

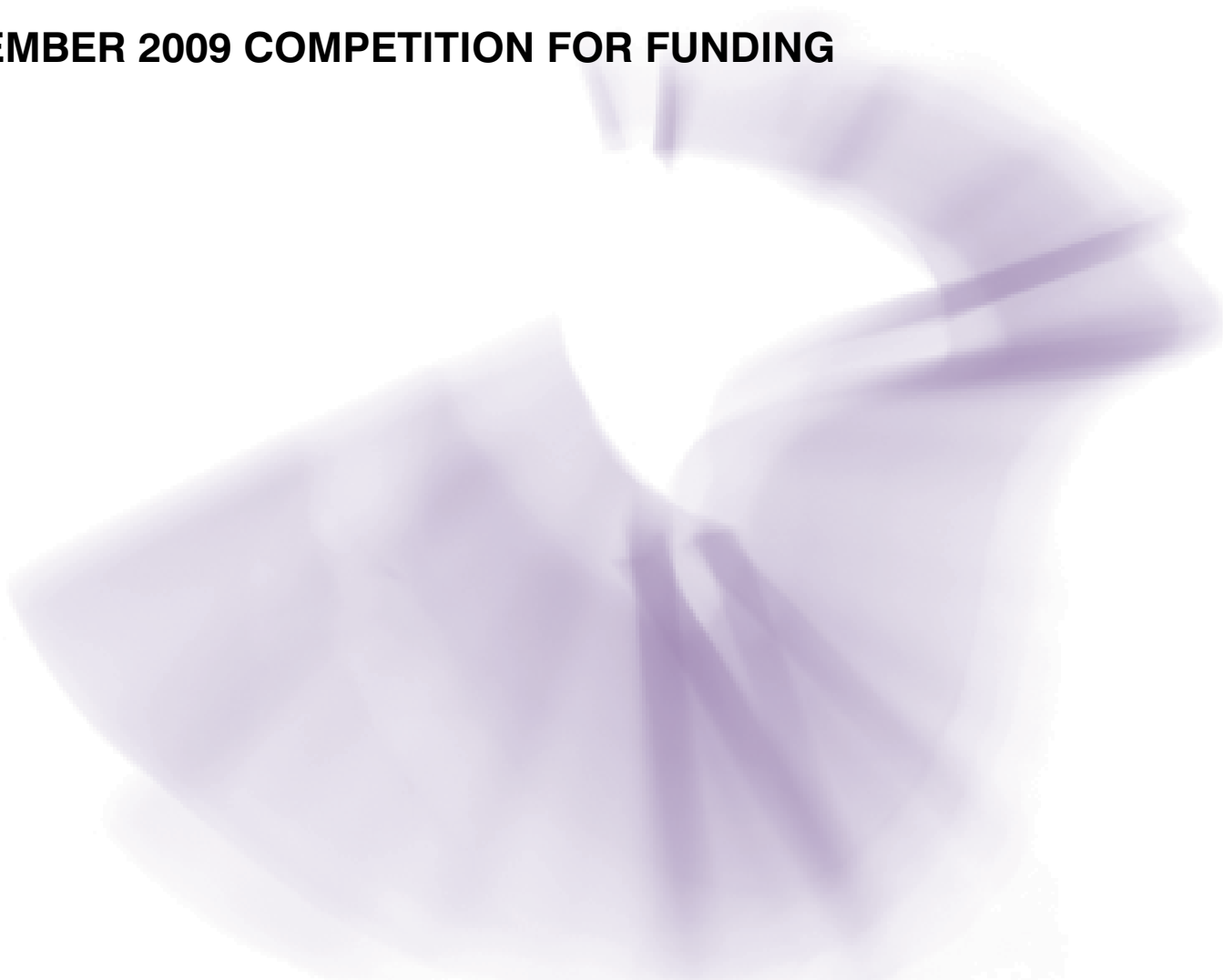
Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation



Feasibility Studies for Digital Britain

SEPTEMBER 2009 COMPETITION FOR FUNDING



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Summary

To stimulate innovation in business models, applications, services and technologies in support of the Government's vision of a Digital Britain, the Technology Strategy Board is allocating up to £2m for feasibility studies. These will enable the timely exploration of ideas and visions for the future of a Digital Britain, to inform further investments in innovation. Each study will last up to three months and cost no more than £33,000 in total, and we will fund up to 75% of the project cost (up to around £25,000).

For this competition we invite proposals:

- that contain an element of innovation in technology or business practice closely aligned with the Technology Strategy Board's *Our Strategy for Digital Britain*, published in June 2009. This can be found at www.innovateuk.org under Publications
- that are both led and undertaken by companies either individually or in partnership, and
- where the lead company would expect to be an active partner in any research work and exploitation of the ideas in the study.

The output of each study will be a short report that should include:

- a description of the problem addressed, the proposed solution and the expected impact
- the approach adopted during the feasibility study
- initial design or technical work to showcase the principles involved
- a technology gap analysis, and either
- a proposal to exploit the ideas, with a development plan to produce a prototype or demonstrator, or
- a justification for why the ideas cannot be taken forward.

Each project will be required to provide a 10-minute presentation of the report at a closing workshop in March 2010.

After completing these feasibility studies, applicants should be well placed to seek investment to develop their ideas, including through application to further Technology Strategy Board Digital Britain competitions in 2010 and beyond.

