

The Growing Kent and Medway 'Business Sustainability Challenge'

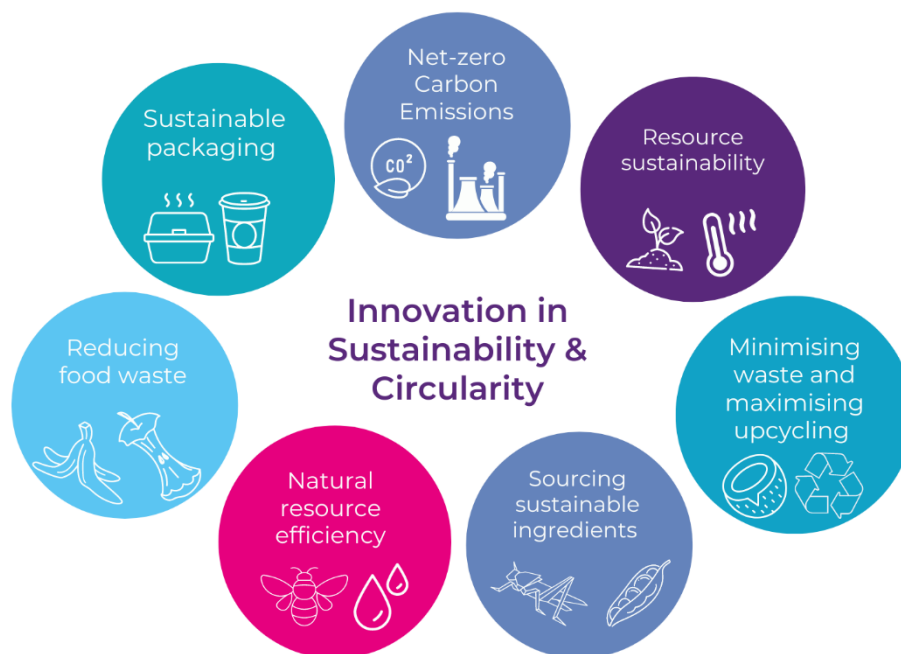
The Challenge

Innovative ideas, processes or technologies to support sustainable production, products and packaging in the horticultural, food and drink supply chain.

Growing Kent & Medway's Business Sustainability Challenge will support businesses to work individually or in collaboration with other businesses on short-term, high-impact innovation projects focused on sustainability and creating viable circular economies in the Kent and Medway region.

Scope

The aim of this competition is to support innovation in sustainability and circularity in the horticultural and plant-based food and drink sectors. To help guide you we have defined 7 core areas and during the application stage we will ask you to describe how your project fits under one or more of these areas.



Projects can focus on the following:

- Moving towards net zero carbon emissions targets
 - *For example, testing and implementing innovative solutions to reducing emissions from your business (or hub of businesses)*
- Improving resource sustainability

- *For example, selecting more sustainable resources for your operation or finding ways to 'close the loop' on otherwise wasted resources*
- Minimising waste and maximising recycling
 - *For example, find alternative uses for waste/by-products within the business or between businesses to replace non-circular practices such as landfill and incineration*
- Procure food ingredients from sustainable sources
 - *For example, a food producer looking to replace their animal-based protein with an alternative protein source or 'upcycling' ingredients from raw materials which would otherwise be wasted*
- Use natural resources efficiently
 - *For example, reduce fossil fuels, optimise water use, reduce pollution of waterways, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, maintain healthier soils and increase biodiversity*
- Use environmentally efficient food packaging
 - *For example, optimise packaging use and switch to using recycled or 'upcycled' materials with a lower environmental impact*
- Reduce food waste
 - *For example, use technical strategies to extend shelf life and reduce waste sent to landfill*

Whilst your project should fit into one or more of the 7 core areas, the list of examples is not exhaustive. If you are unsure please [contact us](#) to discuss project ideas and how they fit within our core areas.

The Project

- Projects must be innovative and can last for up to 8 months
- Projects should focus on sustainability and/or creating viable circular economies in horticultural food and drink sector.
- We encourage collaborative applications with multiple business partners. Individual businesses can also apply.
- Multi-partner projects will need to identify a lead partner who will sign a funding agreement on behalf of the collaborating businesses.

The Funding

- This funding call will offer grants up to 50% of eligible project costs (see [guidelines for applicants](#)), with a maximum grant value of £50,000 and a minimum grant value of £10,000
- The business(es) should co-invest a minimum of 50% of total eligible project cost through match funding.
- This means total project costs of £20,000 - £100,000+

- Grant will be paid upon project completion – you will need to provide a proof of payment to be reimbursed.

