



Proof of Market (PoM), Proof of Concept (PoC), Innovation Challenge Projects (ICP)

About Future Fashion Factory

Future Fashion Factory is a 5 year long, £5.4m project funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under the UK government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) initiative. This is an industry-led project focused on applying, co-developing and implementing new textile and industrial digital technologies (IDTs) in collaboration with supply chain manufacturers and other technology experts, in the high value textile and fashion sector. The R&D cluster will deliver exciting new creative innovation opportunities, new products, shorter product development and design lead times, reduced costs, and substantially increase global industrial competitiveness and productivity.

The University of Leeds in collaboration with University of Huddersfield and the Royal College of Art, London and the Textile Centre of Excellence leads future Fashion Factory.

This call for proposals aims to support innovative, industry-focused projects in the high value fashion and textile industries that fit with any of our three key themes:

1. Digitally Connected and Sustainable Processes
2. Digital Communication and Data Analytics
3. Training, Education & Workforce Development

Who can apply?

Applications can be made by a single business or a group of businesses with a common need. At least one of the applicant companies must be based within the Yorkshire region.

Proposals must be developed in collaboration with an academic partner at the University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield or Royal College of Art. If you are unsure of who can support your idea, please e-mail contact@futurefashionfactory.org with a brief description of the project and we will help identify the most appropriate person to work with you.

What Funding is on offer?

Support can be requested at one of three levels depending on the stage of the idea you wish to develop / type of activity that you wish to carry out; these are detailed in Table 1.

There will be Funding Calls each year of the project with a finite amount of funding available within each Call.

Funding Stream	Total Project Value	Maximum Grant Value	Purpose	Funding Breakdown
Proof of Market (PoM)	Up to £10k	£9k	To evaluate a market opportunity; identify existing IP/conduct freedom to operate searches; explore further funding options; carry out small-scale R&D activity.	10% minimum match-funding requirement 90% Intervention rate
Proof of Concept (PoC)	Up to £50k	£37.5k	To carry out interventions that progress proven methods and knowledge into validated technologies for a defined application.	25% minimum match-funding requirement Up to 75% Intervention rate <i>Varies depending on company size & project</i>
Innovation Challenge Project (ICP)	Up to £100k	£60k	Funding for innovations in partnership with industry to demonstrate and begin to scale up new technologies in a commercial setting. Such projects should be near to market (TRL 7-8, see <i>table on page 5</i>)	40% minimum match-funding requirement Up to 60% Intervention rate <i>Varies depending on company size & project</i>

Table 1 Funding levels available from Future Fashion Factory programme

All projects must have match funding from the company partner(s). This can be provided in cash or as an in-kind contribution (e.g. staff time spent on the project by company representatives, supply of materials/samples, use of equipment or facilities, etc.). The **minimum** level of match funding to be eligible for each Funding Stream is indicated in **Table 1**. The value for money of the project and appropriateness of the match will form part of the assessment criteria and provision of information to evidence match-funding, as well as added value to the company from project activity, will form part of project acceptance paperwork.

The project delivery activity will be carried out in collaboration with an academic partner with staff, expertise and resources to assist in the delivery of your project. Grant funding will mainly be directed to paying these costs. However each project will be considered on its own merits and where necessary a proportion of funding may be (a) sub-contracted to a third party or (b) used for direct purchases on behalf of an applicant. Academic partner staff may also be contracted to work within an applicant company to help deliver the project, if appropriate. In-kind contributions such as work being done towards the project by staff in the business are very strongly encouraged and should be detailed in your proposal as part of your evidence of match-funding.

NB: Project funding to be provided to the University partner will be calculated during the application process in liaison with the Future Fashion Factory Programme Manager, applicants are not expected to develop this portion of their application alone.

How to apply

It is essential that applicants discuss and explore the development of their project/s with the Future Fashion Factory team to ensure fit and alignment with the focus of the project, and avoid time being spent on projects that are unlikely to be supported. In the first instance please send a brief description of your project idea to contact@futurefashionfactory.org and a team member will be allocated to you. All applications must be submitted on the supplied pro-forma which will be supplied.

