

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INNOVATION TEAM?

Collaborating with partners on an R&D project allows you to benefit from a wide range of skills, experiences, and practical tools - without the risks that come from more formal long-term partnerships. It's a chance to test out whether or not a relationship will work...but it's still important you choose your team carefully.

With this in mind we've put together some helpful tips and things to think about when you're selecting partners for your project, such as: what sort of partners do you need to achieve your business objectives and goals faster? How can your team be strengthened through partnerships? And have you considered partners right across your value chain (customers, supply & expertise)?

We've also detailed how best to articulate your collaborations when you apply for Innovate UK funding, to give your idea the very best chance of success.

HOW TO FIND PARTNERS FOR YOUR INNOVATION

1

EXAMINE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES

In business, as in life, finding the right partner takes time. So, as eager as you might be to get other enthusiastic people on board, don't just go for the first one that takes an interest. Look for partners that will have the greatest impact on your innovation and prioritise these - even if it means employing a little patience. It'll be worth it in the long run.



2

DEVISE A CLEAR STRATEGY AND BE CLEAR ON YOUR OBJECTIVES

There are bound to be trade-offs in any relationship, but it's important to be clear on what you're looking for from your partner, outlining these in writing before you agree anything formally. For example: is it help with technology you're looking for? Or with design? Or both? Make sure you work out the parameters of your partnership early on.



3

FULLY EVALUATE POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Now's the time to be picky. Make sure you fully evaluate any potential partners with a critical eye (not rose-tinted spectacles). Do their values and vision for the project perfectly align with yours? Can you see yourself working with them on a one-to-one level? These are all important questions, which could have a real impact on your project's future success.

4

MONITOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

Sustained collaboration must generate for success for both partners. It seems like an obvious point, but it's important to make sure you regularly review whether or not your partnerships are working for everyone involved - setting out clear objectives, and monitoring value, performance and impact as your project progresses.

TIPS ON PARTNERSHIPS WHEN APPLYING FOR FUNDING

1

WHAT MAKES A GENUINE TEAM?

When you apply for funding, it's important to make sure your collaborators are true partners in your business, not sub-contractors glorified for the purposes of securing a grant. If you have collaborators, you'll need to demonstrate how they'll benefit from the project and exploitation of the technology, ensuring they have input into the proposal, and that the relationship is not in any way one-sided.

2

MAKE SURE YOU'RE DEFINING 'COLLABORATION' CORRECTLY

Many Innovate UK competitions require organisations to collaborate with others. To give your idea the best chance at winning, be sure to carefully check you understand if/how the application defines 'collaboration' (for example, 'two or more grant receiving partners'). Remember, if you aren't 100% clear on this, or anything else in the competition, please feel free to email us at support@innovateuk.ukri.org or call us on 0300 321 4357.

3

AGREE PARTNERS AND MAKE IT FORMAL

Once you've found the right partners, it's time to make it official. Before work begins, all participants need to sign a collaborative agreement, showing clearly who does what, how the intellectual property is shared, how each collaborator benefits, and how they will be able to exploit the technology being developed. Setting the terms of your partnership here, in black and white, could help you avoid major legal headaches in the future.

READY TO APPLY? [Click here](#)