## West Midlands Innovation Programme 3.0 (2025-2026)

## Flexible Innovation Fund Application

This form is for applicants wishing to submit their pilot project proposal to the West Midlands Innovation Programme (WMIP).

Project proposals should be align with the [West Midlands Plan for Growth](https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/economy-and-innovation/plan-for-growth-a-vision-for-growth-in-the-west-midlands/). Applicants are required to engage with WMIP Cluster Innovation Partners before submitting the application, who will help to ensure that the proposals are aligned with the region’s priorities. For information on how to contact CIP members, please see the Call Guidelines.

Completed forms, accompanied by separate files containing the project budget, detailed project plan, and risk register should be submitted via email to valentina.barker@wmca.org.uk. **The deadline for applications is 5pm on 9 June 2025.**

**Scoring:**

Each of the four main criteria (Quality, Impact, Strategic fit and Deliverability) will be scored from 0-6 by the reviewers (based on good practice from other processes), as follows:

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| **Score**  | **Meaning** | **Assessed as** |
| 0 | Very Poor | Application section lacks information to make a judgment. |
| 1 | Poor | Application section has many weaknesses / most criteria not addressed. |
| 2 | Fair | Application section has some weaknesses and some criteria not addressed. |
| 3 | Satisfactory | All criteria addressed but with limited detail. |
| 4 | Good | All criteria addressed but with a few gaps in detail. |
| 5 | Excellent | All criteria addressed to a high standard. |
| 6 | Outstanding | All criteria addressed to an exceptional standard. |

**PROJECT DETAIL:**

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| **Project Name** |  |
| **Lead Delivery Partner** |  |
| **Project Start Date** |  |
| **Project End Date** |  |
| **Funding Requested from WMIP** |  |
| **Additional Funding / Co-investment levered** |  |
| **Total Value of the Project (from all funding sources)** |  |
| **Cluster Innovation Partner(s) supporting the proposal** |  |
| **Public project description (250 words max)** |  |
| 1. **Project Outline. Provide an outline of the project and clearly describe the Innovation Ecosystem ‘gap’ or ‘challenge’ this project is addressing**
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| **1.1. What gap / challenge are you addressing?** |  |
| **1.2. Describe the opportunity to solve this challenge** |  |
| **1.3. What does the solution look like? (provide project outline)** |  |
| **1.4. Who are the stakeholders for this project? To what extent have they been engaged to date? How supportive are they of the project?** |
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| **1.5. Which CIPs (Cluster Innovation Partners) have you engaged with as part of this application? How supportive are they of your proposal?** Note: engagement with one or more CIPs is required to complete this application. |
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| 1. **Quality in relation to Innovation**
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| **2.1. Outline three main objectives that your project intends to address.** |
| **Objective 1** |  |
| **Objective 2** |  |
| **Objective 3** |  |
| **2.2. Provide three main outcomes that you expect to achieve by developing this project.**  |
| **Outcome 1** |  |
| **Outcome 2** |  |
| **Outcome 3** |  |
| **2.3. What intelligence or research have you interrogated that can demonstrate that this project is innovative?**  |
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| **2.4. What evidence shows that the outcomes of this project will respond to a local market or demand-side challenge?** |
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| 1. **Impact in relation to Innovation**
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| **3.1. Who are the target beneficiaries of this project?** |
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| **3.2. How will the project stimulate a greater demand for innovation in the regional clusters / sectors and contribute to a thriving innovation ecosystem?** |
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| **3.3. How will this project complement existing projects already funded in the area?** **To the best of your knowledge, have the proposed outputs of this project been funded through this or other regional funds in the past 5 years?** |
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| **3.4. Please provide the details of the additional funding / co-investment levered by the project.** |
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| **3.5. How can this project lever follow-on funding, attract further investment and scale? Do you have a road map to scaling proposed activity to benefit business growth and innovation? Please include your plans for the project dissemination activities and relevant stakeholders you’re planning to engage with.** |
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| **3.6. Has consideration been given to opportunities for international collaboration in the future? If you would like WMCA support to engage with European stakeholders and opportunities, please indicate which cities / organisations you would like to engage with.** |
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| 1. **Strategic Fit**
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| **4.1. How does this project meet the WM Plan for Growth and WMIP objectives and support delivery of WMCA targets for business productivity and growth, job creation, and enabling collaborations?** |
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| **4.2. 2. How will the project outcomes meet WMIP 3.0 objectives? These being:*** Piloting and expanding cross-sector and demand-driven innovation projects aiming to build greater capacity and capability to innovate across the regional businesses base.
* Securing funding to expand successful projects and aiming to increase public and private R&D investment in West Midlands.
* Supporting projects that address significant societal needs, challenges on net-zero, and health inequalities.
* Demonstrating impact of innovation interventions developed and driven at the regional level on stimulating high-quality applied and translational R&D activities.
* Building region’s reputation as the innovation champion and promoting its R&D strengths and networks globally to attract talent, partners, and investment.
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| **4.3. How will the project contribute to the following WMIP outputs agreed with the Innovate UK:*** Innovation support provided to 250 businesses
* creation of 22 jobs
* facilitation of 100 new collaborations
* delivery of 30 innovation events for 1500 attendees
* £4m in co-investment.
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| **4.3. Which Clusters/Sectors does this project address?** |
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| **4.4. What current regional initiatives does this project link to or add value to?** |
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| **4.5. Explain how this project will contribute to WMCA environmental sustainability, inclusive growth and equality objectives.** |
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| 1. **Deliverability**
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| **5.1. Provide an overview of your track record in developing successful demand-led innovation projects such as this.** |
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| **5.2. Outline how you plan on achieving the three outcomes stated in section 2.2. What are the critical success factors?** |
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| **5.3. List any partners, collaborators, contractors you intend on working with delivering this project.** |
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| **5.4. Clearly outline a list of tasks that will need to be undertaken, their timescales and resource requirements and any risks associated with these. Please provide a detailed project plan/ Gantt chart and risk register as separate documents.** |
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| **5.5. Clearly outline the how the funding will be spent to deliver the desired outcomes.** **Please provide a detailed project budget as a separate document.** |
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| **5.6. Clearly outline the project management and governance procedures that will be set up during the development and running of the project.** |
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**Annex 1:**

**Co-Investment Details**

In addition to the co-investment levered as part of the project funding, applicants are encouraged to consider wider private sector co-investment within their projects. They can also leverage existing West Midlands innovation infrastructure assets and expertise as in-kind contribution. Achieving a high-level of private sector co-investment across the portfolio of WMIP projects will be one of the considerations taken by the WMIP review panel when selecting the mix of projects for funding.

Whilst there is no mandated co-investment target for individual projects, applicants should be aware that the programme is aiming to achieve 1:1 co-investment over the project delivery phase (Pledged and Accompanying co-investment) and 2:1 over the total project lifespan (all types).

**Types of co-investment:**

* **Pledged**: The remainder of project costs not funded by public grants. In relation to WMIP pilot projects, this is co-investment levered and pledged by the Flexible Innovation Fund applicants.
* **Accompanying:** As for pledged, but over and above those pledged at the application stage.
* **Aligned:** Investment in a technology/research area thematically aligned to and catalysed by WMIP activities. E.g. increased confidence leading an organisation to start a second related innovation project with no grant funding from the programme.
* **Follow-on:** The investment to take to market, or exploit, outcomes from WMIP-funded activities (for example, investment to deliver a commercial product or funding for a scale up project).

Co-investment can be broken further into Public, Private or third 3rd sector co-investment. Detailed co-investment reporting will be required, as part of the projects monitoring framework.