

Food and Drink Manufacturing Grant and Funding Opportunities June 2025

Below is a list of the current funding opportunities for food and drink businesses, and a few initiatives which are currently in progress however not open for new funding applications.

Here are the UKRI definitions for the various types of projects included in the table and what they mean in practice:

- **Feasibility study** – investigation of technical, economic, and operational impacts of deploying a technology solution within the existing industrial process.
- **Engineering study** – a detailed project plan that identified specific technical and operational requirements which provide sufficient detail for a business to arrive at an investment decision.
- **Deployment projects** – will support onsite deployment of technologies with the intention of a commercial roll out and permanent installation of technologies at industrial sites.

A quick reference of Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) definitions is included at the end of the document.

Open Schemes:

Programme Name	Countries/ Regions	Details of Scheme	Funding Details	Key Dates / Notes
Made Smarter: Improving energy or resource efficiency in manufacturing – feasibility studies	UK registered organisations	<p>As part of the Made Smarter Innovation Challenge (MSI), Innovate UK will invest up to £2M in innovation projects to examine the feasibility of developing new industrial digital technologies.</p> <p>These are for micro or SME manufacturers to improve their energy or resource efficiency that would lead to a more productive, resilient and sustainable sector.</p>	<p>To work alone or lead a collaborative project, your organisation must -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered business of any size <p>Grant: up to 70% of project costs can be covered depending on business size</p> <p>To be eligible, your project must -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → have total costs between £25,000 and £100,000 → last between 3-6 months → carry out project work in the UK 	<p>Opens: 09/06/25 Closes: 02/07/25</p> <p>For more information, or to apply</p>

			→ Not start before 1 October 2025 and end by 31 March 2026	
Clean Futures Accelerator: Trial Opportunity for West Midlands SMEs	West Midlands SMEs	<p>The Clean Futures Accelerator programme is looking for West Midlands SMEs who have innovative solutions to challenges including Net Zero Manufacturing.</p> <p>Successful applicants will have the chance to conduct a 6-month trial (2 months planning, 4 months testing) in collaboration with Coventry University.</p>	<p>To be eligible for you must –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a registered UK company → have an operational base within the West Midlands region <p>Grant: projects can receive £10,000 to £50,000 each.</p> <p>Participating SMEs must provide in-kind match funding equivalent to 100% of the requested funding amount (e.g. personnel costs, materials)</p>	<p>Opens: 27/05/25 Closes: 06/07/25</p> <p>For more information, or to apply</p>
Global Incubator Programme: Canada – Made Smarter Manufacturing	UK-based companies	<p>Opportunity for UK-based companies looking to expand into the Canadian market and collaborate with North America's largest urban innovation hub.</p> <p>The Global Incubatory Programme will be delivered virtually on a weekly basis, with two visits to Toronto, Canada built into the programme. Each business is supported by an Innovate UK Innovation & Growth Specialist.</p> <p>Currently accepting applications for up to eight innovative companies in the Smart Manufacturing sector running from</p> <p>Funded by the UK Government and led by Innovate UK.</p>	<p>To be eligible you must -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK-based innovation-led company with ambitions to grow → be an SME <250 employees → focus on manufacturing <p>Funding: Innovate UK will fund and organise flights, accommodation, in-market travel, and any additional fees for successful applicants. Innovate UK will also pay for any reasonable adjustments throughout the initiative.</p> <p>Only one representative from each company will be funded.</p>	<p>Opens: 09/06/25 Closes: 31/08/25</p> <p>Running from October 2025 to March 2026</p> <p>Application Form</p>

British Business Bank Growth Guarantee Scheme	UK wide	<p>The Growth Guarantee Scheme is the successor to the Recovery Loan Scheme.</p> <p>It is designed to support access to finance for UK smaller businesses as they look to invest and grow. The Growth Guarantee Scheme launched with accredited lenders on 1 July 2024, with a wide range of products supported by different lenders, including term loans, overdrafts, asset finance, invoiced finance and asset-based lending.</p>	<p>To be eligible, you must –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a smaller business with a turnover of up to £45m (on a group basis, where part of a group) → the borrower must be carrying out trading activity in the UK, not in difficulty or insolvency → for most businesses, must be generating more than 50% of its income from trading activity → For more details on eligibility <p>Grant: up to £2m per loan, depending on business type and location, and provides the lender with a 70% government-backed guarantee</p> <p>Businesses can use the finance for any legitimate business purpose – including managing cashflow and investment. However, businesses must be able to afford to take out additional debt finance for these purposes.</p>	<p>Applications open year-round</p> <p>How to apply – GSS is available through the British Business Bank's accredited lenders which are listed on the GSS accredited lenders page</p>
British Business Bank Investment Fund	<p>Scotland</p> <p>South West – covers the entire South West region including, Bristol, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire</p>	<p>The fund aims to drive sustainable economic growth by supporting innovation and creating local opportunity for new and growing businesses.</p> <p>The fund offers a range of commercial finance options with loans from £25,000 to £2 million and equity investment up to £5 million.</p>	<p>Funds available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Smaller Loans, £25k- £100k: to fill the funding gap for growth and development projects → Debt Finance, £100k - £2M: designed for smaller companies that can demonstrate growth potential → Equity Finance, up to £5M: for established businesses with ambitious plans, or large start ups with high growth potential 	<p>Applications open all year round</p> <p>Scotland applicants</p> <p>South West applicants</p> <p>Wales applicants</p>

