

Information regarding Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP) grant funding – December 2018

The Manufacturing Growth Programme grant is available to Hertfordshire SME manufacturers to assist with the cost of bringing in external expertise to help the business. The programme website is <http://www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk/about-the-programme/>. Projects can cover a wide range of business development activities, so please see the Projects in Scope document also attached for an idea – though bear in mind that this list is not exhaustive and I'll be happy to advise on the eligibility of other types of project.

The programme grant covers 30% of the cost of a project; typical project costs are between £2500 and £5000, and a typical grant is approximately £1000 to £1500. The minimum project size is currently £2000 and the maximum is £6000, but these limits can change from time to time, so please check with me when considering a project.

Projects can last up to 3 months – we don't get involved in setting the overall schedule for the project, but the grant must be claimed within 4 months of receiving the grant offer letter. Grant offers are made very quickly, usually within a week, and grant claims are paid promptly at the end of the month in which the grant claim is sent to us. When the grant is offered, the client must use the provider named in the offer letter, and must pay their invoices through the bank account of the business entity named in the offer letter.

Clients are welcome to use any provider they choose, and there is no Approved Register – the choice of specialist is up to the client and only one quotation is needed. I can help find suitable external experts, if the client doesn't already have one in mind, to help with the strategy, planning and project work. The final choice about which specialist to use is entirely up to the client.

The grant doesn't cover "business as usual" services such as general accountancy or outsourced IT support, but a one-off project could be supported with a grant. There is no cost to the SME manufacturer, nor to the provider of expertise, for using this service – it is paid for from European Regional Development funding.

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) criteria to be met by the business are:

- Under 250 staff
- Under €50 million turnover
- Under €43 million balance sheet assets value
- Not owning, nor owned, more than 25% of/by a larger company that would take the overall size of the group over the above 3 criteria limits
- Not having received more than €200,000 in State Aid (other public/grant funding) in the previous three years
- A manufacturer (which their Companies House listing can usually clarify).

If the above criteria are met, it is a simple process to apply and there are no lengthy forms to complete. The Manufacturing Growth Manager (that's me, for Hertfordshire) will need to visit the premises with the relevant paperwork (which I will prepare) to be signed by a Director of the company. I then complete the remaining paperwork, get confirmation by email from the provider about their quotation, and the grant offer will be confirmed in writing within just a few days. Claims are also paid promptly at the end of the project. Please see the process flowchart below for the steps involved.

The following page explains the process step by step.

I hope all the above is clear, but should you require any clarification or to discuss a project, my contact details are Amanda Freeland, 07973 946529 or email amanda.freeland@egs.live and I'll be happy to help.

How does it work?

1. Contact your local Growth Manager to discuss your project (Amanda Freeland, 07973 946529, email amanda.freeland@egs.live)
2. The Growth Manager does some background checks to review your likely eligibility for the grant
3. If you don't have a specialist in mind to carry out your project, your Growth Manager can offer you some to contact
4. If you're ready to proceed, but not yet started the project, the next step is to arrange a meeting with the Growth Manager. Please note: If you have already started the project and been invoiced in part by the specialist, you will not be able to get the grant
5. The project must involve only one specialist firm. If, for example, you need a branding specialist as well as a separate digital marketing specialist, one must agree to act as the main contractor for the purposes of invoicing and payment
6. When you're ready to proceed, the Growth Manager prepares the grant forms, comes out to meet you and goes through the forms with you in the meeting
7. Growth Manager contacts the specialist by email for a quotation, which must be dated as at the following day, not previously
8. When the specialist quote is received, the grant application is submitted to Head Office (Economic Growth Solutions Ltd)
9. The grant offer letter is issued – usually in a week or so – from Head Office.
10. The project can then begin – you need to tell your specialist that you're ready
11. You must continue to use the same specialist throughout the project. If you run into difficulties with that specialist, you need to contact your Growth Manager to discuss the position before making any changes. This is essential to maintain your grant offer, as the application paperwork must be changed at Head Office.
12. The specialist invoices you in due course – it can be more than one invoice, but not dated prior to the grant offer letter date, and not for the total project value within Month 1 – i.e. the project must last beyond the month in which you are given your grant offer letter
13. The invoice(s) must be or total to the same value as the original project quotation and as specified in the grant offer letter
14. You pay the specialist according to your/their terms
15. When you have paid the specialist the final invoice, contact your Growth Manager for a quick chat about the project – this is the project evaluation
16. Send in your grant claim consisting of the specialist's invoices, your proofs of payment leaving your bank, and your invoice to Economic Growth Solutions Ltd for the grant amount.
17. The Growth Manager will upload the project evaluation documents to complete the claim process
18. Your claim is paid within the same month if your claim is received by 21st of the month. Otherwise it is held until the following month – only one payment run takes place each month.

Please note: if you have questions about any part of this process, just call your Growth Manager to discuss them at any time – the sooner the better if any issue needs to be resolved.

Amanda Freeland, 07973 946529, email amanda.freeland@egs.live