Eligibility

- In order to be eligible to lead a project you need to be a Kent or Medway-based micro, small or medium sized business (see list of eligible postcodes and guidance on company size definitions in our [guidelines for applicants](#)).
- Collaborating businesses can be any sized UK-registered business from any region in the UK. However, 75% of project activity needs to take place in the Kent and Medway region and large businesses cannot draw from the grant, although their match funding does count towards the total project cost.
- Subcontractor costs are allowed up to 30% of total project costs and the subcontractor(s) can be from anywhere in the UK, you must select them through your usual procurement process.
- Applications are also welcome from businesses that are sole traders/ partnerships or charities and social enterprises.
- To demonstrate that you are a genuine company we will require you to provide supporting evidence on request as follows:
 - If you are a limited company – 3 years of company accounts (where available) to be supplied plus 3 months of business bank statements (where available).
 - If you are not registered with Companies House (such as sole traders) we would require two or more of the following documents:
 - **Three months of business bank statements (where available)**
 - **HMRC Registration Document**
 - **Business Utility Bill (addressed to the business)**
 - **Business Insurance Certificate**
 - If you are a partnership – you can supply a signed copy of the partnership agreement plus one of the documents highlighted in purple above
 - If you are a not-for-profit entity – you can supply a Memorandum and Articles of Association plus one of the documents highlighted in purple above
- The competition is focussed on the horticultural and plant-based food and drink sectors. Businesses operating in these sectors and/or projects which have a positive impact on the sustainability of these target sectors are eligible for funding. If you are unsure if your business/project idea will be eligible [contact us](#).
- Your project must demonstrate impact on the Kent and Medway economy.

- Subsidy: This competition provides funding in line with the UK's obligations and commitments to Subsidy Control. You will be asked during the application stage to declare amounts of subsidy and financial support previously received (find out why and how we do this in our [subsidy control guidelines](#)). Further information about the UK Subsidy Control requirements can be found within the [EU-UK Trade and Cooperation agreement](#) and the subsequent guidance from the department of [Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\)](#).

Key dates

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Online Briefing | 10 th March 2023 Available on demand |
| Applications open | 3 rd April 2023 |
| Deadline for applications | 31 st May 2023 |
| Successful applicants notified | By August |
| Project start | August onwards* |

* Projects can start and expenditure incurred from the date the grant offer letter is received (on the condition that the legal agreement is signed and returned in a timely manner thereafter). Alternatively, applicants will have up to two months from the date of the grant offer letter to review and return the legal agreement, to arrange any collaborative agreements (if applicable) and to prepare for the start of the project.

How to apply

The Business Sustainability Challenge is a competitive funding call with a single stage application process. If you would like to discuss your idea before applying to check if it is suitable, please get in touch with one of our innovation growth managers [here](#). You can start your application via the [funding page](#) on the Growing Kent and Medway website. We recommend that you become a member of Growing Kent and Medway ahead of starting your application which will mean you are able to relaunch your application form from your membership dashboard, guidance for which can be found in the following [video](#).

You will need to provide applicant details, information to assess your eligibility, details about your project and project costs. See our [guidelines for applicants](#) to guide you through the application form.

NOTE: You are only allowed to submit one application as a lead applicant per business in this funding round.

Assessment of the proposals

This is a competitive grant fund. We will assess your eligibility to receive funding and the quality of the project proposed. A portfolio approach will be taken in awarding funding. The assessment criteria is summarised below:

- Collaborative projects will be favoured
- Your proposed project needs to be innovative and in scope
- Your proposed project needs to demonstrate that the resources and team are appropriate and have the potential to lead to a successful outcome
- Your proposed project costs need to be appropriate
- Your eligibility will be assessed based on where the lead applicant is based, their size and subsidy allowance
- Your commitment to GKM's conditions of grant funding (the grant will use public funding and as such we ask applicants to commit to a number of conditions at the application stage which are: an agreement to publicise the funded projects (you have an opportunity to outline a public statement should the project be commercially sensitive); [social value](#) commitment; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.

Award of grant

- Following the subsidy and eligibility checks and assessment panel decision, applicants will be informed of the outcome.
- Successful applicants will be invited to complete and sign the [Legal Agreement](#).
- You must not start the project until the award has been approved (i.e. you have received a grant offer letter).

Post-award requirements

- Projects to start within 2 months of receipt of the grant offer letter
- [Social value](#) delivery (plan to be included in the application)
- Support with publicity, including a press release and case study (GKM story)
- Grant payment in arrears - provide claim evidence