

Industrial Partnership Fund Proof of Concept

Fund Overview

QuantIC's mission is to develop, commercialise and accelerate quantum technologies. QuantIC links world-leading quantum technologists with industry leaders and commercial users to accelerate innovation in quantum imaging and its deployment.

The aim of IPF PoC is to fast-track the development, implementation and commercialisation of novel demonstrators, processes and/or systems in the field of imaging, in alignment with QuantIC's priorities. IPF PoC aims to capture technical feasibility and market potential for new ideas. The outcome of the project is to establish market or technical feasibility of the proposed concept.

Total Budget: £1m from QuantIC; minimum £1m from industry (in kind or in cash).

Key characteristics of the scheme are:

- Projects are focused on demonstrating proof of concept for quantum technologies for a commercial application, in line with QuantIC's mission.
- To ensure industrial buy-in, industry partners will need to commit at least 50% resource to the project, preferably in cash. If any in-kind contribution is included, it will need to be verifiable to the project.
- QuantIC will be covering costs up to a maximum of £60k at full economic cost (fEC) (£48k at 80%) and 12 months in length.
- Performance targets will need to be set for the technology along with a clear investment plan as part of the application. A letter of commitment to the follow-on activities and the investment plan, upon achievement of the performance targets, will be required as part of the application. Both performance targets and letter of commitment form integral part of the assessment process.
- Only QuantIC partners are eligible to apply.
- Scheme is always open with rolling quarterly deadlines. Applications will be automatically aligned to the nearest rolling quarterly deadline.

Deadlines, submission and award process

IPF PoC is always open for submission of applications and operates rolling deadlines for proposal evaluations.

Applicants should submit their completed application forms by email to info@quantic.ac.uk. **Please note that the grant offer letter will be subject to terms and condition.**

Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must satisfy all of the eligibility criteria below. We advise applicants to use this section as a checklist before submitting a proposal.

1. Eligible applicants are a collaboration of at least one non-academic partner and one QuantIC academic partner. When this minimum is satisfied, additional academic and industrial partners are also eligible.
2. **The principal investigator will need to be a partner in QuantIC**; additional investigators can be from any UK Higher Education Institution.
3. Projects need to be in the field of quantum imaging technologies and aligned with QuantIC's vision to accelerate their commercial deployment.
4. All proposals need to be costed on the basis of full economic costs (fEC). If a grant is awarded, QuantIC will provide funding at 80% of the fEC. The organisation must agree to find the balance of fEC for the project from other resources.
5. The maximum award will be £60k (£48k calculated as 80% of the fEC) of the eligible costs sustained by the academic partner. Larger value projects are eligible, but evidence needs to be supplied that there is sufficient additional funding to cover all project costs secured through contribution from the industrial partner. Only eligible costs as per guidance below will be funded.
6. Eligibility of costs follows standard EPSRC rules; funding for equipment above £10k is not allowed under this scheme.
7. Industrial costs cannot be covered by the grant. A matching in-kind and/or in-cash contribution is required from the industrial partner.
8. Applications from companies established by universities or non-profit research centres, in which the institution retains a shareholding, are eligible to apply as long as one of the purposes of the company is the development of products or processes for commercial exploitation.
9. Applicants are required to use the appropriate application form. The form should be written in English and completed in all parts. Applicants must comply with word limits provided in the application forms. Forms need to contain full financial information. No re-costing of the project will be allowed at award stage.

Eligible Costs

IPF PoC awards will cover a maximum of £60k of all eligible costs sustained by the academic partner (£48k calculated at 80% fEC). IPF PoC awards only cover academic costs. Industrial costs are not eligible for funding.

Eligible costs are:

- Directly Incurred Costs – Salaries of staff to be employed on the project, consumables, travel and subsistence which are strictly necessary to the execution of the project. Other eligible DI costs are, for example, those related to subcontracts.
- Directly allocated costs which are strictly necessary to the execution of the project.
- Estates and indirect costs are also eligible.

Ineligible costs comprise:

- Travel to conferences and scientific meetings;
- Equipment above £10k;
- Travel that is not related to the delivery of the project;
- Directly allocated costs which are not demonstrably necessary to the execution of the project.

Evaluation Process

All projects will undertake a three stage review process:

A. Eligibility check – All projects submitted to the scheme will be checked for eligibility. Ineligible projects will be rejected and the applicant will be informed promptly.

B. Expert review – Each project will be peer-reviewed and scored by at least 3 members of the QuantIC Market Opportunities Panel, which is populated by industrial experts in the areas of imaging and quantum technology.

C. Panel discussion – All projects will be discussed and ranked at the panel meeting based on the reviewer's scores and panel discussions.

Evaluation criteria

All projects will be marked against the following 3 evaluation criteria:

A. Potential Impact/Opportunity including the following:

- a) Size, growth rate and accessibility of the market/business opportunity. Alignment of the project with the trends in the addressed market.
- b) Ability to impact, attract and influence industrial engagement/interest.
- c) Identified user needs that will be addressed by the project. Main economic benefits to the users that will make them buy/invest in the innovation.
- d) Alignment with and potential for acceleration / enhancement of quantum imaging applications to commercial sectors.
- e) Potential to strengthen the competitiveness and growth of companies by deploying innovative solutions as per the needs of the market.
- f) Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR).

B. Clarity, including:

- a) Clarity and pertinence to the objectives;
- b) Credibility of the proposed approach and feasibility of the research;
- c) Soundness of the concept

C. Quality and efficiency of the implementation, including:

- a) Value for money;
- b) Company commitment, in particular evidence that company will take the project forward if PoC is successful;

- c) Appropriateness of the participants within the consortium to deliver project and exploit the results.

Scoring

Proposals are scored “as submitted” on the basis of the above criteria. When an evaluator identifies significant shortcomings, they must reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. The Market Opportunities Panel will either recommend a proposal for funding or reject it and will not enter into negotiation with the applicants. The panel may choose to offer suggestions for improvement when the project is thought to have potential and invite the applicants to address the project shortcomings and resubmit. This does not constitute a commitment to fund the resubmitted project.

Each of the three evaluation criteria will be scored as follows:

Interpretation of the scores:

0 — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 — Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

2 — Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

3— Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

In order to be approved for funding, a proposal must achieve a total score of at least 5

Feedback will be provided to all applicants. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. Unsuccessful applicants may resubmit a revised application.

The panel decision will be final.

Other Important Information

Applications are submitted to QuantIC in confidence and members of the assessment panel are bound by confidentiality. The panel member list can be obtained by sending a request to info@quantic.ac.uk. If there are members of the panel you would wish to exclude from assessing your application, please notify us by email when submitting your application, stating the reason (direct competitor, conflict of interest, etc.).

A Project Manager may be appointed to oversee your project. Reporting requirements will be set out in the offer letter.

Contact

For more information or if you have any questions please contact: info@quantic.ac.uk and our team will be delighted to help.