Innovation Cluster Development Fund
Application Briefing Document

The Innovation Cluster Development Fund (ICDF) is an early-stage fund aimed at enabling staff and project teams to focus on the development of an innovative idea that may have potential for a spin-out venture or worthy of exploration through other commercialisation routes. ICDF will assist project leaders to validate and mature these innovations, identifying gaps that need to be filled in the journey to commercialisation and realising the potential of our new and groundbreaking discoveries.

Who can apply?

The Innovation Cluster Development Fund (ICDF) is open to all academic staff members (including post-doctoral researchers and PhD students) at the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian University who have salary support in place until 31 July 2027.

Please note that associate/honorary staff are not permitted as budget holders – in these cases a staff member (e.g., Co-PI, collaborator) can be named as budget holder/main Principal Investigator. PhD students are eligible if they have a Principal Investigator (staff member) as budget holder to provide support.

Further, should students' fees or stipend be paid for by a third party, students must obtain approval from that third party to participate. These terms apply to both University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian University. To be eligible for the Innovation Cluster Development Fund, PhD students must familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions from their institution to ensure there is clarity on the assignation of intellectual property rights arising from their supported project.

Principal Investigators should be directly engaged with the UofG IP & Commercialisation team / GCU InnovationExchange@gcu.ac.uk to ensure appropriate support for their commercialisation activities including identification, protection, management and assignation of IP, and prior to commencing commercialisation activities.

Key Dates

This round of funding is now open, with key dates as follows:

Applications open	21st September 2026
Application deadline	2nd November 2026 at 12 noon
Applicants notified of outcome	Early December 2026
Project delivery period	5th January 2027 – 5th July 2027
Project spend and activities deadline	5th July 2027

End of project report deadline	30th July 2027

The project delivery period should be between 3 months and a maximum of 6 months, and all projects must complete spend of budgets and activity by Monday July 5th, 2027. We will not be able to extend projects beyond this date and any expenditure incurred after that date will not be eligible for reimbursement.

What are the entry level criteria?

This call is open to all academic staff members (including post-doctoral researchers and PhD students) at the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian University who have a proposed project idea that demonstrates:

1. A clear ambition to commercialise an idea or product offering/create spin-out venture – with a potential pathway to realise this
2. A customer led focus
3. Some evidence the solution meets an unmet need or market gap (however early) potential for competitive advantage
4. Potential for intellectual property protection (could be unpublished data/know-how or patent filing)
5. Alignment with one of the 8 Industrial Strategy Sectors (IS8):
    - Advanced Manufacturing
    - Clean Energy Industries
    - Creative Industries
    - Defence
    - Digital & Technologies
    - Financial Services
    - Life Sciences
    - Professional and Business Services

    Or alignment with one of the 5 eligible University of Glasgow clusters:
    - Health & Life Sciences
    - Critical Tech (e.g. quantum, semiconductor, photonics and wider digital enabling)
    - Energy & Net Zero (includes engineering)
    - Creative Arts
    - Social Sciences & Social Innovation (includes professional services)

Please note if you have applied for previous University of Glasgow innovation funding, you must demonstrate how your project is different from any previously funded projects and/or clearly demonstrate how the project has progressed since any previous funding has been received. As ICDF targets early stage innovation, if your project has previously received early stage support you may be guided towards another fund at the University or externally.

What funding and support is available?

Up to **£30,000** of funding is available per project.

Eligible costs

Examples of eligible work packages include:

- **Wide ranging support** e.g. market identification and validation studies/customer discovery exercises; prototype design; data collation; platform design; diagnostics; IP development; proof of concept; regulatory/compliance preparation, etc.
- **Developing a regulatory plan** to take an innovation forward
- **Buy-out of staff time** to generate evidence and validate the scale of the market for the innovation proposed via engagements with developers, investors, corporates, and other stakeholders. *(This could include engaging a product designer via sub-contract to input to creating visuals/narratives to pitch innovations)*.

  Note: Up to six months of salary costs for new temporary staff at University of Glasgow (direct appointments only) are eligible for inclusion, where it can be demonstrated that appropriate staff can be recruited in the timescale and/or that contractual arrangements for current staff on temporary contracts can be reasonably altered.

