supported to develop a "new to the firm" product, including:

- Product - when it is either at pre-launch or launched to the market
- Process - when it has been introduced into the business
- Service - when it has been introduced to the business

Multiple products can be reported as a result of one grant if you introduce several products. If you are in any doubt, please contact a member of the eScalate team.

A product is new to the firm if you did not produce a product with the same functionality or the production technology is fundamentally different from the technology of already produced products. Products can be tangible or intangible (including services).

Please note that you will be asked to provide a self-declaration to confirm the product/process or service is new. Evidence might include the date a new or improved process became operational or the date the new product or service was launched from market information or marketing literature. If product has not progressed to market, the enterprise should provide information on the status of the product.

Employment Increase

A new full time equivalent (FTE) job that you create as a result of your support from eScalate.

The job(s):

- must have been created as a result of the activity supported by the grant
- cannot have been in place before the grant was awarded
- should have an intended life expectancy of at least 12 months and be for at least 36 hours per week

Please note that you will be asked to provide a copy of the contract of employment demonstrating these criteria for audit purposes.

You will also need to provide basic information about the gender, age, disability status and ethnicity of the job holder on the 'Form eScalate-04B Impact Declaration. This information will be treated in strict confidence.

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10. Capital Grant Asset Register

If you purchase any capital item (i.e. an item costing more than £1,000), your purchase(s) will be entered onto a Project Asset Register that is held by OxLEP. We may visit your premises to verify the purchase(s) and record identification details.

These mobile assets cannot be disposed of until they have depreciated and must be used for the purpose for which they were purchased up to that point.

Please be aware that if you dispose of the item(s) within 3 years of purchase, OxLEP reserves the right to reclaim a proportion of the grant.

The detailed information that will be recorded on the Project Asset Register is:

- Asset name and description;
- Serial or identification number;
- Location of the asset (including grid reference);
- Purchase price (£) (net recoverable VAT);
- Date of acquisition;
- Approved Use of Asset;
- Legal Registered Owner of Asset;
- Location of the ownership record(s);
- Method of Depreciation;
- Date of Depreciation.

11. Further Information

Applications must be made on the official eScalate grant application form. There is a **separate guidance document** for Scale Ups and Social Enterprises – please ensure you are referring to the relevant one to your business.

In line with EU State Aid regulations, you must sign a De Minimis State Aid Declaration covering the last 3 years. This will need to include all previous aid received from all sources. If in doubt, please talk to an appropriate member of your organisation to check the De Minimis State Aid your company has received to date before submitting your application form. This may take the form of other grants or business support received in the past.

You should have already completed a De Minimis State Aid Form as part of your initial eScalate application form. If there are any changes since then please request another form.

You must inform us if you receive other public funding towards your project as this will have an impact on the level of grant funding that we can offer.

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OxLEP reserves the right to visit you to ensure the grant has been used for the purpose it was intended as stated in the application form and to inspect records to show costs have been incurred by you.

Your grant activity may also be subject to auditors from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ERDF and the European Court of Auditors.

12. Notes to assist with completing the Grant Application Form

All applications **must be completed electronically and sent by email with supporting documentation to the eScalate team at business@oxfordshirelep.com.**
We aim to review applications twice monthly, based on a cut-off date at **midday on the first and third Fridays of the month**. Late applications will be held and considered after the next cut-off date. We aim to let applicants know within 21 days of the cut-off date whether or not their application has been successful. You will be advised as early as possible if there is likely to be a delay.

As soon as your application is received the eScalate team will send an e-mail to confirm that the documentation has been received.

Please note that in the current exceptional circumstances (COVID-19) we can accept email applications only together with any supporting documentation. Applicants are asked to retain a hard copy to provide to OxLEP on a later date when contacted to do so by the eScalate team.

Key Information: Please provide basic information about you and your company.

Executive Summary: Please provide a brief overview of the contents of your eScalate Grant Application which highlights key points in your application.

Public Summary: Please provide a description of your proposed project in laymen's terms. This will facilitate the application review process for assessors and panel members who are not experts in your field. The description of your proposed project could be published in the public domain and used for marketing purposes.

Section B:

This section is where you can describe your grant project. There are specific questions to answer:

a) an explanation of your business or business idea
b) For applications under the enterprises for social good route only - the positive social and environmental impacts that makes your business purposeful and

the positive social and environmental impacts that will result from the funding if successful.

c) For applications under the scale up route only – how this grant project will help you to become investment ready or access finance

d) a brief history of your business or business idea to date (explaining whether you are a new or existing enterprise. (*New defines as registered with Companies House less than 12 months **or** branches locating to England for the first time)

e) a description of your proposed grant spend / how you intend to use the grant money

f) how it will help your business grow

g) how any jobs will be created as a result of the grant

h) whether the investment will result in you introducing products or services that are new to the business itself (must involve product development)

Tell us about your business idea, the history and your aims and aspirations for the future. Include any key challenges that you have /need and any market research you have conducted. Provide us with an overview of the project that you are planning and how the grant would help your business to grow. This might include viability, sustainability, future growth, increased skills or labour force, new areas of investment or research activity.

Please quantify the results wherever possible, for example, an estimated % increase in sales, if you are introducing new products, will hire staff, improvements in profitability or productivity or anticipated annual cost savings. Also, list any other benefits and if you wish to receive further support through the programme.

Be concise but clear as there is a 3,000-word limit. Communicate what you intend to use the grant funding for i.e. "to purchase marketing consultancy" would be deemed insufficient detail for the grant panel to seriously consider. A much better response would be to include details of how the consultancy will contribute to business growth, why you need it, how it will be used in the business and how it may complement other activities that you are already conducting.

