



## Application Guidance Notes –Export Grants Fund (PDF)

### EXPORT GRANTS FUND – AIMS

The **Export Grants Fund** is designed to support **SME businesses located in the borough of Telford and Wrekin**. The primary objective of this grant is to stimulate business growth by providing financial assistance for eligible investment projects.

Through this initiative, the fund aims to help businesses:

- **Explore Opportunities in Overseas Markets** Encourage SMEs to become more aware of the benefits and potential of international trade.
- **Overcome Barriers to International Trade** Provide support to address challenges and obstacles associated with exporting.
- **Increase Awareness of Export Support Services** Highlight the resources and guidance available through the **Department for Business and Trade**.
- **Enhance International Trade Capabilities** Strengthen the skills, knowledge, and infrastructure required to succeed in global markets.
- **Boost Export Value** Support efforts to increase the overall value of goods and services exported by local businesses.

### SUPPORT PROVIDED

The **Export Grants Fund** offers **100% funded grants up to £3,000** for eligible export-related projects aimed at improving a business's *export readiness*.

The fund may support activities such as:

- Market research
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) consultancy
- Translation services and cultural advice
- Social media and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Participation in trade shows
- Market development initiatives
- Exploring routes to market
- Coaching, mentoring, and relevant training or upskilling
- Access to professional support (e.g. piloting freight forwarding services)
- Development of an export strategy
- Research into overseas markets
- Preparing a product or service for export

### **Example Scenarios:**

- **Company A:** Purchases website translation services to translate their site into German for £6,000. They can apply for a £3,000 grant and cover the remaining cost themselves.
- **Company B:** Hires a third-party specialist to develop an export strategy costing £2,800. They apply for a grant covering the full amount.

> **Note:** Retrospective projects and purchases made before grant approval are not eligible.



## PAYMENT PROCESS:

The grant is awarded on a **defrayal basis**. After grant approval and submission of the offer letter, the applicant must:

1. Purchase the goods/services
2. Provide evidence of payment and delivery
3. Only then will they receive reimbursement — **no upfront payments are made.**

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet all of the following:

- **Be based in Telford and Wrekin** Use this link to check your location: Council Tax Checker
- **Be actively trading for at least 12 months** at the time of full application submission
- **Be an SME** (under 250 employees, annual turnover ≤ £36 million and/or balance sheet total ≤ £18 million)

## PRIORITY FUNDING:

Preference is given to businesses that can complete their project **financially by December 2025**.

## ELIGIBLE BUSINESS TYPES

Applications are welcomed from both **B2B and B2C** businesses. Priority sectors include:

- Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Digital
- Professional/Office Services
- Logistics and Distribution
- Wholesale
- Construction
- Environmental Services

> **Note for B2C Applicants:** You must clearly demonstrate a market opportunity you intend to pursue with the support of the fund.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

To be eligible, proposed projects must meet **one or more** of the following objectives supported by the **Telford Export Support Scheme**:

### **1. Create New Permanent Employment**

- Projects must create new additional **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** or **Part-Time Equivalent (PTE)** jobs.
- All jobs must be created by **February 2025**, with priority given to those created within 12 months.
- “New” jobs must not have existed prior to the grant award.



- “Permanent” means jobs must be retained for at least 12 months from the date of creation.
- **Zero-hour contracts or subcontractor roles** are not eligible. However, converting these into permanent FTE positions is permitted.

## 2. Increase Export Capabilities

- Projects should support **new** or **enhanced export-readiness** activities:
  - “New” activities have not been undertaken before.
  - “Enhanced” activities build on existing efforts to expand or deepen export readiness.

> Projects that address all three objectives will score higher during the assessment. Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the grant value they request. In cases of high competition, partial awards may be offered to maximise support across viable proposals.

### SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Applicants must supply baseline information, including:

- Current **FTE/PTE staff numbers**
- Current **non-UK market activity**

After project completion, applicants must submit **post-intervention data** showing outcomes against their selected objectives.

### Example Scenarios:

- **Company C:** Has 3 FTEs pre-application. Plans to add 1 FTE through the project. Evidence: HR/payroll records, contract of employment.
- **Company D:** Does not export to Germany. Plans to attend a German trade show. Evidence: Pre- and post-event sales records, proof of event attendance.
- **Company E:** Already exports to the Netherlands. Plans to enhance presence through a marketing campaign. Evidence: Baseline and follow-up sales, marketing activities.
- **Company F:** Has 2 FTE roles at risk. Seeks to retain these via new export contracts. Evidence: Job roles, risk justification, contracts secured through campaign.

