



The Business of
Fashion, Textiles &
Technology Partnership

SME R&D Support Programme Funding Call Round 2



Are you running a successful business in the fashion, textiles or related technology sector? Do you have an idea that could take your company and the industry to the next level?

We want to hear from you.

The Business of Fashion, Textiles & Technology (BFTT) SME R&D Support Programme is open for Expressions of Interest (EOI).

The fashion, textiles and technology related sector (FTT) is buoyant, innovative and multidisciplinary, informing many adjacent sectors in the wider industry. Quite literally, spanning Agriculture to Advertising. This Funding Call is looking to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the development of the next generation of products, services and experiences in the fashion, textiles and technology sectors - with sustainable innovation at their core.

SMEs, with or without associated industry partners, that are already working at the developmental stages of testing an innovative product, service or concept prototype are eligible to apply. R&D projects may also be at an earlier scoping stage (pre-prototyping). In both cases, for the project to be successful, it would benefit from specialist support across a range of fields that could be provided by the BFTT partnership, including: new materials design & development; application of less accessible and cutting-edge technologies; novel applications of digital technologies; business model innovation.

We look forward to hearing from FTT companies, and those in the wider STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) fields interested in collaborating with the FTT sector- who would like to achieve a step-change in their business trajectory.

Who should consider applying and why?

Who

- UK-based SMEs trading for a minimum of 2 years as a fashion, textiles or related technologies business. More info [here](#).
- UK-based SMEs trading for a minimum of 2 years in the FTT sector, applying in partnership with a 2nd industry partner. More info [here](#).
- UK-based SMEs that wish to advance their market position and make a positive impact in the sector through research and development of new products, services and/or experiences.

Why

- To access unrivalled research and development expertise from BFTT SME R&D Support Programme partners.
- To enable a step-change for your FTT business through additional funding and dedicated project resource.

**Deadline to register your
Expression of Interest (EOI)**
7 September 2020



The BFTT SME R&D Support Programme offer

The BFTT SME R&D Support Programme is an ambitious research and development initiative providing structured support for UK SMEs looking to achieve sustainable growth through R&D. Throughout the course of three and a half years, the programme will disburse around £2.5m in funding (plus leveraged funds) to take forward up to 25 R&D projects led by SMEs in partnership with leading academic partners.

The programme provides SMEs - and any associated industry partners - with a targeted range of support including **funding, mentoring, wide ranging fashion, textiles and technology industry expertise and showcasing opportunities** specifically designed to help SMEs turn bright ideas into commercially viable, sustainable and impactful propositions.

Each shortlisted applicant will be provided with bespoke business strategy and project development support to help refine their ideas and turn them into viable R&D proposals. They will then have the opportunity to pitch their proposal for an award of funding and further support, including the opportunity to be mentored by leading industry and academic partners throughout the duration of their projects.

Projects will be considered for an award value up to £150,000, for individual SME projects and up to £250,000 for partnerships*.
Projects could last between 12 to 24 months.

**Grants will be made subject to compliance with all applicable state aid regulations.*

Support to date

- **Over £1.2million awarded to 10 SME projects**
- **Over 40 hours of 1:1 business mentoring**
- **Over 100 hours of additional advisory support**
- **12 business development talks and workshops**

What's included

- **Strategic partnering with cross disciplinary academic support**
- **Mentoring towards project development and business strategy**
- **A part time, fully qualified Project Lead to deliver the project**
- **Budget for materials, machinery prototyping and training expenses**
- **Showcasing opportunities (retail, tradeshows, etc.) as appropriate**
- **Access to University labs, equipment and studio space if required**
- **Bespoke support to develop a robust in-house R&D methodology**

Expected outputs

- **Fully tested prototypes of FTT products, services and / or experiences**
 - **A commercialisation plan tested with relevant stakeholders during the project**
 - **A documented process for R&D**
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Blackhorse Lane Atelier's Sustainable Denim Wash & Finishing R&D Lab

What is the BFTT SME R&D Support Programme looking to fund?

The programme is open to UK-based SMEs with strong growth, innovation ambitions, and a track record of minimum two fully operational years. SMEs can submit individual project applications or they can do so as a partnership with another complementary SME (e.g. a fashion brand and a technology SME) or a larger industry partner. More info [here](#).

Funded projects to date cover a range of FTT sub-sectors and R&D innovations, including: bio-material development; woven and non-woven textiles innovation; laser technology applications for material finishings on denim; food and metal waste initiatives; on-shoring of sustainable manufacturing; novel digital solutions to crowdsource creativity, and increase transparency and accountability in the sector.

We are particularly interested to hear from companies and cross-sector partnerships exploring the development of sustainable production & design processes, reimagining current or new products, services and/or experiences in relation, but by no means limited...



...to the following visionary themes.

Reimagining materials and production

Can future-facing innovations, from bio-technologies to artificial intelligence be adapted for impactful applications within fashion, textiles and/or cosmetics; creating new materials and production processes that improve efficiency, quality, circularity and overall sustainability?

Inspiring sustainable consumers

What business model innovation, novel product-service-systems (PSSs) and/or design solution could lead to systemic change in the sector? What approaches could encourage more sustainable relationships with fashion and beauty?

Uncovering hidden data and insights

The FTT industry has access to the power of data throughout the supply chain to generate positive impact and change businesses. How can the sector capture in new ways, and ensure that data collected is of high quality, scrutinised effectively, and communicated in ways that drive transparency, collaboration and sustainability throughout product lifecycles?

