



Application Guidance Notes – Export Grants Fund

FUND AIMS

The Export Grants Funds is targeted at SME businesses based in the borough of Telford and Wrekin. This grant fund is being used to encourage business growth by seeking to support eligible investment projects with grant funding that enable businesses to:

- Become more aware of the opportunities presented by trading in overseas markets
- Address barriers to trading internationally
- Raise awareness of export support that is offered via the Department for Business and Trade
- Enhance international trade capabilities
- Increase the value of goods and services exported

SUPPORT PROVIDED

The grant programme will providing 100% funded grant up to a maximum grant award of £3,000 for eligible export related projects which aim to increase the applicants “export-readiness”.

The fund will do this by looking to support business activity in the following areas:

- Market research
- Consultancy on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Translation / Cultural Advice
- Social Media and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Participation in trade shows
- Market development
- Routes to market
- Coaching and mentoring or meeting any training or upskilling requirements needed for a business to begin or recommence exporting
- Access to professional support – exploring use of and/or piloting freight forwarding etc.
- Production of an export strategy
- Undertaking research into an overseas markets
- Actively preparing a product or service for export.

For example:

- Company A may seek to purchase a translation services for their website that would enable them to have their website fully translated into German at a cost of £6,000. Company A would be able to apply to the Export Grants Fund for a maximum grant of £3,000 towards the cost of this service. Company A would then have to cover the additional £3,000 from their own financial resources.
- Company B may seek to procure specialist 3rd party services for the creation of an export strategy, this may cost £2,800. Company B would then apply to the Export Grants Fund for a maximum grant of £2,800 to support this activity.

Retrospective projects are not eligible, nor items purchased prior to any grant approval.

The fund will work upon a defrayal basis whereby once the grant is approved, and the grant offer letter returned, applicants will need to purchase the goods or service, evidence the purchase, and evidence the delivery. It is at this point businesses will be able to draw down their grant funding allocation. Grant payments **will not** be paid up front.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- The business must be based within Telford and Wrekin
 - For clarification on where your business is located, please input your post code into the following link - <https://www.gov.uk/pay-council-tax>.
- The business must be trading for a minimum of 12 months at the point of a full application submission.
- An SME business – This is defined as a business with less than 250 employees, and an annual turnover not exceeding £36m. and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding £18m

Priority funding will be allocated to applicants who can financially complete their project by March 2024.

All businesses of both B2B and B2C classification are eligible to apply, but priority sectors we are seeking to support are:

- Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Digital
- Professional or other office services
- Logistics and Distribution
- Wholesale
- Construction
- Environmental

Note for all B2C business: Businesses who primarily trade B2C are able to apply, however all B2C businesses need to be able to clearly demonstrate a clear market opportunity they are expecting to exploit if they are successful.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

All eligible project must meet one or more of the following objectives that the Telford Export Grants Fund is attempting to support. We are seeking to support projects that directly enable businesses to:

All proposed projects must meet one or more of the following objectives that the Large Grant Fund is attempting to support. We are seeking to support projects that directly enable businesses to:

- Create new additional permanent FTE and/or PTE posts within the company:
 - All jobs must be in place by February 2025. Priority will be given to applicants who can create the post/s within 12 months
 - New means it should not have existed with the employer before the award of the grant application.
 - Permanent means it is in place for at least 12 months from the point at which it is created
 - For clarification the creation of zero hour contract employees, or subcontractor posts does not count as job creation. However, the conversion of zero hour posts or subcontract post to FTE post is an eligible output



- Safeguard Jobs as a result of support:
 - A safeguarded job is a permanent and paid job that was at risk prior to support being provided, which the support helped the business to retain. This includes sole traders and business owners
 - This includes both part-time and full-time jobs
 - At risk is defined as being forecast to be lost within 6 months
- Increase export capabilities by supporting businesses to engaged in new or enhanced export-readiness activities.
 - New means activity that was not undertaken prior to the grant support.
 - Enhanced means additional activity to deepen or widen activity already underway.

