

Internationalisation Fund – FAQs

1. What is the internationalisation grant?

The Internationalisation Fund is a co-investment grant scheme initiated and sustained by the Department for International Trade (DIT) of the United Kingdom (UK) Government.

Match-funded grants of between £1,000 and £9,000 will be available for future activity (subject to eligibility and availability).

To secure a grant, you'll need to fund a proportion of your costs yourself. This varies according to where your business is based and will be either 40 or 50% of the total cost.

The Fund is currently available throughout England except Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, which has its own similar scheme.

2. Who is eligible for it?

- The company must be based in England
- The company must be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) with up to 250 employees
- No more than 25% of the business is owned by an enterprise which is not a SME
- Annual turnover does not exceed €50 million or annual balance sheet does not exceed €43 million

The fund is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Please note:

- start-up businesses are not eligible for the Internationalisation Fund
- the funding comes via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), so further eligibility criteria may apply.

3. What can I use it for?

To qualify for Internationalisation Fund support, an activity should have value addition. It should not be a mere extension of the current business activities. These activities can be encompassed in SMEs with high-level objectives or high growth potential.

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Eligible expenditure entails approved spending that the DIT has determined to steer the main funding objectives of businesses including a high growth potential and having high-level objectives.

The fund can be used to support areas including (but not exclusively limited to):

- Market research
- IP (intellectual property) advice
- Translation services
- International social media/SEO
- Trade fairs (where no TAP funding is available)
- Independent market visits
- Consultancy and other international commercial services

Firms starting to export: SMEs purposing to start exporting activities qualify for this funding. They are new entrants into the export industry.

Entrance into a new market: the DIT Internationalisation Fund covers firms seeking to penetrate new geographical locations, break new barriers hindering business, venturing into new sectors or have new products or services for the market.

Improve international processes: Running an export business can be hectic especially when working on productivity. The DIT Internationalisation Fund supports such businesses to improve their international processes. Improved international processes facilitate export efficiency consequently boosting trading activities.

Increasing export performance: Businesses striving to significantly increase their export performance can receive the Internationalisation Fund to give them a boost so they can trade competitively.

Creating more than 2,200 jobs: UK SMEs on the move to create more than 2,200 jobs through their export businesses are entitled to the Internationalisation Fund so they can Fastrack their objectives. SMEs with a high growth potential (HGP) qualify for co-investment funding in DIT

There are UK SMEs in the international export space with high growth potential. They also qualify for the DIT Internationalisation Fund. The DIT has

determined that firms with the following characteristics potentially fall in the category of high growth potential (HGP) SMEs.

High international potential: Rapid and sustainable growth in the international trade market are part of the characteristics of SMEs in the export industry with high international potential. The DIT Internationalisation Fund can help such firms strengthen their grip in the international market.

Products or services for new international markets: Entering new international markets with new products and services need adequate financial resources to penetrate the market. The funds also facilitate their business operations right from meeting legal requirements to the actual product or service sale. UK's DIT is providing funding for such SMEs so they can enter the market with ease.

Export as a growth plan: If the management of an SME sees export as their growth plan, they can table their case to the DIT so they can get funding to implement their export activities.

SMEs targeting £500k + sales/turnover: If a firm in the export sector is targeting £500k or more, it can apply for the Internationalisation Fund so it can boost its activities to realise its revenue goals. Small companies with significant potential can also receive funding.

An open-minded approach to suitability: Flexibility in target SME size can also qualify a firm to receive funding for its international trade operations.

4. How many grants can I have?

Each SME can only make one application and one claim. Fund allocation adheres to detailed eligible expenditure guidelines. Online application and claim processes include eligibility checks in which areas the Internationalisation Fund is available. The Internationalisation Fund is available in all regions in the UK except Cornwall & Isles of Scilly because it has its own similar finance funding plan for its SMEs.

5. What is the maximum grant award level?

Match-funded grants of between £1,000 and £9,000 will be available for future activity (subject to eligibility and availability). The actual amount a firm can receive is determined by its Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

allocation. LEPs allocate the ERDF support to have amounts of funding available to reflect their contributions.

6. Are there any limits on markets?

There are no limits on markets but there are financial limits. The Internationalisation Fund supports entering new international markets with new products and services and growth in the international trade market.

7. Is there a time limit on the grant and how many times can you apply?

The Internationalisation Fund is available from 2020-23 and will help 7,600 SMEs to internationalise.

8. Where can I apply?

SMEs can apply for the Internationalisation Funding by:

Step one: Making initial contact with the DIT's Regional Network.

Step two: Discussing their plans with an adviser at the DIT's Regional Network.

Step three: Settle and agree on an export action plan with the adviser.

Step four: If the DIT finds their support suitable for the business, the DIT adviser will provide further application details on how to proceed with the application for the fund.

Please note: The rules of the Internationalisation Fund are being tweaked as the programme unfolds so please ensure you check on the details of the latest position in case this affects your application.

Important: The DIT trade advisor is a person who pre-qualifies company. Only the advisor will give you the link to apply.

9. Who is the ITA for my region and how to I get in touch with them?

Find your Local Trade Office here: <https://www.great.gov.uk/contact/office-finder/>

10. Are the grants limited in number - ie will they run out?

The £38m Internationalisation Fund is available from 2020–23 for SMEs in England and will help 7,600 SMEs to internationalise.

Sources and further details:

The [Internationalisation Fund](#) is delivered by the Department for International Trade (DIT) and supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The fund is part of the government’s [Export Growth Plan](#) and aims to help SMEs grow their overseas trading and strengthen their business.

- <https://www.great.gov.uk/campaigns/internationalisation-fund-for-english-businesses/>
- <https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2021/05/28/up-to-9000-export-grant-dit-internationalisation-fund-a-guide-for-smes>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hmg-launches-export-growth-plan-to-help-businesses>