> **Important information for enterprises for social good:**
>
> You need to clearly describe the commitment your business has to social or environmental purposes. If the panel do not have enough information and decide not to progress your application the decision is final. Please provide enough evidence of your commitment to positive social and/or environmental impact. For example, is your social purpose embedded in your articles of association? Are you working towards relevant accreditation such as B Corporation status, or do you provide products or services that enable positive social or environmental change? If you are in doubt whether you fit the programme, or how to describe your commitment we strongly advise you to book an appointment with the Enterprise Support Manager on the number above.

Section C: Costs and Deliverables

C1: Please provide the estimated cost of the project to which the grant will contribute (excluding VAT). Please ensure that you follow the European Union procurement requirements set out in Section 4 of the above Guidance Notes. State the value of the grant you are applying for. Grant applications should be 50% of total eligible expenditure.

C2: If you are not VAT registered or are unable to recover the VAT from HMRC, you can claim VAT back. Please include VAT in the spend profile and note "INC VAT". Grants cannot be increased following award to take into account VAT.

C3: Please state the value of the grant you are applying for

C4: Please state the percentage of the total project costs that the grant you are requesting represents. This must be at 50% of total project costs.

C5: Please state the date on which the project is due for completion.

C6: Please confirm that you have provided evidence of the match funding needed for the project, i.e. covering the non-grant element of the total project costs.

C7a: Please confirm whether you have explored any alternative sources of funding other than an eScalate grant.

C7b: If you have then please explain what these were.

Please tell us about any jobs that you intend to create as a result of this project. If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these jobs have been created. We will also ask you to provide some basic equality and diversity data about the post holders once the jobs have been created. This data will be treated as strictly confidential and submitted anonymously to the government for the project for monitoring purposes. The definition of a job is a role that is at least 36 hours per week for a minimum of 12 months. FTE jobs can be accepted (i.e. part-time jobs that add up to at least 36 hours per week can be counted). Part-time jobs

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should be reported on a pro rata basis, based on 36 hours per week full time. Jobs are created as a result of the grant project and do not include freelancers, subcontractors or volunteers.

Please tell us about any new products / services that you intend to introduce to your firm as a result of this project. If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these products / services have been introduced.

You must provide a copy of your business plan and financial forecasts to support your business idea/creation. You will also need to provide a copy of your most recent full-year profit and loss accounts and balance sheet. Please confirm the main point of contact for the application

Section D: Planned Expenditure

A condition of the ERDF grant is that you are required to demonstrate that you have procured the product or service for which the grant is being sought in line with EU Procurement regulations, as described in section 5 (above).

If you cannot demonstrate that you have procured the product or service for which the grant is being sought in line with EU Procurement regulations as outlined above, we will not be able to consider your grant application.

Please set out the spend profile for your grant claims, setting out the anticipated claim date, the progress you will have achieved by the point of claim, the total costs for that claim and the grant claimed.

We do not anticipate that any individual procurement under an eScalate Grant project will exceed £24,999. If you think that one might, you <u>MUST</u> contact the eScalate team prior to submitting your application.

We *STRONGLY* advise you to speak with a member of the eScalate team for help in completing this section.
Please set out the spend profile for your grant claims, setting out the anticipated claim date, the progress you will have achieved by the point of claim, the total costs for that claim and the grant claimed. A single grant claim is strongly preferred at the end of your project however multiple claims (maximum one claim per quarter) are acceptable should this be required.

Section E: Declarations

You should have already completed a *De Minimis* State Aid Form as part of your initial eScalate application form. If you have applied for or had approved any aid since your eScalate application form, you must contact the eScalate team and provide updated information to ensure that you can still qualify for a grant. Please

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contact the eScalate team with any queries on how to complete this section of your form.

By answering yes to the questions in this section you are signing to confirm that the following elements are unchanged from your initial eScalate application form:

- **SME** status
- De Minimis State Aid position (excluding any aid awarded or received by the eScalate project)
- Undertaking in Difficulty test status (i.e. that you continue not to be an undertaking **in difficulty)**

13. Submission

When you have signed the application form this must be submitted to the eScalate team by email together with your **business plan, cash flow/financial forecast, last full-year profit and loss accounts, balance sheet and supplier quotations/evidence of tendering and evidence of match funding**.

Applications should be submitted by email with supporting documentation to the eScalate team at business@oxfordshirelep.com. Applications can be submitted at any time. We aim to review applications twice monthly, based on a cut-off date at **midday on the first and third Fridays of the month**. Late applications will be held and considered two weeks later. We aim to let applicants know within 21 days of the cut-off date on whether or not their application has been successful. You will be advised as early as possible if there is likely to be a delay.

Applications should be signed and then scanned if you are able to do so, or if you do not have access to a scanner, an e-signature or typed signature is acceptable with a statement confirming your authority to sign on the company's behalf.

Whilst we are not specific as to the form of your business plan we do require enough detail to enable us to assess your project and application. For guidance on a summary business plan template see: http://oxonbe.co.uk/resources/

You will be expected to:

- Provide all evidence required to process and verify the grant application
- Provide all evidence as set out on the Form eScalate-04B Impact Declaration, which will ask details of jobs created and outcomes as a result of the funding
- Co-operate, if requested, with eScalate to promote and publicise success stories in the form of press releases, case studies, Freedom of Information Act requests or other communications unless there are clear reasons not to (for example, confidentiality around commercial issues, intellectual property or patents etc.)
- Participate in any evaluation activities by eScalate, the funding body and the external evaluator

14. Contact Us

Please send any supporting documentation, such as copies of quotations, your accounts or current business plan and procurement evidence, to the email address below. If you have any queries, please contact the eScalate team on 01865 897181 or email business@oxfordshirelep.com

Building a robust business community in Oxford

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