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Female Founders
Grant Competition

APPLYING MADE SIMPLE

In partnership with:

Women in
Business

a part of **W** The **WiB** Group

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Female Founders Grant Competition

If you require further information beyond what has been provided in the criteria below, please do not hesitate to contact Techstart via email at **grants@techstart.vc**.

One of the team will arrange a call to discuss any queries you may have ahead of the application closing date.

What is the overall objective?
The Female Founders Funding Opportunity aims to support female entrepreneurs with a grant and business mentoring, directed towards exploring the viability and commercial potential of their innovative business idea.

What form does the funding take?
Grants of up to £35,000 are available.
Grants of different amounts will be awarded, but no applicant will receive more than £35,000.

Are the grants 100% funded?
Yes – up to the maximum limit stated above.

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What are the criteria to apply for the Female Founders Funding Opportunity?

- Applicants must be a Sole Trader, Partnership, or Limited Company. Applications from Community Interest Companies and Social Enterprises will not be considered.

- You (as a Sole Trader, Partnership, or Limited Company) must have an innovative business idea.

- You must be resident in Northern Ireland. If the principal applicant is applying through a Limited Company, the company must be registered in Northern Ireland and the principal applicant must be the majority shareholder. Techstart may request a recent utility bill as proof of address.

- If you are applying for part of the grant to cover the employment costs of people promoting the project, the application must be made by a Limited Company.

- For independent third-party costs, you must identify your proposed supplier at the application stage. If you have obtained a quotation from the supplier, it should be appended to your application.

- Successful applicants must provide formal quotations from proposed suppliers before a Letter of Offer is issued.

- Up to 30% of the grant awarded may be used to cover the employment costs of those promoting the project, with a set daily rate of £200.

- Your application must clearly detail the work to be undertaken during the PoC project under these costs, and the expected output.

- Administration time, project management time, and similar overhead activities are not eligible for employment cost coverage.

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Do I need to provide additional information beyond the supporting quotes from my chosen suppliers?

In addition to the application form and supporting quotes, Techstart may request further information or documentation before reaching a decision on your application.

Should I apply as a Sole Trader, Partnership, or Limited Company?

All are eligible. However, if you are applying for part of the grant to cover employment costs, you must apply as a Limited Company. If successful, the grant will be awarded to the entity that applied, and that entity must incur the costs, as the grant is paid in arrears.

Can the grant be used to cover employment costs?

Yes – however:

- The application must be made by a Limited Company.

- The application must clearly detail the work to be undertaken and the expected output.

- Administration time, project management time, and similar activities are not eligible.

- A maximum of 30% of the grant awarded can be used for employment costs.
- The set daily rate is £200.

- To claim these costs, the beneficiary must submit self-certified timesheets.

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Eligible activities

Activities eligible for support include, but are not limited to:

- Concept/Prototype Development – e.g. design and development of a software or hardware product, such as UI/UX design, platform development, mobile/web app creation, MVP production, or construction/manufacturing work.

- Market Research – e.g. understanding and sizing the addressable market, focus groups, domain expert consultancy, and/or attending relevant trade shows.

- Market Validation – e.g. testing the concept with potential customers and end-users.

- Market Testing Activities – e.g. assessing the best route to market.

- Assessment of IP Uniqueness – e.g. a patent search.

- Employment Costs – if the applicant has the expertise to carry out some of the above activities, this is permitted within the 30% employment cost limit, provided a clear output is delivered.

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Non-eligible activities

Non-eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Company registration/legal incorporation costs.

- IP protection costs, including trademarks.

- Product development beyond the core product (e.g. refinement).

- Marketing and sales costs.

- Costs incurred before the award of the grant or outside the agreed project timeframe.

- VAT (if you are VAT registered).

- Costs not directly connected to the project.

- Tablets, laptops, or similar equipment.

- Trading stock or stock for resale.

- Administration time, project management time, and similar overhead activities.

- Subsistence (including food, taxis, mileage).

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Who can undertake grant-related activities?

Applicants may appoint any independent third-party supplier they consider most suitable, provided the supplier is completely independent (e.g. has no relationship or directorship in the applicant's company).

What happens if my application is successful?

You will be notified by email and invited to a 'briefing session' to explain the process. Techstart will agree a plan of expenditure and clarify the claims process before issuing a Letter of Offer.

Women in Business walso contact you to arrange a suitable mentor to support you during the project.

How is the grant money paid?

Payments are made in arrears, upon submission of a project report and evidence of expenditure in line with the agreed plan.

This includes invoices, receipts, and a copy of the applicant's bank statement showing relevant payments. An 'End of PoC Project' meeting must take place before the final payment is released. If part of the grant is for employment costs, self-certified timesheets at a daily rate of £200 will be required.

Further information on the claims process will be provided if your application is successful.

If my application is unsuccessful, will I receive feedback?

Yes – feedback will be available upon request following your pitch.

Best of luck with your application,

Techstart Team.