

Inclusive Economy Partnership BOOST 2021 scale-up programme

Application guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides information to support your application for the Inclusive Economy Partnership BOOST 2021 programme.

If you have questions about the Inclusive Economy Partnership BOOST 2021 scale-up programme which are not answered in this document or elsewhere on this website, please contact us by emailing iep@youngfoundation.org

1. What is the BOOST 2021 scale-up programme?

1.1. What is the BOOST 2021 scale-up programme?

BOOST 2021 is a scale-up programme within the Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP).

The IEP, run by the UK government's Cabinet Office and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), brings together business, civil society and government to tackle the UK's most pressing social and economic problems through cross-sector partnerships.

The IEP believes that partnerships are the catalyst to unleash potential and create a fairer and more inclusive society.

By unlocking the power of partnerships, the BOOST 2020 programme enabled the cohort of 18 organisations to form partnerships with over 130 new businesses, civil society organisations and government departments, and directly leverage over £4m in additional funding and investment. This resulted in the innovators scaling their services, supporting hundreds of thousands of people to secure work, be financially resilient and have better mental health.

The IEP BOOST 2021 programme will support up to thirty social-impact organisations across the UK to scale their impact. The programme is free and does not require you to give up equity.

2. About the BOOST 2021 scale-up programme

2.1. What does the BOOST 2021 scale-up programme aim to achieve?

BOOST 2021 aims to support organisations to achieve greater impact and scale, primarily through partnerships.

BOOST 2021 will support up to thirty carefully selected organisations from across the UK who have impactful solutions to social challenges, so that their solutions can reach more people in need. The organisations selected will be among the most promising social innovation and mission-led companies in the UK, and focus on supporting people across the following areas:

- Transition to work for young people;
- Mental health;
- Financial inclusion and capability; and
- Digital inclusion that supports one or more of the above challenge areas.

In the 2020, the BOOST accelerator programme supported 18 organisations to forge over 130 new partnerships, and directly leveraged over £4m in additional funding.

There was also a 45% increase in the number of end-users supported by organisations who participated in the programme.

2.2. [What support is available?](#)

The **six-month online bespoke support programme** will support selected organisations through:

- **Curating partnerships** with a first-class network who can help you scale, including delivery and commercial partners, investors and those who can offer pro-bono support.
- A dedicated **expert point person** to support you to make best use of your partnership connections, through coaching, intelligent pairing, and championing what you do throughout.
- **Tailored scaling workshops** focused on the needs of high impact, ambitious organisations.
- A **high calibre peer alumni network** that extends beyond the six-month programme.
- **Government champions** who will support connections into relevant policy and delivery teams to advance your impact.
- **Exposure** to hundreds of organisations across the UK invested in creating a more inclusive economy.

2.3. [When will the programme commence?](#)

The BOOST 2021 programme aims to commence in late March 2021, and the selection process will take place during February and March. The selection and the programme delivery will be delivered online by default.

2.4. [How long does the programme last?](#)

The intensive BOOST 2021 programme will last for six months and is planned to run from March to September. Beyond this point, all BOOST participants will be invited to become part of the alumni.

As part of the alumni you will have exclusive access to events, peer support and further networking opportunities after the programme ends.

3. [Who can apply for BOOST 2021?](#)

3.1. [What are the eligibility criteria?](#)

You must be a UK registered company / charity or other legal entity

AND

Your solution to scale must benefit end users who live in the UK.

We are unable to support:

- Applications from individuals.
- Solutions that are likely to increase inequality or exclusion, or otherwise have a harmful or detrimental effect on individuals (such as through the unethical use of private data).

3.2. Do you have to be based in the UK to enter?

Yes.

3.3. Can individuals apply?

No. You must be a UK registered company / charity or other legal entity.

Given that this is a scaling programme, we would also expect a team to be in place who are able to manage growth and take advantage of opportunities this programme might offer.

3.4. We have been involved in the previous IEP accelerator programme/s. Can we still apply?

Organisations who have been involved in either of the previous IEP accelerators can apply.

Applicants involved in previous programmes should be aware that they will be assessed on the same criteria as any other applicants, and that this may mean that not all organisations involved in previous rounds of BOOST will continue to be as suited to this programme as they were to prior rounds.

3.5. We are not a UK registered charity or company. Can we still apply?

If you are another form of legal entity that is UK registered, and you support people in the UK, you can still apply.

3.6. Our organisation is not based in the UK, but my solutions benefit people based in the UK. Can we still apply?

No, you must be a UK registered and based organisation to apply for BOOST 2021.

3.7. We will be involved in another accelerator / support programme at the same time. Can we still apply?

Yes, but we encourage applicants to consider the time commitments and relative benefits of being involved in more than one programme at a time.

3.8. There's a potential conflict of interest (e.g. one of the IEP organisations invests in us), can we still apply?

You can still apply. Please mention any potential conflict of interest by emailing us at iep@youngfoundation.org, and we will make relevant steps to ensure your application is assessed to minimise any conflict.

