1. Purpose

The Innovation Accelerator Fund aims to support a long-term programme of activities to accelerate the progression of EPSRC-funded research discoveries at the pre-commercialisation stage towards ‘real-world’ use and benefit.

Funding available under this scheme is between the range of £25k to £50k.

We strongly encourage you to contact the IAA Partnerships Officer who can help you to develop your proposal before applying.

2. Eligibility

Applications are only permitted for projects focused on the exploitation of knowledge or technology generated through EPSRC-funded research. The scheme will not fund new research projects. Projects should normally be completed within 12 months and must be completed by 31st March 2020. No extensions are possible.

The lead applicant can either be a member of academic staff or EPSRC funded post-doctoral researcher. PhD students are not eligible to apply. Larger scale bids from groups of academics (e.g. within or across Departments, Faculties and Centres) are welcome as well as individual project based bids. However, this scheme will not support collaborations between universities or research institutes.

Activities that may be supported include, but not limited to:

- Early Stage Commercialisation
  - Proof of concept studies to trigger a licence agreement, spin-out investment, joint development agreement with a third party or lead to further development funding.
  - Market stage assessments to provide guidance on how to refine the position of a technology;
  - Completion/development of licence data pack.
  - Prototyping, demonstrators and software development.
  - Generation of new data to demonstrate the credibility of a technology (but not further research into the development of that technology).
  - Scale-up testing, end user testing or trails and market validation.

- Long-term secondment (full time or part-time)
  - Outward secondment of a PDRA / PhD student previously funded by EPSRC to ‘hand-over’ project results (e.g. tool or technique) to collaborating partner and/or work on focussed project addressing a commercial problem or opportunity and draw up a plan to tackle them. A minimum of 50% of the overall time should be spent at the partner organisation.
  - Inward secondment of senior industry / user scientists. A minimum of 50% of the overall time should be spent at the partner organisation.

Eligible organisations to partner with include UK businesses (and international businesses with a UK presence/influence), third sector and public sector organisations.

Eligible costs include:

- Buy-out/salary of existing academic (maximum of 20% of academic time)
- PDRA/researcher salary
- Travel and accommodation
- Project support costs
- Professional fees
- Outsourcing and prototyping
- Bench fees and consumables (inward secondments only).

Costs cannot be requested to support additional research work, ‘bridging’ between research grants, estates and indirect costs.

For further details of eligible costs, please refer to the Eligible Cost Table.

3. Management of Intellectual Property

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Head of Technology Transfer, Adam Daykin at the earliest possible stage to discuss the intellectual property management plan.

4. Assessment

Funding decisions are made by the Innovation Review Panel comprising of internal and external impact experts. The group will rank the proposals after considering the likelihood that the proposed activities would enhance the impact of EPSRC research investment. Shortlisted applicants and their partner organisation representative/s will be invited to an interview by the panel. Decision outcomes will be sent to the Principal Applicants by the IAA Partnerships Officer. Feedback will only be given to unsuccessful applicants if the panel decides that additional feedback is necessary or useful.

Applications will be assessed against this criteria:
- Scale of EPSRC-funded research base to be exploited, its quality, and the potential scope for impact (i.e., new products, jobs, cost savings, increased profits, new policies, improved healthcare, etc.).
- A clear explanation of how funding will be used to achieve impact from research output.
- Quality of the business case, including evidence of demand from companies or end-users; a clear definition of the requirement; a plan of activities and outcomes; understanding of potential follow-on activities; and, a clear definition of services to be offered or technology to be created.
- Strength of involvement of external partners. Partnerships that link to the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund are very much encouraged.
- In-kind/financial contribution of the collaborating partner. Projects will be prioritised where a matching funding contribution is provided by the partner organisations, either cash or in kind (e.g. staff time, access to equipment, provision of consumables), with a target level expected of at least 1/3 of the requested EPSRC funding as a contribution. A cash contribution is encouraged, but not essential. Projects with fully in kind and/or reduced contributions may be given priority where the partner is a governmental, charity or other not-for-profit body or an SME, and the project is deemed to be highly impactful.
- Ability to spend the funds as requested within the timeframe of the project.

5. How to apply

To apply for funding please submit an expression of interest form to be eligible to submit a full application. Both forms should be submitted to the IAA Partnerships Officer, r.babb@qmul.ac.uk.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis twice per year until funds have been allocated. Funding deadlines for 2018 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme opens</th>
<th>Expression of interest deadline</th>
<th>Full application deadline</th>
<th>Shortlisting</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>21st March</td>
<td>17th May</td>
<td>31st May</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 2</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>tbc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications must be submitted by 17:00 (GMT/BST) on the deadline day.

For request of funds for outwards secondments, please also include this information along with the application form:
- a letter of support from the external partner
• (if the secondee is a PhD student) a letter from the main academic supervisor confirming their support and that the student’s studies will not be affected by undertaking the secondment and no extension will be required in finishing their PhD

6. Accessing Funds

Information on how to access funds will be provided to successful applicants with their award letter. Any unaccounted costs or underspends will be clawed back for re-use within further calls. Overspends are the responsibility of the School/Institute.

7. Reporting

To be eligible under IAA rules, applicants that are successful in receiving an award will be required to produce a final report (two A4 pages max) one month after the end of the project. The report should include information on the following:

• What the funds have been used for;
• How the funds have increased the impact of the initial EPSRC investment;
• Key outputs, outcomes and impacts (see EPSRC Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts Capture Table);
• Envisaged future applications of the outputs and outcomes obtained, including the potential for further research and development.