Assessment process

All applications will be considered by the project's **Investment Committee**. The Investment Committee is comprised of:

- Mr Adam Mansell – Director, UK Fashion & Textile Association
- Mr Andy Duley – Director of Commercialisation, University of Leeds
- Prof Stephen Russell – Director, Future Fashion Factory
- Mr Bill MacBeth OBE – Managing Director, Textiles Centre of Excellence

Applications will be handled as follows:

- Submitted applications which fit the call will be circulated to the **Investment Committee** by e-mail for initial scoring.
- Each proposal will be judged against the following criteria: definition of unmet need; market opportunity; innovative step; business case; scalability and business growth potential for the cluster and other UK beneficiaries; delivery plans; project outcomes & deliverables; financial plan costings; perceived value for money.
- Each member will score the proposal based on the following scale.
 1. The proposal is flawed and should not be funded.
 2. The proposal does not meet one or more of the assessment criteria.
 3. The proposal meets the assessment criteria, but with clear weaknesses.
 4. The Proposal meets the assessment criteria, but with minor weaknesses.
 5. This is a strong proposal which meets all assessment criteria.
 6. This is a very strong proposal that fully meets all assessment criteria.
- Investment Committee Members will return the scored applications to the Future Fashion Factory Programme Manager not later than two working weeks following the close of the call. In the case of Call 1 this will be **Thursday 14th March 2019**.
- The Future Fashion Factory Director and Programme Manager will collate and average applicants scores and produce paperwork for Investment Committee

Members who will then meet to finalise project awards. Results from the call will be communicated not later than **Friday 29th March 2019**.

Indicatively applicant project scores will be treated as set out below:

- Applications which achieve an average score of 5/6 after review will be funded (subject to agreement being put in place).
- Those scoring >3 but <5 will receive feedback on where the committee feel weaknesses exist and will be able to resubmit their proposal, which will then be funded subject to the panel being satisfied the weaknesses have been addressed.
- Those scoring <3 will be supported to redevelop their idea for the next round of funding but will not be eligible to re-submit to the current round.
- Funding will be allocated to projects on a first-come-first served basis. Once all funding allocated to a Call has been allocated, the Call will close and future applications will need to wait until the next Funding Call opens.

Intellectual Property (IP)

The handling of IP within project funded by the Future Fashion Factory will be as follows:

- Background IP ownership will remain with the originator even after it is modified (e.g. if enhancements are made).
- Foreground IP will be contracted under Lambert 4 with various available options. The clear intent is that the industrial partner will have the right to exploit the IP commercially and the academic partner may (with permission from the industrial partner) use the outcomes for teaching purposes.
- It is the intention that innovations will be commercially exploited, where this occurs the industrial partner in a project will automatically have the right to exploit any IP generated without having to negotiate any further agreements.

State Aid

State aid is a term used by the European Commission. It describes assistance given by a public body or publicly-funded body to organisations on a selective basis that take part in commercial activity which could distort competition and trade within the European Union. The State Aid rules are designed to prevent unfair subsidies.

Future Fashion Factory funding is UK Government funding and as such the University of Leeds needs to ensure that State Aid rules are followed. All three levels of programme funding are available through an open and transparent competitive process for one of the following, or a mixture of, these purposes: research & development, innovation, regional development. PoC & ICP awards will typically be made under the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). Smaller higher-intervention level PoM awards to SMEs will typically be made under De-Minimis. State Aid letters will be issued prior to each project delivery start date for clarity and to ensure compliance.

Key Dates

Call Opens	Friday 25 th January 2019
Call closes	Thursday 28 th February 2019
Final projects assessed in call receive feedback	Friday 29 th March 2019

Projects are expected to start between April and June 2019 and must be completed within 12 months of commencement. This will be a condition of the award.

Post-Award Requirements

Awardees will need to sign up to a collaboration agreement which will lay out the terms of the grant. They will also be expected to assist with the collection of information about the impact of their project to allow us to report on Project progress to the Future fashion Factory project funders (the Arts and Humanities Research Council) and for publicity purposes (where IP considerations allow).

Further information

For background information on Future Fashion Factory and its research challenges, visit the website: www.futurefashionfactory.org.

For help or advice on the scheme, contact the Future Fashion Factory Programme Manager, Mrs Susan Rainton (s.rainton@leeds.ac.uk / 0113 343 0982 / 07702 367331) or the Business Engagement Officer Mr John McSweeney (johnmcsweeney24@gmail.com / 07740 546388).

Academic partners should contact their Faculty Research & Innovation Office for costings. They should work with the Programme Manager to ensure that PART 2 of the 'Costing & Contributions' section of the form is correctly completed.

Explanation of Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)

Technology readiness level (TRL)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Activity	Discovery & Research		Innovation					Commercialisation	
TRL description	Basic principles observed and reported	Concept or application formulated	Experimental proof of concept	Concept or process validated in laboratory	System or component validated in relevant environment	System model or demonstrator in relevant environment	System prototyping demonstrator in an operational environment	Actual system completed and qualified test & demo operational environment	Actual system mission-proven in successful mission operations

Whilst it is allowable, and expected, that PoM and PoC proposals will address more fundamental problems that are sometime away from commercial application larger funded projects are expected to be near market. The table above shows how this fits with the concept of Technology Readiness.