Scope

The feasibility studies must align closely with *Our Strategy for Digital Britain*.

This identifies priorities for innovation in the areas of:

- Economics of the network: to ensure that physical infrastructure can be installed and maintained in a cost-effective and sustainable way, and that its capacity and services are at the right scale for anticipated future needs
- Economics of content and services: to enable a fair and efficient flow of revenue across the value chain from content and service consumers to producers and providers
- Access, protection and enablement: to ensure that the entire infrastructure, and the interfaces onto it, meet users' expectations of quality of service, security, usability and flexibility.

We are particularly interested in proposals that address the following four priority areas, which may be the subject of further investment opportunities in 2010. Proposals outside these areas but within the scope of our strategy will also be considered.

Enabling technologies for the internet

We invite proposals for feasibility studies on hardware and/or software technologies that could extend the core functions of the internet and support the services that run on it. Examples include technologies and protocols to enable:

- content management, eg metadata technologies and systems to monitor, benchmark, index and link to digital content on the network
- revenue distribution, eg micropayments systems
- quality of service control on deployed networks
- a balance between personalisation and privacy
- management of data in the home, eg smart meters, home networking, set-top boxes, and interfaces based on TV or other devices.

The Technology Strategy Board is leading the introduction of digital test beds (announced in *Our Strategy for Digital Britain*) that will provide an environment in which businesses can explore solutions to the challenges outlined in the Strategy. The test beds are expected to start operations in 2010.

There will be an opportunity for feasibility studies from this competition to lead to investment in technology demonstrators, which may then be adopted to extend the core capabilities of the test beds, and so become part of the platform for developing new applications and services.



Applications and services for Digital Britain

We invite proposals for feasibility studies on novel applications, services and business models that embody and address the challenges explored in our strategy, especially those that facilitate cooperation between actors across the value chain. Examples include:

- new models for distributing and managing digital content, such as those based on metadata
- trusted services models, and
- models for personalising services and interfaces.

The Technology Strategy Board aims to support collaborative R&D projects in all of these areas, and the feasibility studies from this competition will help to inform the direction of subsequent competitions. Successful applications and services will also have the opportunity to be deployed and demonstrated on the digital test beds.

Access to public service information

With its Digital Britain agenda and other policy initiatives, the UK Government has stated its commitment to improve access to public service information, and to increase the number, quality, reach and accessibility of public services that are delivered digitally. The Government will therefore be a lead adopter of innovative technologies that address these challenges.

We invite proposals for feasibility studies that provide a compelling vision of the future shape of digital public services. Examples might address the problems of:

- how to increase accessibility to, and public engagement with, public services offered over digital networks, and
- how to increase the accessibility of public service information (eg through semantic analysis or the use of Linked Data), and how to exploit this through services centred on public needs.

The Technology Strategy Board is working with public service providers throughout Government, and may be able to help successful projects to connect to this market and the opportunities arising from government initiatives in this area.

Cost-effective deployment and operation of digital infrastructure

A major barrier to developing next-generation information infrastructure is the cost of deployment or operation. We invite proposals for feasibility studies on innovative methods and technologies that confront this challenge. Examples include:

- community initiatives or deployment models to increase the coverage of next-generation and wireless internet access to customers who are currently under-provisioned, in a way that reduces the cost of deployment compared to conventional methods
- ways to reduce the amount of energy needed to run telecommunications networks
- ways to use resources more efficiently during the running of networks.

The Technology Strategy Board is considering launching a competition for projects in this area in 2010.

Funding allocation and application process

The Technology Strategy Board has allocated up to £2m to fund feasibility studies that align with its Digital Britain strategy and seek to address the technical challenges identified in the four focus areas described above. The competition is open to all companies, whether alone or in collaboration with other companies. The total project costs can be no more than £33,000 and the Technology Strategy Board will award grants at 75% (up to around £25,000) to suitable proposals.

The competition is a single-stage process that will open on 1st September and close at midday on 1st October 2009. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by 16th October. Offer letters will be despatched no later than 30th October and must be returned by 30th November. This is a 'light-touch' competition with a shorter than normal time between opening and closing. An optional briefing will be held in London on 8th September to explain the process. To register for the briefing and to download an application form, visit our website at www.innovateuk.org

The feasibility studies must be completed by 26th February 2010 and applicants will be required to present their findings at an event in London in mid-March 2010, where they can also consider how their work might relate to competitions planned for later in 2010.

Key dates

Competition opens	1st September 2009
Briefing (optional)	8th September 2009
Deadline for receipt of full applications	1st October 2009 (midday)
Decision and feedback to applicants by	16th October 2009
Offer letters posted by	30th October 2009
Feasibility studies completed by	26th February 2010



Further information

For more information about this and other events, and details of how to register and apply, visit www.innovateuk.org under Current Competitions.

Competition helpline:
01355 272155

Email:
competitions@tsb.gov.uk

Publicity

The Technology Strategy Board frequently publicises the results of competitions and this includes engagement with the media. All applicants will be given a chance during the competition process to opt out of any publicity. Willing applicants will be asked to provide an agreed form of words for use in publicity material. E-mail pressoffice@tsb.gov.uk with any queries.

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the Government. Its role is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve quality of life.

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