The overall number of objectives that can be supported by each project will be considered when assessing all applications. Applicants who can clearly demonstrate a project that meets all objectives highlighted above will score higher in appraisal. Applicants should consider the level of grant funding needed to complete their project when submitting a project proposal. If there are a high number of competitive projects, successful applicants may be offered a reduced amount of grant funding in an attempt to support as many viable projects as possible.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

All applicants will be required to evidence baseline information relating to the objectives and the proposed impact of their project. This means outlining:

- Current FTE/PTE count
- Current none-UK market activity

Once the project has been completed applicants will be required to submit post-intervention data demonstrating growth within their chosen objective/s.

For example:

- Company C may outline in their application that they currently employ 3 FTE's. This information would be recorded as baseline, pre-intervention data. Company C would evidence this by supplying HR/Payroll information. Company C may then highlight through the support of the Export Grants Fund they will be able to increase their FTE count to 4 FTE's once the project has been completed. This would demonstrate a +1 growth in FTE count. Company C would then be required to evidence the +1 growth in FTE count, this would be done through the submission of contracts of employment, and update HR/Payroll information.
- Company D may outline in their application that currently do not export to Germany. This information would be recorded as baseline, pre-intervention data. Company D would evidence this by supplying sales information. Company D may then highlight through the support of the Export Grants Fund they would look to attend a trade show in Germany to increase their market exposure. The attendance of this event would demonstrate engagement in a new market through export-readiness activity. Company D would then evidence the attendance at the trade show.



- Company E may outline in their application that they currently export to The Netherlands. This information would be recorded as baseline, pre-intervention data. Company E would evidence this by supplying sales information. Company E may then highlight through the development of an established marketing strategy, or increased PR activities in The Netherlands they would be able to enhance their activity within an existing market. This project would demonstrate additional activity to deepen or wider activity already underway. Company E would then evidence this activity.
- Company F may outline in their application that they currently have 2 FTE positions at risk. This information would be recorded as baseline, pre-intervention data. Company F would be required to clearly outline what posts were at risk, why these post were at risk, and submit evidence to prove these post were at risk. Company F may then highlight through the support of the Export Grants Fund they would be able to secure these 2 posts by securing new export contracts, through a targeted marketing campaign. This project would demonstrate 2 post's being safeguarded.

The examples are not exhaustive, we expect businesses to develop a project to support their growth and development that aligns with the fund objectives. For this reason all applicants are required to discuss their project with the Invest Telford team.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications will be required to go through a three stage process to evaluate project viability against the fund criteria.

All forms must be completed online. We will not accept paper copies of applications.

- Stage 1: Submission of the Export Grants Fund Expression of Interest (EOI) form.
 - All applicants will be required to submit an EOI form to register an interest for the fund.
 - At this point applicants will need to provide information regarding:
 - Applicant details
 - Details of the proposed project and value
 - Details regarding which fund objective/s you will achieve
 - Information regarding previous funding allocations
 - From this point all EOI forms will be assessed against eligibility criteria, scheme requirements, and fund objectives.
 - Once your EOI is reviewed, applicants will be notified if they are eligible to proceed to Stage 2, or that they have been unsuccessful at this time.
- Stage 2: If you EOI is approved, you will be invited to discuss your project in full with a member of the Invest Telford team.
 - The purpose of the meeting is to scope out the project in full, build upon the information provided in the EOI form, and to make sure the proposed project aligns with the fund objectives.
 - Applicants will be unable to submit a full application until they have fully discussed the project with the Invest Telford team.
 - This is also a stage for applicants to discuss the project in more detail with the team, ask any questions, and discuss additional support options which can be provided by the Invest Telford Team.



- Once the project is fully scoped out, applicants will be provided with full submission details.
 - Please be aware that project scoping may take more than one meeting.
 - Meetings can be arranged face to face, or over Microsoft Teams.
 - Whilst the use of 3rd party consultants to complete the application form is allowed it is an ineligible grant claim cost. We will not discuss any project without a representative of the applying business present.
- Stage 3: Applicants will be invited to submit a full application.
 - We will provide applicants with a unique link to complete their application form

FULL APPLICATION INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE INFORMATION

The application is broken down into eight sections. The application form will save your details as you go, so you do not need to complete the form in one sitting. To save applicants time, we would suggest that all applicants gather the information needed below, and type up their responses in a blank word document before proceeding with the form so that they can copy and paste their information into the online form in one session.