Designing new experiences

Can technologies like virtual and augmented reality provide new reasons to visit local high-streets? Could innovations in virtual environments such as those in the gaming sector merge with design and creativity from the fashion world?



A leather made out of pineapple leaves, invented by Ananas Anam © Pflaetex

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following four criteria:

1. **Relevance** – project and business fit amongst the BFTT SME R&D Support Programme themes.
2. **Innovation** – how innovative the proposed project is compared to what's already available in the marketplace.
3. **Impact** – the proposed impact the project will have on driving the FTT sector and beyond to become more sustainable as a whole.
4. **Feasibility** – is the project feasible given timeframes, funding, available expertise and market positioning.

The process and timeline

To express your company's interest in this programme, please complete the following:

1. The EOI form can be accessed [here](#).
2. The EOI guidance sheet can be found [here](#). This document includes a list of the questions, allowing for prior preparation if needed.

FAQs: About the BFTT SME R&D Support Programme and process [FAQs](#).

Find out more: About awarded projects to date [here](#).

Get in touch: If you need more information, contact the BFTT SME R&D team BFTTsm@arts.ac.uk

Click here: to submit your EOI in the BFTT SME R&D Support Programme.

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- 1. Expression of Interest**
Deadline 7 September 2020
 - 2. Shortlisting**
Up to 15 applications will be shortlisted and notified by 21 September 2020.
 - 2. Bespoke support**
Shortlisted applicants will receive bespoke support, and mentoring during a two-month business development period (Oct-Nov 2020), to help you refine your ideas.
Note: those not shortlisted may also receive advice and be invited to workshops and events, as appropriate.
 - 3. Final proposal submission**
Final R&D proposals submitted for review by 15 December 2020.
 - 4. Pitch to decision panel**
Final R&D proposals pitched to an experienced multidisciplinary selection panel – including Designers, Technologists, Academics, Retailers, and Journalists, January 2021.
 - 5. Awarded projects announced**
Successful applicants will be announced, February 2021.
 - 6. Projects launched**
All projects launched by June 2021.
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More about the BFTT SME R&D support programme

What are the BFTT SME R&D Programme key aims?


The Programme offers a comprehensive range of coordinated activities that aim to:

- Foster a creative and supportive business research and development culture, which will enable fashion, textile and technology SMEs to thrive using bespoke R&D as a mechanism for innovation and growth.
- Advance the development of sustainable and technologically engaged FTT products, services and experiences.

How does the Programme work?

The programme helps SMEs to:

- Develop viable and strategic R&D propositions throughout the shortlisting process.
- Connect with appropriate industry and academic experts.
- Prototype conceptual ideas and test innovations - benefitting from bespoke & expert mentoring through the implementation phase - from 12 to 30 months depending on the complexity of the project.
- Implement industry changing ideas sustainably through additional funding and dedicated project resource



“Bringing together the Digital Anthropology Lab and the expertise across the BFTT programme has enabled us to access incredible specialist knowledge which will be invaluable to develop our co-creation platform. In particular, the know-how brought in by the Project Lead and Academic Mentor, in AI and Neuroscience, will provide us with a really strong foundation to drive the innovative development of our platform forward.”

Alfredo Orobio
Founder and CEO, AWAYTOMARS

What makes the Funding Call Unique?

- YOU - this Programme addresses the challenges and specialist requirements of FTT SMEs and aims to showcase the sector's potential.
- The Programme is informed by leading FTT industry and academic partners who are working collaboratively in order to make a real difference to FTT brands of the future.
- The Programme provides targeted funding, training and expertise across relevant areas including technology, product and service development and sustainable innovation.
- Awardees will emerge from the Programme ready to take their ideas to the next level, having developed, prototyped and tested their commercial potential.

“As a company, we know that we need to make major environmental strides in this decade. A program like this makes the most of creative, technical, academic and entrepreneurial skills, is a leap in the right direction. Our project would have taken us three more years to get off the ground. Instead, our R&D goals, have been matched with amazing academic partners, with funding. It's invaluable. Finding partners – then the right business, and legal support – would have taken many months. To be awarded funding in addition is just fantastic.”

Kresse Wesling
Co-founder, Elvis & Kresse



BFTT SME R&D Support Programme Partners

Core BFTT Academic Partners

University of the Arts London
Digital Anthropology Lab
Digital fashion futures

Centre for Sustainable Fashion
Sustainable fashion value chain & policy

Textile Futures Research Community
Novel textile craft

Centre for Circular Design
Circular materials and systems

Centre for Fashion Business
& Innovation Research
Fashion industry economy and trends

Queen Mary University of London
Engineering & materials science

University of Cambridge
Sustainable manufacturing futures

Loughborough University
Products & materials engineering

University of Leeds
Sustainable textile chemistry

University College London
Social anthropology

Industry Partners

Adapt+

Arla

ASOS

British Fashion Council

Centre For Fashion Enterprise

Christopher Raeburn

Clarks

Creative Wick

Echo

Fashion District

Greater London Authority

Here East

Holition

Jack Wills

John Smedley

Keracol

Kering

Klarna

Kukri

Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership

London Fashion Fund

London Legacy Development Corporation

Newham College London

Poplar HARCA

Selfridges

Speedo

The Trampery

Tower Hamlets

UK Fashion & Textile Association

V&A Museum

Westfield
