

FAQs: Accelerated Knowledge Transfer 2 Innovate (AKT)

KNOWLEDGE BASE PARTNER

Which Knowledge Bases are eligible to apply for AKT?

Any Knowledge Base that is eligible to register as a Knowledge Base for KTP is eligible to apply for an AKT grant.

Can a Knowledge Base apply for more than one AKT grant?

Yes, within reason. However applicants should explain how they will be able to effectively deliver multiple projects.

What cost model should be used by the Knowledge Base in applying for an AKT grant?

Knowledge Bases should follow the cost model used for KTP and where their institution uses FEC, they will be required to attach an up to date FEC letter. Note however the 90% grant rate for AKT and also that a maximum of 10% of project costs may be spent on consumables, travel and estates costs.

Can one Knowledge Base Supervisor be present in two applications?

Yes, however, this will be a matter for the Knowledge Base institution. NB. Involvement of a single Knowledge Base Supervisor in 2 AKT projects would require a minimum of 0.5 days per week (i.e. 0.25 days per project per week).

Can the Knowledge Base Supervisor be allocated more time, say 0.5 days a week to the project?

Yes, however, use of resources should be justified in the application and should represent the best means of delivering the project.

BUSINESS PARTNER

What Business Partner organisations are eligible to partner in an AKT project?

Please see the Call Guidance documentation where eligibility is defined. Note that there are no upper limit restrictions on the size of Business Partner.

What exactly do you mean by Business Partner?

We define the Business Partner as a business, charity or charitable company. They must be registered in the UK. Public sector organisations are not eligible as Business Partners in AKT.

Can a Business Partner be involved in more than one AKT project?

Yes, within reason, however applicants should explain how they will be able to effectively deliver multiple applications.

What financial contribution is made by the Business Partner?

The Business Partner must contribute a minimum of 10% of the total project cost in cash. There is no exception for third sector organisations.

Can a business use a grant acquired from elsewhere as their match contribution?

Public money cannot be used to match AKT funding.

What other contribution is the business partner expected to make?

The business should dedicate its own staff and necessary resources to facilitate the AKT project and work in partnership with the Knowledge Base institution and the Associate. The exact nature of this will need to be discussed and agreed by the project partners before the application is submitted. The AKT grant does not support any costs incurred by the company during delivery of the project.

Is there any flexibility around the requirement for the Business Partner to have 4 FTE's?

We believe that a Business Partner with 4FTE's will be better able to contribute and support the project. This will be reviewed at the end of the pilot.

Can start-ups use the funding to explore an opportunity before looking into a full project?

Yes, so long as they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this document and the Competition Guidance.

Can 2 SME's apply jointly for the project?

No. AKT is restricted to one Knowledge Base working with one Business Partner.

Regarding 4FTE's, what if the business has contracted workers working full-time on the business, not actually employees?

The Business Partner must have a minimum of 4 FTEs in its employment.

AKT ASSOCIATE

Can the AKT Associate be part-time if the project runs for longer than 4 months?

The AKT Associate can be part-time BUT projects cannot run longer than 4-months. Additionally, up to two Associates can be proposed to work on the project, up to a maximum of 1 FTE in total.

Does the AKT Associate have to spend time at the Business Partner premises?

It is expected that the project team (all partners, as defined in the application form) will meet at least every two weeks. Ideally, these meetings should occur at both the Knowledge Base institution and the Business Partner premises, but they can also take place remotely. Spending some time at the Business Partner premises is desirable, but not mandatory.

Do you have to name the Associate on the application?

Yes. You must identify the Associate and the Business Partner must be content to work with them. This must be agreed before the application is submitted.

Can we substitute an Associate during the project?

The expectation is that the Associate will deliver the entirety of the AKT project. If for any reason this is not possible, you will need to inform the AKT Manager at Innovate UK KTN. If an agreed suitable substitute cannot be found, the project will be terminated. Projects will neither be extended nor paused.

Does the Associate have to be based in the UK?

The Associate will need to be in the UK and will be employed by the Knowledge Base Partner.

Can the Associate already work for the business?

An Associate from the business would be ineligible as the Business Partner must cover their own costs. Associates cannot be seconded from the Business Partner to the Knowledge Base partner.

Can a KTP Associate that is already working for the Business Partner be the Associate on an AKT project?

A KTP Associate role is a full-time position so they cannot participate in a KTP project and an AKT project. However, if an AKT project starts as the KTP contract comes to an end then the KTP Associate could potentially segway directly into an AKT project, provided the Knowledge Base HR processes allow for this.

Can an AKT Associate become a KTP Associate?

Not directly, but a successful AKT Associate would be welcome to apply for any relevant KTP Associate role. Knowledge Bases are reminded that a demonstrably open and fair recruitment process is required under the terms of a KTP grant.

Are there any eligibility criteria for the Associate?

The Associate must be employed by the Knowledge Base on a temporary or permanent basis. The Associate must be appropriately skilled to deliver the AKT project. The minimum requirement is a Level 5 qualification (or equivalent qualification) or relevant significant experience. Recent graduates, master's students, PhD candidates, post docs, lab technicians, research assistants and early career researchers are all potential AKT Associates.

Can the company find the AKT Associate or does this need to be the Knowledge Base?

The Associate must be employed by the Knowledge Base partner.

Could an academic act as an Associate?

Yes as long as the available grant (maximum of £35,000) will 'buy' enough time for the academic to deliver the project. Note that the Associate and the Supervisor can not be the same person.