> These examples are illustrative. Applicants must tailor their projects to demonstrate alignment with scheme objectives and discuss proposals with the **Invest Telford Team**.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process has **three stages**:

#### Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

- Complete the **online EOI form** (no paper copies accepted).
- Required details:
  - Business and applicant information
  - Project description and funding requirement
  - Alignment with fund objectives
  - History of prior funding



- EOIs will be assessed against eligibility and scheme criteria.
- Applicants will be notified if they are moving to Stage 2 or have been unsuccessful.

## Stage 2: Project Discussion

- Approved EOIs progress to a **project scoping meeting** with Invest Telford.
- Objectives:
  - Deepen understanding of the proposal
  - Ensure alignment with fund goals
  - Provide opportunity for Q&A and identify additional support
- Multiple meetings may be required.
- Can be held in person or via Microsoft Teams.
- Third-party consultants may assist with applications, but **cannot claim associated costs** through the grant.
- A business representative **must be present** for all discussions.

## Stage 3: Full Application Submission

- Eligible applicants receive a **unique link** to submit the full application online.

## FULL APPLICATION INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- The **application form is divided into 10 sections**, and it automatically saves your progress—so you don't need to complete it in one sitting.
- To save time and avoid potential data loss, we recommend that applicants **prepare their responses in a separate Word document** before starting the online form. This allows you to copy and paste your answers directly into the form in one session.
- When submitting your full application, your business will be required to provide **all of the following information**:

### Section 1 – Applicant and Business Contact Details

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Business Details</b>	Provide the business name, address, and postcode. Include the company registration number or Unique Tax Reference (UTR), VAT number (if applicable), and SIC code.
<b>Applicant Contact Details</b>	Enter the applicant's full name, job title/role within the business, contact details (email and phone), and company website (if applicable).

### Section 2 – Business Information and Background

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Type of Business Entity</b>	Select from: Sole Trader, Partnership, Limited Partnership, LLC, Other
<b>Business Sector</b>	Select from: Manufacturing, Logistics, Food and Drink, Engineering, Professional and Office Based, Wholesale, Construction, Distribution, Environmental, Other



<b>Main Business Activity</b>	Provide a short description of your core service or product (max. 25 words)
<b>Trading Start Date</b>	Indicate when your business began trading
<b>FTE Employees</b>	Number of Full-Time Equivalent employees
<b>Part-Time Employees</b>	Number of part-time employees
<b>Apprentices</b>	Number of apprentices currently employed
<b>Zero-Hour/Agency/Subcontractors</b>	Total number employed in these categories
<b>Current Turnover</b>	Provide your latest annual turnover
<b>Business History and Overview</b>	A brief narrative of your business from inception to present (50–200 words)
<b>Type of Work Undertaken</b>	Describe the goods/services your business provides (50–300 words)
<b>Current Markets</b>	List the sectors you serve and, where possible, specific customers
<b>Customer Locations &amp; Export %</b>	Where are your customers based? What percentage of your turnover comes from exports? (50–300 words)
<b>Declarations</b>	Complete all six Yes/No declarations

### Section 3 – Project and Impact

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Do you currently export?</b>	Select Yes or No
<b>If Yes: Overview of Export Activity</b>	Describe what you currently export and to which markets
<b>Export Value</b>	Indicate the annual value (£) of your exports
<b>Export % of Turnover</b>	Estimate what percentage of turnover is export-based (%)
<b>Use of Grant Funding</b>	Describe what the grant will be used to purchase
<b>Job Creation</b>	Number of jobs to be created. If applicable, provide: Position, Skill Level (Unskilled/Semi-skilled/Skilled), Hours, Salary, Expected Start Date
<b>Job Safeguarding</b>	Number of jobs to be safeguarded. If applicable, provide: Position, Skill Level, Hours, Salary, Expected Redundancy Date
<b>New Market Engagement</b>	Describe which new markets you'll target, how you'll engage, and forecast export value (50–400 words)



<b>Need for Grant Funding</b>	Explain why the grant is necessary for this project (50–400 words)
<b>Project Start Date</b>	Indicate when you plan to begin the project
<b>Financial Completion Date</b>	Indicate when the project will be financially completed

## Section 4 – Business Relocation or Expansion

*Only complete this section if your project involves moving premises within the next 6 months.*

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Current Premises</b>	Full address including postcode
<b>New/Additional Premises</b>	Full address including postcode
<b>Premises Size</b>	New/additional space in square feet (sq. ft.)
<b>Expected Completion Date</b>	When you plan to complete the move/expansion

## Section 5 – Project Cost

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Expenditure Items</b>	List all items you are seeking funding for, including: • Name / Model Number • Cost • Preferred Supplier • Reason for selecting that supplier

## Section 6 – Risk Management

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Project Lead</b>	Name the Director or Owner responsible for managing the project.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Identify known risks associated with the project and describe the mitigation measures to manage them.