	<u>Wales</u>			
<u>British Business Bank Investment Fund II</u>	<p><u>Midlands Engine</u> – covers the whole of the Midlands including West, East and South East.</p> <p><u>Northern Powerhouse</u> – covers the whole of the North of England, including rural, coastal and urban areas, including North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber</p>	<p>The fund aims to build on the success of the first Investment Fund and will drive sustainable economic growth by supporting innovation and creating opportunities for new and growing businesses.</p> <p>The fund (II) offers a range of commercial finance options with debt finance from £25,000 to £2 million and equity investment up to £5 million.</p>	<p>Funds available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Smaller Loans, £25k- £100k: to fill the funding gap for growth and development projects → Debt Finance, £100k - £2M: designed for smaller companies that can demonstrate growth potential → Equity Finance, up to £5M: for established businesses with ambitious plans, or large start ups with high growth potential 	<p>Applications open all year round</p> <p><u>Midlands Engine applicants</u></p> <p><u>Northern Powerhouse applicants</u></p>
<u>Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS)</u>	SMEs across the West Midlands - including Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton, Worcestershire and the Marches, Warwickshire and Stoke and Staffordshire.	<p>The Pilot Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS) is offering 4000 free energy assessments. The assessments will provide recommendations for energy reduction, helping to reduce costs.</p> <p>Then after a business has undertaken an energy assessment there will be an opportunity to apply for a grant for commercial and industrial SMEs to facilitate investment in energy efficiency measures.</p>	<p>Grants: Opportunity for the SMEs to apply for grants up to £100,000.</p> <p>These grants will be administered by the SME's local authority.</p>	<p>Ensure to register for the correct authority or this could delay your assessment:</p> <p><u>Operating in Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry or the Black Country</u></p> <p><u>Operating within Herefordshire, Shropshire or Telford & Wrekin</u></p> <p><u>Operating within Staffordshire County Council</u></p>

Bio renewables Development Centre	Yorkshire	<p>The BDC provides customers with innovative ideas to convert plants, microbes and biowastes into profitable, high-value products.</p> <p>The BDC can support businesses by delivering desk-based assessments (e.g. market research, mapping of primary and secondary sectors), facilitating connections across the bioeconomy sector, and helping companies to find value across their supply chain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded support for regional SMEs Part-financed by the ERDF, the BDC offers funded support for Yorkshire SMEs operating in bioeconomy sectors. The offer includes lab- and consultancy-based projects. • Business Innovation insight Helping customers to find commercial value chains by delivering market research and mapping, facilitating introductions and connections (B2B, B2C), providing business advice and identifying funding opportunities. 	<p>To discuss how the BDC can help your research or your business, contact the BDC team info@biorenewables.org or +44 (0)1904 328040</p>
Made Smarter - SME Digital Adoption Support	Currently England only	<p>Made Smarter Digital Adoption Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer funding and support for SME manufacturing business looking to adopt technology. • Opportunities available in: North East, North West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, West of England and East Midlands. 	<p>SME Regional Digital Adoption Support</p> <p>North East - delivered by North East LEP & Tess Valley Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes workshops, guidance, leadership training and a 1-2-1 digital health check. Funding routes also available <p>North West - delivered by The Growth Company, Cheshire & Warrington LEP, and Cumbria LEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a fully funded assessment, match funded grants of up to £20k to purchase hardware and software <p>West Midlands - delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire LEP with GBSLEP, the Black Country, Worcestershire Business, The Marshes, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match funded grants up to £20k for the purchase of hardware and software 	<p>Most regions offering match funded grants up to £20k for SMEs looking for support to adopt digital technologies.</p>

			<p>Yorkshire and the Humber - delivered by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, York and North Yorkshire Growth Hub and Hull and East Yorkshire LEP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully funded business assessment Match funded grants of up to £20k for the purchase of hardware and software. 	
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Up-coming Schemes:

Programme Name	Countries/ Regions	Details of Scheme	Funding Details	Key Dates / Notes
Future Leaders Fellowships: Round 10, business and non-academic	UK	<p>The aim of this competition is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support ambitious research and innovation to tackle difficult and novel challenges support excellence in innovation, across interdisciplinary boundaries and sectors develop, retain, and attract the next wave of research and innovation leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding type: Grant Your project must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → have a grant funding request of between £100,000 and £3 million last for a minimum of four years, with the option to extend for a further three years → carry out all its project work in the UK & intend to exploit results from or in UK → be based at, or have the support of, an eligible non-academic host organisation <p>View more details</p>	<p>Opens: 23/06/25 Closes: 05/11/25</p>

Testing transformative AI technology	UK	<p>The £7 million funding comes from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Technology Missions Fund, delivered by the Innovate UK BridgeAI programme.</p> <p>It will help the 120 projects test potentially transformative AI technology across four high growth industry sectors, including the agri-food sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £7million fund in total (Specific details will follow when the programme opens) Awarded to SMEs 	TBC
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Recently Closed Schemes:

Programme Name	Countries/ Regions	Details of Scheme	Funding Details	Key Dates / Notes
Innovate UK innovation loans future economy: Round 20	UK	<p>Innovate UK innovation loans are for highly innovative late stage research and development (R&D) projects with the best potential for the future. There must be a clear route to commercialisation and economic impact.</p> <p>Your project must lead to innovative new products, processes or services that are significantly ahead of others currently available, or propose an innovative use of existing products, processes or services. It can also involve a new or innovative business model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding type: Loan between £100,000 and £2 million (£25 million in total) To receive an innovation loan for a new project you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered SME → carry out your project from or in the UK → intend to exploit the results from or in the UK → give evidence that your business is suitable to take on a loan 	<p>Opened: 06/03/25 Closes: 07/05/25</p>

			Find out more details about the scope of the programme	
Investor partnerships: digital technologies, North East round 2	Northeast England (refers to the geography of the North East Combined Authority which includes Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham)	<p>The aim of this competition is to provide support for research and development and access to the capital investment that businesses need to develop and commercialise their innovations and grow.</p> <p>Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, has selected investor partners who have demonstrated the credibility, capability, capacity and appetite to invest in innovative, technology-led businesses in areas that align with our objectives in programme areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding type: Investor Partnerships (up to £1.7 million) • You must demonstrate that if your project is funded, it will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → have significant market impact → be scalable → be attractive to equity investors • Your project must help to grow your innovation activities in the digital technology cluster in North East England, both during and after the project. <p>Find out more details about the scope of the programme</p>	Opened: 24/02/25 Closed: 09/04/25
Launchpad: net zero industry, Southwest Wales – round 2 CR&D	Southwest Wales	<p>The aim of this competition is to support outstanding innovation projects led by businesses.</p> <p>This funding is from Innovate UK's Launchpad programme which supports the UK government's goals for local economic growth. This Launchpad is also supporting Net Zero Industry Wales as the local cluster management organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding type: Grant (Your project's total eligible grant funding request must be between £150,000 and £750,000.) • To lead a project your organisation must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered business of any size → be or involve at least one grant claiming micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) → collaborate with other UK registered organisations → be growing your innovation activities in the net zero 	Opened: 24/02/25 Closed: 09/04/25