4. BOOST 2021 structure and timeline

4.1. How is the programme structured?

The BOOST 2021 provides individual organisation and cohort support.

While we cannot be 100% accurate about the combination of individual and cohort support until the validation process is completed with selected organisations, the indicative programme for BOOST 2021 is:

- **6-8 cohort workshops**, covering topics such as:
 - Recruiting and retaining a scaling team;
 - Pricing strategy;
 - Maintaining impact at scale;
 - Investment and funding options for growth;
 - Governance for growth; and
 - Moving from development to customer experience.
- Ongoing **bespoke support from an expert point person**.
 - The point person’s role will be to help validate and identify your scaling objectives, and curate and source relevant connections, support and opportunities to advance your scaling objectives. Organisations in the BOOST 2021 programme will likely have a call with their point person every 2-3 weeks.
- **Mentoring** from specialists or market experts spanning dozens of different disciplines and industries to meet your specific needs.
- **Investment and funding opportunities including** uniquely curated opportunities for pitching.
- **Partnerships access**, facilitated and aided with and through government, commercial and civil society experts.

4.2. What are the key dates I should be aware of?

Date	Status
Monday 18th January – Tuesday 23 February 2021	Applications Open for Tranche one
11-12pm Wednesday 3 February 2021	BOOST Webinar
11-12pm Wednesday 10 February 2021	BOOST Webinar
11-12pm Wednesday 17 February 2021	BOOST Webinar
Midday (12 Noon GMT) Tuesday 23 February 2021	Application close for 1 st tranche applications
Friday 5 March 2021	Latest date shortlisted applicants will be informed
W/c 8 March 2021	Stage two: engagement and interviews with shortlisted applicants
Monday 15 March 2021	First tranche Selection confirmed
Monday 22 March 2021	Programme commencement for 1 st tranche cohort
Thursday 25 March	Applications close tranche two
Friday 2 April	Programme commence for 2 nd tranche cohort
End September 2021	Programme end date
October 2021	Alumni support offer commences

5. What is BOOST 2021 looking for?

5.1. Who should the solution be aimed at?

We are looking to support impactful organisations with proven, scalable solutions that address **one or more** of the following areas within the UK:

- Transitions into work for young people;
- Mental health;
- Financial inclusion and capability; and
- Digital inclusion, specifically where it addresses one of the above challenge areas.

5.2. What do you mean by transitions to work?

We are focused on helping young people aged 18-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) to secure and retain meaningful employment. Too many young people are faced with uncertain prospects, either because of COVID lockdown or automation impacts.

We want to support work for young people at any age who need or wish to transition into other employment areas because their jobs are at risk or lost as a result of COVID or automation.

We are looking for proven and promising solutions that can support young people to gain the skills, attributes, or confidence into work.

5.3. What solutions are you looking for around mental health?

The cost of poor mental health to the economy as a whole is estimated at between £74 billion and £99 billion per year.

The IEP is advancing the role of business in positively impacting the mental health of society.

While previous BOOST accelerator programmes focused on mental health within the workplace, we are now extending the remit to include proven solutions addressing mental health for anyone in the UK.

5.4. What do you mean by financial resilience and capability?

The IEP is working to provide the financially under-served with access to affordable credit, with the tools and capabilities to interact with fair financial products, and to improve financial capability in order to solve the issue of problem and persistent debt.

Through BOOST 2021 we are particularly interested in proven and promising solutions that can support people in need through:

- Accessible FinTech solutions to tackle financial exclusion;
- Availability of affordable credit; and
- Poverty premium mitigations.

5.5. What do you mean by digital inclusion?

COVID has cast an even sharper light on the impact that a lack of access to digital technology has for access to essential services or support.

For that reason, for BOOST 2021 we are also interested in solutions that improve digital inclusion, and particularly those with digital inclusion solutions that cut across other existing IEP challenge areas.

We are interested in:

- Organisations that support people approaching / at working age to access and use digital services that improve workforce skills, increase financial resilience, and/or support mental health.
- Organisations that support greater inclusion of under-represented groups in the digital workforce, particularly programmes that operate in regions of higher projected unemployment.
- Increase digital access to education, income maximisation (e.g. provider switching services) or mental health support through provision of hardware and / or reliable and affordable network access to those most in need.

6. Completing the application

6.1. How do I apply BOOST 2021?

You MUST complete the application form (on SurveyMonkey) by Thursday 25 March 2021.

While it's difficult to be exact, we anticipate that the application form may take between two and three hours to complete, assuming you have relevant information to hand.

Please note: Answers in the online form are not saved until you submit and therefore cannot be returned to later, so will be lost. Please ensure you save your answers elsewhere and paste them into the fields before submitting. Use the PDF application form as a reference to plan your answers in advance.

6.2. What is the deadline for applications?

Midday on Tuesday 23rd February for tranche one. From 24th February to 25 March applications will be accepting on a rolling basis, meaning applications will be assessed on a weekly basis for suitability.

6.3. Can I apply with more than one idea / proposal?

No. Please just apply once.