## Section 7 – Document Upload

Applicants are required to upload the following supporting documents:

- **Bank Statements (Latest 3 Consecutive Months)** Must show the full month and include the bank name, business name, account number, sort code, and account holder. *Redacted or incomplete statements will not be accepted.*
- **Evidence of Match Funding** Acceptable formats include:
  - Most recent bank statement
  - Loan agreement



- Agreed overdraft facility
- Signed confirmation from a company director *Please note: purchases via lease, hire purchase, or similar structures are ineligible.*
- **Previous Year's Annual Accounts** Only required if applying for **over £10,000**.
- **12-Month Cash Flow Forecast** Required for applications **over £10,000**.
- **Quotes in Line with Procurement Guidance** Refer to the procurement guidance notes for specific instructions.
- **Evidence of Existing Staff Numbers** Submit HR or payroll records for all current employees.
- **Pre- and Post-Intervention Data** Baseline data will be required upon award. Post-intervention evidence will be collected after project delivery in partnership with the Invest Telford team.

> Submitting false or misleading information will result in immediate withdrawal of funding and contract cancellation. If funds have already been drawn, **a clawback process will be initiated**. There is no appeals process.

## Section 8 – Subsidy Control (Formerly State Aid)

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Public Sector Funding</b>	Provide details of any previous funding awards received over the past three years. Include: • Name of awarding body • Date of award • Funding mechanism (e.g. De-Minimis, GBER)

## Section 9 – Equality Monitoring

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Equality Information</b>	Complete four dropdown fields related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Range</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Disability Status</li> <li>• Ethnicity</li> <li>• Religion</li> </ul>

## Section 10 – Declaration

Requirement	Guidance
<b>Applicant Declaration</b>	Sign to confirm that all information provided is complete and accurate.

> **Important:** Retrospective applications and any spending made prior to receiving a grant offer letter are **ineligible**. Such actions will result in the withdrawal of your funding allocation by Telford & Wrekin Council.



## Procurement Rules

Total Value per Item / Supplier	Procedure	Advertising Requirement
<b>Under £10,000</b>	Achieve best value through three informal quotes	No advertising required
<b>£10,001 – £177,897</b> (Supplies & Services)  <b>£10,001 – £50,000</b> (Works)	Minimum of three written quotes required	<p>Advertise the opportunity for <b>at least 10 days</b> on the grant recipient's website, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity details</li> <li>2. Requirements</li> <li>3. Evaluation criteria</li> <li>4. Deadline and application instructions</li> </ol> <p>Each bid must be impartially assessed using the stated evaluation criteria, with justification provided for the selected supplier.</p>
<b>Over £177,897</b> (Services & Supplies)  <b>Over £50,000</b> (Works)	Formal tender process	<p>Competition must be formally advertised for <b>at least 35 days</b> on the grant recipient's website, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity details</li> <li>2. Requirements</li> <li>3. Evaluation criteria</li> <li>4. Deadline and application instructions</li> </ol> <p>Applicants must use a scoring/evaluation sheet and provide evidence that the winning bid was chosen based on merit. Rationale for selection must be documented.</p>

> **Note:** The minimum value accepted per individual item is **£500**. For purchases below this threshold, applicants must consult the **Invest Telford team** in advance.

## Subsidy Control

Applicants are required to disclose **any public sector grants or support received** within the last **3 financial years** in their application.

This scheme operates under the **UK Government Subsidy Control Act (2022)**. The total amount of **Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA)** received across a rolling three-year period must **not exceed £315,000 per business group**.

- It is the applicant's responsibility to track MFA received.
- A declaration confirming compliance will be required prior to a grant offer.
- MFA thresholds apply at the **company group level**.

> If applicants fail to adequately demonstrate compliance with the UK Subsidy Control Regime, their application may be deemed ineligible and could be rejected.





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