Ineligible costs

The fund **will not** support the following costs:

- Shortfalls from research funded by other grants
- PhD fees
- Publisher costs associated with Open Access
- Costs associated with academic conference attendance
- For internal staffing costs: estates and indirect costs are not included (as per costing template)

How to apply?

Completed applications must be submitted by 2nd November 2026 at 12 noon, as follows:

University of Glasgow applicants

Application forms (in Microsoft Word format), and if applicable Costing Template for University of Glasgow staff costings (in Microsoft Excel format) as well as relevant quotes must be submitted electronically to innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk.

Glasgow Caledonian University applicants

Application forms (in Microsoft Word format), Costing Documentation and Risk Register, as well as relevant quotes must be submitted electronically to InnovationExchange@gcu.ac.uk.

What are the assessment criteria?

All applications will be checked for eligibility, and thereafter eligible applications will be assessed by a small expert panel comprising of members with commercialisation and economic development expertise from the University of Glasgow and its partners. The panel will assess and prioritise applications with respect to:

- Overall alignment with the purpose of the Fund
- The stage of concept/protype development
- Intellectual property status
- Evidence of any industry endorsement for the project / solution
- The market and impact opportunity
- The potential for scalable spin out venture / social enterprise creation / licensing opportunity

See appendices below for other Terms and Conditions and our Privacy Notice.

Application writing guidance

- Project should be immediately understandable
- Explain your product or service clearly and how it fixes the problem
- Make the commercial opportunity clear
- Be specific about what the funding will achieve
- Clearly identify the customer or end user
- Use evidence to support claims about demand, market need and potential

Expected outcomes

Every funded project is expected to deliver, by its end date:

- **An evidenced decision -** proceed, pivot or stop, with the evidence that drove it.
- **Direct market contact -** documented engagement with prospective customers, users, industry partners or investors. Numbers and names.
- **A defined IP position -** invention disclosure lodged where relevant, freedom-to-operate scoped, and a decision made on protection.
- **A named next step** - the specific programme, partner, investor or licensing route you are looking to take after the fund end date.

What are the reporting requirements?

- Successful applicants will be invited to a 1-2-1 update meeting at the midway point of project delivery phase.
- Award recipients will be required to submit a succinct report detailing expenditure and project outcomes by July 30, 2027.
- We may get in touch with you once a year to hear how your project is progressing, the impact the funding has had and any key developments that are relevant to share.

APPENDIX: TERMS AND CONDITIONS (University of Glasgow)

Clauses:

- Principal Investigators must be the main budget holder for project funds at the University of Glasgow and are fully responsible for all project reporting and leading the delivery of project activities.
- Principal Investigators are responsible for compliance with award conditions and ensuring any collaborators meet conditions.
- PhD students are eligible if they have a Principal Investigator (UofG staff member) as budget holder to provide support. Discussions will take place with the IP&C team and Enterprise programmes team to ensure there is clarity on the assignation of intellectual property rights arising from their supported project.
- Further, should students' fees or stipend be paid for by a third party, students must obtain approval from that third party to participate. Please provide evidence of approval at application stage.
- Acceptance of the funding award letter constitutes acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.
- All awards must acknowledge their funding support in all publications, press releases and other communications materials as follows: funded by the University of Glasgow's Innovation Cluster Development Fund.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that all proposed activities are in accordance with the University's ethical guidance and Code of Practice for Research. All projects must ensure appropriate project risk assessment have been completed before beginning any funded activity (including where activity is not being completed by UofG staff or students). Applicants must apply best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion according to University policies, please also refer to courses housed on the Equality and Diversity Unit's Moodle portal.
- The University of Glasgow is committed to take proactive measures to address the climate crisis, please consider sustainability goals when planning and performing project activities.
- All applications selected for funding are additionally subject to all other research assurance processes at the University of Glasgow, including due diligence checks, purchasing and procurement guidelines, and ethical approval.
- A privacy notice on how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data in relation to your application can be found on the webpage.
- It is a requirement that the applicant(s) gains approval for any internal costs associated with their application prior to submitting their application and for project related time commitments from their line manager or academic supervisor.
- No additional funds will be made available to projects that exceed their budget, including those associated with unforeseen VAT charges. Please note that almost all external services including consultancy are subject to VAT. Please include VAT costs in the costings of your application. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their requested budgets are sufficient for all project related costs.
- All project budgets must be fully spent by 5th July 2027. We will not be able to extend project spend beyond this date and any expenditure incurred after that date will not be eligible for reimbursement. Any underspend cannot be allocated to other University projects.
- Successful applicants will be asked to report on their progress, by way of a short 1-2-1 mid-term meeting, and submission of a final report. Deadline for reporting is 30th July 2027 (e.g. interim/final report).
- In exceptional circumstances an extension to project reporting can be considered at the Universities discretion. Please contact the innovation & Enterprise team directly: innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk

- Written approval is required for changes to award objectives, milestones, budget reallocations or project personnel. Please contact the innovation & Enterprise team directly: innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk. Successful applicants should immediately begin preparing any necessary subcontracts, hiring processes and budget set-up upon award (please DO NOT underestimate how long these processes might take). There will be no possibility of extensions.
- Procurement/ Contracts: subcontracts such as consultancy agreements are required for all external services and partnerships. Applicants are responsible for ensuring contracts are in place before starting any work. Please familiarise yourself with procurement rules at University of Glasgow - MyGlasgow - Procurement Office and contact financeprocurementhelpline@glasgow.ac.uk or your local procurement transaction hub after funding has been awarded for help. Please send a copy of all signed subcontracts to innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk.
- PIs should be directly engaged with the IP&C team to ensure appropriate support for their commercialisation activities including identification and protection of IP, and prior to commencing commercialisation activities. In line with the University of Glasgow's IP policy, successful applicants must follow reasonable procedures for the identification, protection, management and commercialisation of IP including appropriate dialogue with the IP&C team. All results arising from the funded project including all intellectual property will be the exclusive property of the University of Glasgow.
- Decisions on funding award are final and not subject to appeal.
- Termination of funding: There may be circumstance in which your funding is terminated. This includes misconduct, non-compliance, inactivity, or any identified financial irregularities. The University will let you know if this is the case and consider any reasonable representations you may have before a decision is taken.
- It is a condition of the grant of award that the University has the right, but not the obligation, to publicise the award including your participation in the award. The University may do this at the time the award is announced, at any time during the period of the project and after you cease work on this. The legal basis for this under Data Protection laws is legitimate interests.
- The University wishes you every success in the Project. If for some reason you are finding it difficult to meet any of these conditions, you are encouraged to contact innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk so that the University can consider how best to support you.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS (Glasgow Caledonian University)

For applicants from Glasgow Caledonian University, please contact Susan Armstrong innovationexchange@gcu.ac.uk for the Terms and Conditions specific to your institution.

APPENDIX 2: Privacy Notice (University of Glasgow)

Your Personal Data

The University of Glasgow will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your application to the Innovation Cluster Development Fund. This privacy notice will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

Why we need it

We are collecting your basic personal data such as name and contact e-mail address in order to evaluate your application, loading successful applications onto grant management systems, enable outcome tracking and to support emerging innovation initiatives across the university. We will only collect data that we need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. In this instance, the legal basis is 'Legitimate Interest'.

What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by staff at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. We will use contact e-mail addresses provided in your application to provide information regarding the application and may also share general information (Principal Investigator name, contact e-mail address and general research interests) with other members of staff at the University of Glasgow, who might be useful contacts. Your application including name of Principal Investigator, will be shared with an expert panel of reviewers, some of whom might not be members of the University of Glasgow. We may share non-confidential projects descriptions, principal investigator names and e-mail addresses of successful applicants on University of Glasgow website and with the funders as part of reporting requirements (this may include sharing post codes with the funder to capture strategic regional outcomes for the Glasgow city region). Gender and ECR data is shared in aggregate form only and is used to identify and address any potential bias in the application and selection processes.

How long do we keep it for

Your data will be retained by the University indefinitely unless the information is deemed no longer needed. If the data is no longer required, it will be securely deleted.

What are your rights?

You can request access to the information we process about you at any time. If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it restricted, corrected, or erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request via the webform or contact dp@glasgow.ac.uk.

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) https://ico.org.uk/. If you have any questions relating to this consent form or the way we are planning to use your information, please contact: innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk