

Specialist Upskilling Fund Guidance Notes

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance is for applicants who wish to apply (submit a bid) to CITB for funding from the Specialist Upskilling Fund (the “**Fund**”). The guidance is intended to help you complete an application (the “**Application Form**”), understand what is fundable, and give you a clear idea of the information you need to submit with your application.

If you have any queries during the application process, please contact the CITB Commissioning Team using the following contact details:

Contact	Role	Email
Veronique Durand	Commissioner	Veronique.durand@citb.co.uk
Commissioning mailbox		Commissioning@citb.co.uk

Contents

- Part 1:** [Available funding and who can apply](#)
- Part 2:** [Aims of the Fund](#)
- Part 3:** [Specialist sectors](#)
- Part 4:** [What we do and don't support](#)
- Part 5:** [Fund scoring](#)
- Part 6:** [Application Form overview](#)
- Part 7:** [Submitting your application & funding decisions](#)
- Part 8:** [Monitoring and evaluation](#)
- Part 9:** [Final checklist](#)

Part 1

Available funding and who can apply

Any organisation with the relevant experience can apply for this Fund. The organisation bidding does not need to be CITB registered.

CITB registered businesses with a live project under a separate CITB fund (e.g. Industry Impact fund) are able to apply provided you are not in breach or default of any other agreement with or obligations to CITB.

Applicants can apply for up to £35,000. The funded project must be delivered, with all funding utilised and evidenced within 12 months from the start date of the funding agreement. The funded activity / project cannot commence until after a successful funding decision has been confirmed in writing to you and a funding agreement signed and returned to CITB.

Retrospective activity will not be funded.

Once all of the funds have been allocated in each area for the initial period of 12 months, no further funding will be available. CITB may extend the project for a further 12 months, at its sole discretion, as detailed in the Terms of Funding.

Proposed delivery partners

We understand that a company may be supported by a delivery partner when completing the application, however, please be aware that if successful, the funding agreement will be between CITB and the lead company as listed on the Application Form, who will be solely

accountable for the full funding amount and the overall delivery of the project outlined in the Application Form.

Part 2

Aims of the Fund

The Fund is aimed at establishing ten specialist upskilling programmes to support construction employers in developing their workforce and enabling access to NVQs. Applicants are expected to drive competence-based training for specialist construction trades by offering expert advice and guidance, and by working collaboratively with employers, training providers and sector stakeholders to address barriers commonly faced in the specialist sector area, such as the availability or viability of training provision.

Collectively, the ten specialist upskilling programmes will help improve understanding of sector-specific challenges and contribute to their mitigation. The funding is also expected to enable access to an additional 600 specialist NVQs across the supported sectors.

Successful applicants must be able to demonstrate strong knowledge and experience within the specialist sector they propose to support, alongside a clear understanding of the sector's skills development needs. They should be able to guide employers towards high-quality training provision and appropriate funding routes, and either evidence an established network of employers and training providers or set out a robust plan to engage them. Providers must also show how sector-specific training will contribute to workforce development and help reduce identified skills gaps.

Applicants will be expected to work with their networks to engage employers and undertake training and skills conversations to identify workforce development needs. Based on the needs identified, providers will then support employers to access suitable training provision to upskill their workforce.

Part 3

Specialist sectors

CITB has identified the below specialist sectors, through detailed assessment of the industries upskilling needs, as areas that need additional support.

1. Civils, infrastructure and highways – England and Wales
2. Civils, infrastructure and highways – Scotland
3. Fit out, dry lining and plastering
4. Shopfitting and wood occupations
5. Heritage, including stone masonry and oak framing
6. Tunnelling and drilling
7. Roofing
8. RMI and retrofit
9. Concrete occupations, including steel fixing and formworks
10. Plant hire

If an organisation believes a different specialist sector should be included, an application can be submitted with the additional Q6 being completed to explain their justification.

Part 4

What we do and don't support

Below are some examples of the types of things we would not consider:

- Activity or projects that are already or due to be funded as part of an existing CITB commission or any other public funding;
- Projects that fail to demonstrate ability to deliver;
- Projects with no tangible objectives and activities;
- Projects with excessive costs that are disproportionate to the activities;
- Operating costs of existing partnerships, industry bodies or training suppliers;
- General recruitment or careers campaigns/events;
- Any **capital expenditure** including the costs of any fixed assets, equipment and technology.

In addition and by way of example only, the following training will not be considered upskilling:

- Apprenticeships
- Specialist Applied-skills Programmes (SAPs)
- Health & Safety
- First Aid
- Digital Skills
- Leadership & Management
- CSCS Card Test
- Refresher training

Areas to consider:

The amount of funding requested should not exceed £35,000.

Management costs can include (but is not limited to) activities such as: project planning and set up costs; project reporting; governance; project meetings; preparation of evidence to support invoice payment.

Delivery costs can include items such as time spent engaging with employers, assessing training needs and coordination of training and activity.

Match funding is not essential for this Fund, however if the bidder is providing additional funding then this should be made clear in Q5.

Part 5

Fund scoring

All applicants must complete questions 1-5. If you are applying for a specialist sector that is not listed in Part 3 above then you must also complete question 6 otherwise your application will not be considered.

Any application scoring less than 18 points will not be considered for funding. Once all applications have been scored, then the top ten scoring applications will be awarded the funds. If within the top 10 there is more than one application for the same specialist sector then only the highest scoring one will be funded.

Questions 1-4

If additional space is needed for questions 1-4, please use a separate word document for each question up to a maximum **3 pages** of A4 (font: Arial, size: 10 point) for each question. Please ensure any additional pages utilised are attached to the email when your application is submitted.

Scoring Scale for Questions 1-4

Score	Definition
0	Non-compliant response The question is unanswered, or the response fails to address any of the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance.
1-3	Unacceptable response The response partly meets a proportion of the minimum requirements expressed in the question and response guidance but fails to meet the majority. This indicates that there may be serious difficulties or inability to deliver the proposed project.
4-7	Acceptable response The response meets the minimum requirements expressed in the question and response guidance, but there are some aspects which are not met or are lacking detail.
7-9	Good response The response clearly meets all the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance indicating that the applicant has a good understanding of the requirements and the ability to deliver. The proposed project may offer some limited benefits beyond the stated requirements.
10	Excellent response The response fully addresses the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance, demonstrating that the applicant has a comprehensive understanding of the requirements and the ability to fully deliver. An excellent proposed project which provides additional benefits beyond the stated requirements.

Question 5

This question will be scored as either a pass or fail. CITB will be reviewing your answer to see that the funding requested is suitably broken down so that we can see the activities that it will support.

Question 6

Any applicants applying for one of the 10 specialist sectors listed in Part 3 above will automatically receive 2 points for question 6 without having to complete the question.

Applicants that are putting forward a valid new specialist sector will have the opportunity to earn these 2 points through the response they provide.

Scoring Scale for Question 6

0	Unacceptable response The question is unanswered, or the response fails to address any of the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance.
---	---

1	<p>Good response The response clearly meets all the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance indicating that the applicant has a good understanding of the Fund aims. Some evidence is provided but not fully evidenced.</p>
2	<p>Excellent response The response fully addresses the requirements expressed in the question and response guidance, demonstrating that the applicant has a comprehensive understanding of the requirements of the Fund. An excellent response which provides clear evidence in support of the answer.</p>

Part 6

Application Form overview

Section 1 – Before you apply

Contains information that should be read and understand before you submit your application.

Section 2 – Company details

This section is for you to provide your company information which allows us to check that you are eligible to receive funding.

Section 3 – Application questions

All applicants must complete questions 1-5. If you are applying for a specialist sector that is not listed in Part 3 above, then you must also complete question 6 otherwise your application will not be considered.

Section 4 – Declaration

All statements should be read and marked with an X to confirm your acceptance. Signature and date are required.

Part 7

Submitting your application & funding decisions

Please note submitting an application form is not a guarantee of funding.

Applications must be submitted directly from the lead business named in the Application Form. We will only discuss applications with, or in the presence of, the lead applicant.

To expedite the assessment process, please respond to additional information requests as soon as possible.

Part 8

Monitoring and evaluation

If your application is successful, once the successful funding decision has been confirmed to you in writing and a Funding Agreement has been signed and returned to CITB, your funded project can start.

We will schedule quarterly review meetings with the successful applicants to provide ongoing support and monitor quarterly progress of the Project.

Payments will be made in regular instalments every quarter and subject to provision of a completed quarterly reporting pack and sufficient and acceptable evidence of ongoing fulfilment of the Project. Your funding agreement will detail indicative amounts and dates of

payments. Quarterly payments may be withheld if, amongst other things, you do not meet the agreed levels of progress with the Project.

Please remember you must keep all relevant records and evidence of expenditure associated with the Project and its fulfilment (such as invoices, timesheets, work plans, training needs analysis forms, etc.). These will need to be submitted to CITB as evidence of your progression and fulfilment of the Project.

You will be expected to provide evaluation updates against the progress and success of your Project throughout the timeline. Evaluation guidance and templates will be provided.

CITB Evaluation

CITB will undertake evaluation of this Fund to measure its impact and help shape future offers, your participation in any post-funding evaluation activity is compulsory.

Part 9

Final checklist

- The application focuses on knowledge of the chosen specialist sector and working with employers to upskill their workforce
- The application does not include any items in [part 4](#)
- The application does not include any retrospective activity
- Terms of Bidding and Terms of Funding must be read and understood
- The proposed Project offers good value for money and aligns with the aims of the Fund and will be of high quality