When submitting a full application, businesses will be required to provide all of the following information.

Section 1) Applicant and Business Contact Details

Requirement	Guidance
Business Contact details	Business name, business address and post code, company registration number / Unique Tax reference number, VAT (if applicable), SIC code
Applicant Contact details	Applicant name, surname, position in business, relevant contact details, company website (if applicable)

Section 2) Business Information and Background

Requirement	Guidance
○ What type of legal entity are you?	Choose from drop down list: Sole Trader, Partnership, Limited, Partnership, CIC, LLC, Other
○ Main business activity	Outline the primary service your business undertakes (25 words max)
○ When did you begin trading?	Date trading commenced
○ Employee count Full time	As described
○ Employee count Part time	As described (if applicable)
○ Number of current apprentices	As described (if applicable)
○ Number of zero hour, agency, or subcontractors employed.	As described (if applicable)
○ Turnover for last accounting year	Turnover for last full year. Please do not include forecasts.



Provide a brief history and overview of the business	Outline a history of the business since it began trading, up to now (50 words minimum - 200 words max)
What type of work do you undertake	Outline the type of work the business undertakes / sells or the service it provides (50 words minimum – 300 words max)
Provide details of your current markets	What sectors do you sell to, where possible list some customers. Where are your customers based What percentage of your turnover is generated through export (if applicable) (50 words minimum – 300 words max)

Section 3 – Project and Impact

Requirement	Guidance
Do you currently export?	Yes or No
If yes – please provide a short overview of what you currently export, and to which markets.	As described
If yes - What is the value of your current export?	£
If yes - Roughly what percentage of turnover is associated with export?	%
What will the grant assistance be used to purchase?	As described
How many jobs will be created as a result of the grant	Insert numerical answer
How many jobs will be safeguarded as a result of the grant	Insert numerical answer
What new markets will you be able to expand into or engage with and how? Summarise impacts and forecast value of exports etc.	Applicants are required to highlight their current markets and the new markets that they will be able to expand into or engage with. (50 words minimum – 400 words maximum)
Why is grant funding needed to support the delivery of this project?	Why is grant funding needed to support the delivery of this project? (50 words minimum – 400 words maximum)
What are the environmental benefits of this project? And how does it support the UK Net Zero Strategy	Applicants are required to outline the environmental benefits of the project, and how it supports the UK Net Zero Strategy. For more information on the UK Net Zero Strategy
Are there any additional benefits to the business or wider community?	Highlight any additional community or business benefits that this project will generate/support
When will the project start?	As described
When will the project financially complete?	As described

Jobs Created (new row needed for each job)

Position	Skill Level	Hours worked	salary	Expected start date
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	Unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled			
Jobs safeguarded (new row needed for each job)				
Position	Skill Level	Hours worked	salary	Expected redundancy date
	Unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled			

Section 4 – Project Cost

Requirement	Guidance
Expenditure items	Applicants will be required to list all items they are seeking funding against, and the following information: Name / Model number, cost, preferred supplier, reason for choosing supplier.

Section 5: Document upload

This section is an upload section where by applicants will be required to upload the following documents.	
The latest 3 consecutive months of bank statements	Submit full month documents for the latest full three months. All statements must show bank name, business name, account number sort code and account name. Please be aware you may need to request this from your bank. We will not accept bank statements which are hashed out, or with missing details.
Evidence of match funding	This can either be the most recent bank statement, evidence of loan agreements, agreed overdraft facilities, a signed document from a named company directors of the agreed loan amount. Please note we will not support assets purchased on lease, hire purchase or similar financial structures.
Previous year’s annual accounts	This is only applicable for business requesting over £10,000 For businesses requesting £9,999 or less, you do not have to submit this section.
A cash flow forecast for the next 12 months	This is only applicable for business requesting over £10,000.
Quotes in line with the procurement guidance requirements	For reference refer to the procurement guidance notes section.
Additional information may be requested on a per applicant basis	Whilst reviewing all application we may need to occasionally request additional information to support our eligibility check and application assessment. This will be on an ad-hoc basis.



Evidence of existing staff numbers	All applicants are required to submit HR/Payroll information for all current staff employed.
Evidencing of pre-intervention impact, and evidence of post intervention impact	All successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of their pre-intervention data, this will be requested once grants have been awarded. The team will work with you to collate this data, and prepare it as evidence. We will then work with all successful applicants to provide the relevant impact evidence / post intervention data. Please note: We will be collecting this data after the grant has been awarded. Any applicant found to have submitted false data or deliberately misleading information will have their grant allocation, and funding agreement automatically withdrawn regardless of how far along with their project they are. There will be no appeals process. Where it is the case that applicants have already drawn down the funding, we will initiate a clawback procedure. For this reason we encourage all applicants to work with the Invest Telford team.

Section 6: Subsidy Control (formerly State Aid)

Requirement	Guidance
Details of funding from other public bodies	Applicants are required to outline previous fund awards, from which bodies, dates of award, funding mechanism (De-Minimis or GBER) over the past 3 years.

Section 7 – Equalities Monitoring

Applicants are required to complete a table highlighting age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion

Section 8: Declaration

Application are required to read and sign a declaration certifying the information provided.

Retrospective applications will not be supported, and any expenditure made before the issuing of a grant offer letter will be invalid. This will result in Telford & Wrekin Council withdrawing the funding allocation for your project.

PROCUREMENT RULES

All applicants will be required to follow the procurement criteria outlined below:



Total value per item / with one supplier	Procedure	Adverting Required
Under £10,000	Achieve best value through informal quotes	none
Between £10,001 - £177,897 ex VAT (Supplies and Services) and between £10,001 -£50,000 (Works)	<p>X3 quotes required</p> <p>Applicant must advertise the opportunity online for at least 10 days, highlighting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of the opportunity 2. What is required 3. How the successful candidate will be chosen (evaluation criteria) 4. Deadline and details of how to apply <p>Impartially assess each bid against the evaluation criteria and demonstrate justification that a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the quotes/prices</p>	Applicant must advertise the opportunity on the grant recipient’s website for at least 10 days.
Over £177,897 ex VAT (Services and Supplies) and Over £50,000 (Works)	<p>Formal Tender process</p> <p>Competition must be advertised.</p> <p>Detailed specification must be provided and tenders invited from bidders.</p> <p>Applicant must show evaluation criteria and how the winning tender will be selected.</p> <p>The advert needs to incorporate or direct any interested party to the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of the opportunity 2. What is required 3. How the successful candidate will be chosen (evaluation criteria) 4. Deadline and details of how to apply 	Applicant must advertise the opportunity on the grant recipient’s website for at least 35 days



	<p>Impartially assess each bid against the same criteria and demonstrate this through use of a score/evaluation sheet and provide evidence to demonstrate that the winning bidder has been selected on merit – as a minimum this should include the rationale behind the decision to award.</p>	
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Please note the minimum item value that will be accepted per individual item is £500.00. Applicants who are looking to purchase items with a lower individual item threshold of £500.00 per item are advised to discuss this with the Invest Telford team beforehand.

SUBSIDY CONTROL

You will be expected to inform us within your application form of any grants and other support you have received from the public sector over the last 3 financial years.

This scheme is covered by the current [UK Government Subsidy Control Act \(2022\)](#). The total amount of Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) received over a rolling period of three fiscal years should not exceed £315,000 per business.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor the level of MFA received; you will be asked to declare that this has not been exceeded in the event of an offer being made. [* The MFA financial threshold applies at company group level.]

Where applicants do not adequately demonstrate that the proposed project is compliant under the UK Subsidy Control Regime it may be considered ineligible, and your application could be rejected.