If for any unforeseen reason the named Associate cannot carry out the project when funding is awarded, can the Associate be changed after funding is awarded?

Yes, however, there are time restrictions on starting the AKT project, which is likely to be within 1 month of the GOL being issued. Projects will not be paused or extended.

Could an Associate be home-based or in a hybrid work arrangement?

Yes, however, this should be made to be absolutely clear in the application and, in particular, the provisions for maintaining good communication between the project team must be described.

PRE- AND POST-AWARD ARRANGEMENTS

Will the applications be made through IFS?

Applications will be made through a new application system managed by Innovate UK KTN.

Do we need an IP agreement?

It is not anticipated that IP will be generated within an AKT project, however, if either party wishes to put an IP agreement in place, it should be in place before the application is submitted.

Is there a document similar to a Joint Commitment Statement for AKT?

A separate JCS is not required for AKT applications. However, in submitting applications, applicants will be required to work together as a partnership and to deliver on the commitments made in the application around partnership working.

How quickly will we be notified if our application is successful?

We aim to notify you within 1 month of the competition closing.

Once we receive the Grant Offer Letter (GOL) how soon must the project start?

The project should start as soon as is practicable and within 1 calendar month from the receipt of the grant offer letter.

What happens if we can't start within 1 month of receiving the Grant Offer Letter?

Your funding will be withdrawn.

How will Claims be paid?

Claims will be made in arrears within 30 days of the project end date. Claims must be accompanied by a final report, case study and a presentation.

NB. The Knowledge Base Partner is expected to recover the Business Partner contribution. Invoices for payment should be raised by the Knowledge Base at a time agreed with the Business Partner.

How will applications be assessed?

Please review the competition briefing session for more information around how applications will be assessed. The recording is available on the competition site.

How will projects be monitored?

Requirements around project monitoring will be clarified in the Grant Offer Letter, however we anticipate a mid-point and final project review will be required.

GENERAL AKT

Is there more than 1 round? If so, what are the submission dates?

Round 1 will open at midday on Wednesday 7th September and close at midday on Friday 23rd September. It is anticipated that Round 2 will open at midday on Monday 26th September and close at midday on Friday 21st October and Round 3 will open at midday on Monday 24th October and close at midday on Friday 24th November. All dates are subject to change. Note that additional rounds beyond Round 1 will be dependent on funding being available from the agreed budget (£3m).

What is the total value of the grant awarded?

The maximum grant that will be awarded will be £35,000 irrespective of project length.

Can some of the grant be used for 'sundry' items such as Travel & Subsistence and Consumables?

Yes. Up to a maximum of 10% of the total grant awarded can be used for T&S, Consumables and Estate costs.

Is it possible to get funding for small equipment or equipment hire?

No.

Will the local KTA support the application development?

Applications should be submitted directly. There is no expectation that the KTAs will support AKT applications, and they are not required to review these pre-submission.

Are there any limits on the scope of an AKT project?

No. The project has to be innovative and have the potential to deliver value to the Partners. For commercial businesses, the benefits should major on commercial impact, but economic, societal, environmental and health/well-being, or a combination of these may also be described. For third sector organisations, the benefits can major on non-commercial impacts.

Who is responsible for recovering the Business Partner contribution?

The Knowledge Base will be responsible for recovering the Business Partner contribution.

Can a project be paused part way through?

No, the project is short and must be delivered in its entirety without any breaks.

What are the expected outcomes of an AKT project?

At the end of the project as a minimum we expect:

- A short report outlining the project activities and outcomes
- PowerPoint presentation given by the associate to the business summarising the reports content
- Case study for publication

Will any final report templates be available pre-project so the project team can work towards completion from an early stage?

Successful applicants will be given guidance regarding the content of final reports.

What Technology Readiness (TRL) level is AKT aimed at?

AKT is about evaluating an innovation project or concept for the Business Partner, so TRL levels are not directly applicable. An AKT project will ideally exploit existing knowledge within the Knowledge Base, so should not be used where the likely outcomes for the project are solely research based.

What happens if the idea behind the AKT turns out to be a bad idea?

'Failing Fast' is a successful outcome for an AKT project. The value of such outcomes should be discussed in the final report.

Do I need to use the KTN Innovation canvas?

We think that the KTN Innovation Canvas is a great tool that could help to evaluate the innovative idea pre- and post-project. There are similar tools, which you could use if you are familiar with them. The most important thing is to demonstrate within the application how you will deliver the project in the available time.

Can organisations with an existing live KTP apply?

Yes - however the AKT team will need to be convinced that the company has the capacity to support any additional activity to the KTP project.

Can all of the business contribution be used towards consumables if the project requires it?

Only Knowledge Base costs can be reimbursed. The 10% minimum Business Partner contribution should be paid to the Knowledge Base.

Are Business Schools eligible to apply as the Knowledge Base Partner?

Yes - there are no restrictions on the eligibility of academic discipline accessed through AKT.

Who is the lead applicant? Can we apply again if at first we are not supported?

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The Knowledge Base is the lead applicant and will be the recipient of the grant awarded. Re-submissions will be allowed, however, there will be time constraints associated with the competition dates that may restrict this as an option.

What is the maximum associate salary that can be claimed?

There is no limit to associate salary as such. The maximum grant that can be awarded is £35,000 and the money should be allocated to provide sufficient support to deliver what is outlined in the application.