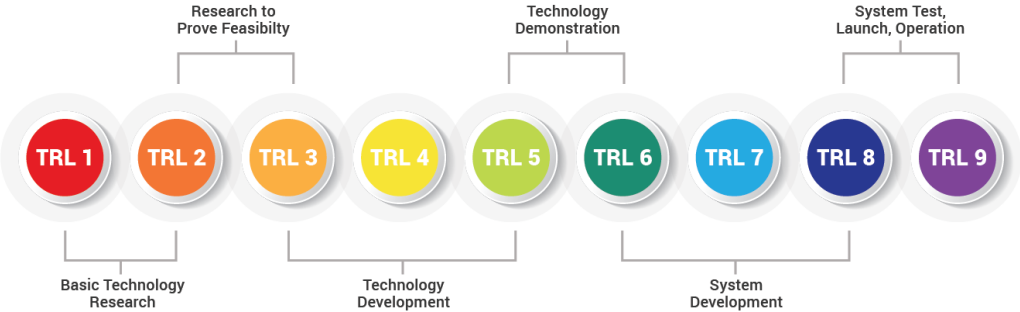
			<p>industrial innovation cluster in Southwest Wales</p> <p>→ have a demonstrable ambition for business growth</p> <p>Find out more about the scope of the programme</p>	
Scottish Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (SIETF)	Scotland	The Scottish Government announced it is open to expressions of interest regarding potential match-funding investment for industrial decarbonisation projects that can demonstrate significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions such as through energy efficiency, switching fuel to a lower-carbon source or capturing carbon.	<p><u>View further information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key contacts can be found below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Scottish Enterprise (SE): ian.carstairs@scotent.co.uk → Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE): Keith.Masson@hient.co.uk → South of Scotland: NetZero@sose.scot 	<p>Stage 1 - February to March 2025: Expressions of interest to capture project data via agencies (closure Wednesday 19 March 2025)</p> <p>View the timetable here.</p>
Innovate UK innovation loans future economy: Round 19	UK	Innovate UK is offering up to £25 million in loans to micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Innovate UK innovation loans are for highly innovative late-stage research and development (R&D) projects with the best potential for the future. There must be a clear route to commercialisation and economic impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding type: Loan • You can apply for a loan of between £100,000 and £2 million to fund your project's eligible costs. • To receive an innovation loan for a new project you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered micro, small or medium sized enterprise (SME) → carry out your project from or in the UK → intend to exploit the results from or in the UK → give evidence that your business is suitable to take on a loan 	<p>Opened: 09/01/25</p> <p>Closed: 05/03/25</p>

			Find out more about the scope of the programme	
BridgeAI Innovation Exchange – Call for challenge holders	UK	<p>The BridgeAI Innovation Exchange (iX), led by Innovate UK Business Connect, offers an exciting opportunity for leading UK enterprises to tackle critical productivity challenges.</p> <p>By hosting these challenges, organisations can benefit from cutting-edge AI solutions from selected solution providers who are supported by access grant funding of up to £50,000 per project.</p>	<p>Applies to: medium to large UK-based enterprises, operating within high- growth sectors, including food processing.</p> <p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A defined productivity challenge with potential for broad, scalable solutions • High-quality, relevant data to support solution development and integration • A commitment to collaboration, as you'll engage with AI solution providers to ensure effective solution delivery 	<p>Opened: 14/01/25 Closed: 07/02/25</p>
AI solutions to develop AI competencies in key sectors	UK	<p>Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, will invest up to £2 million in innovation projects as part of the BridgeAI programme.</p> <p>The aim of this competition is to develop responsible and ethical AI personalised learning solutions, to support AI competency development in specific sectors including agriculture and food processing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding type: Grant • Your project's total eligible grant funding request must be between £50,000 and £100,000. • To lead a project or work alone your organisation must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered business of any size → carry out its project work in the UK → intend to exploit the project results from or in the UK → be or involve at least one UK registered micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) 	<p>Opened: 11/11/24 Closed: 29/01/25</p>

Innovate UK Smart Grants: November 2024	UK	<p>Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is investing up to £15 million in the best game changing and world leading ideas, designed for swift, successful commercialisation.</p> <p>This competition has a focused scope and eligibility criteria to support micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their partners in developing genuinely new innovations with significant potential for rapid economic return to the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Type: Grant • View here to check if you are in scope • Your project must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → start by 1 July 2025 and end by 30 June 2027 → include at least one micro, small or medium enterprise (SME) as the lead or a collaborative grant claiming partner → follow specific rules depending on its duration → carry out all of its project work in the UK → intend to exploit the results from or in the UK 	<p>Opened: 14/11/24 Closed: 22/01/25</p>
Innovate UK innovation loans future economy: Round 18	UK	<p>Innovate UK is offering up to £25 million in loans to micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding type: Loan • Loans can be between £100,000 and £2 million. • You must be able to show that you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → be a UK registered micro, small or medium sized enterprise (SME) → carry out your project from or in the UK → intend to exploit the results from or in the UK → give evidence that your business is suitable to take on a loan 	<p>Opened: 31/10/24 Closed: 08/01/25</p> <p><i>The funding available will be allocated across a series of competitions with the next round opening on the day the previous round closes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>round 19 will open on 9 January 2025 and will close on 5 March 2025</i> • <i>round 20 will open on 6 March 2025 and will close on 7 May 2025</i>

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Technology Readiness Level Scale



- TRL1 – Basic Principles
- TRL2 – Invention and Research
- TRL3 – Proof of Concept
- TRL4 – Bench Scale Research

TRL5 – Pilot Scale
TRL6 – Large Scale
TRL7 – Inactive Commissioning
TRL8 – Active Commissioning
TRL9 - Operations