6.4. How many beneficiaries / users should we be supporting?

Your solution should already be benefiting people successfully.

If your solution provides lower-touch support we would expect this to be supporting at least in the high hundreds, if not thousands of beneficiaries over the course of a year.

If you have a solution that requires deeper one-to-one, ongoing, support we would expect your solution to be successfully supporting in the lower hundreds of people over the course of a year.

6.5. What is the expectation regarding the evidence of impact for the solution?

We want more people across the UK to be economically included, and the BOOST 2021 programme specifically looks for organisations with solutions that are proven or have promising evidence of impact in one or more of the challenge areas.

We would expect successful organisations to have evidence about the impact of their solution on end users. This could take the form of independent evaluations, of qualitative research, surveys or of internal data tracking.

Below are examples of [standards of evidence](#) (also see [NPC evidence info](#)). We would expect programme participants to have at least a level 2 standard of evidence.

All other things being equal, we will place more weighting on organisations with higher standards of evidence when assessing the evidence of impact.



6.6. What stage should our solution be at?

Given this is a scaling programme, we are looking for solutions that already have market traction and a customer base. You should be beyond having a minimal viable product and have be able to identify what markets (verticals or geography) you wish to grow into.

You will need to be able to clearly demonstrate readiness to scale through clarity of market and target verticals, and some understanding of how your solution is apt to scale into those markets/ verticals.

We expect organisations applying to have the turnover and staff numbers that indicate a 'right size' to scale. This might mean that organisations with only one or two full time equivalents are unlikely to be suitable.

6.7. We are not targeting specific verticals, does that matter?

If you can clearly describe the characteristics of the sorts of organisations you wish to partner, or do business with, that is fine. We are looking for organisations who have clarity on what those characteristics are, and often they might fit into specific market verticals, but they do not have to.

6.8. We outsource some of our team (e.g. engineering team). Does that preclude us from applying?

No. We are however interested to also understand the capability of your core team, and their skills and support needs to grow.

6.9. What areas of geography are you interested in?

One of the selection criteria is geography. We are particularly interested in applications from organisations who are based in and / or whose solutions will directly benefit people beyond London and the South East. Within this we are especially interested in areas that are less advantaged and / or where economic exclusion is higher.

6.10. I have commercially sensitive information. How will this be treated as part of the application process?

Information included in your application will be reviewed by key personnel at The Young Foundation, the Cabinet Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, advisory panel members and professional support providers.

7. What are the conditions in being involved in BOOST 2021?

7.1. What are the conditions for being involved?

To be involved in the BOOST 2021 programme, if you are selected, you will need to:

- Participate in and contribute to the programme, and in particular to mentoring, partnership, promotional and workshop opportunities you commit to.
- Devote sufficient time and resource to measurement of impact and programme evaluation processes.
- Share learning and insights about your project and participation in the programme with the programme team.
- Acknowledge the IEP contributions and use IEP guidelines in doing so.
- Inform the programme team in a timely manner to any changes to your delivery plan or team.

7.2. Will we need to give up any equity as a result of being involved?

No, we do not take equity as a result of being involved.

7.3. Is there a cost for being involved?

No, the programme is free.

7.4. Do I have to give up any intellectual property?

No.

7.5. What happens when the programme ends?

BOOST 2021 participants will be invited to join the IEP alumni network. As a member of the alumni network, you will have continued access to support from peer innovators and exclusive invites and access to events and workshops that are relevant to your organisation and increasing its impact.

8. Assessment of applications

8.1. How are the successful applications chosen?

Applicants will need to apply for funding through the online application platform.

Eligible applications will then be assessed against the criteria below.

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Impact	The applicant has a solution that addresses one or more of the challenge areas listed and can provide evidence of impact towards identified challenge areas.	25%
Maturity	The applicant can clearly demonstrate readiness to scale through clarity of market and target verticals, and some understanding of how their solution is suitable to scale into those markets/verticals. The organisation's solution will have existing customers and has the turnover and staff numbers that deem them 'right sized' for scaling.	25%
Capability	The founder and team demonstrate the skill, appetite and emergent infrastructure to scale. They can articulate what support will be needed from the programme to achieve greater impact.	25%
Commitment	The founder and team show commitment to engage in the programme, to collaborative working (including with cohort peers) and to participating in the network provided.	15%
Geography & Inclusion	The organisation has solutions that will have direct impact beyond London and the South East, particularly in areas that are	10%

	most at risk of impacts from COVID-19 and wider economic uncertainties.	
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The most promising applications will be shortlisted and invited to participate in the engagement and selection process.

Shortlisted applicants will be expected to present and discuss their solutions, and wants from the programme, with members of an advisory panel who will help inform the final decision on who to fund, as well as engage with other shortlisted applicants about their solutions.

Final decisions will be made by The Young Foundation, the Cabinet Office and DCMS representatives.

8.2. [When will I know if I have been successful?](#)

Shortlisted applicants in the first tranche of applications will be informed no later than Friday 5 March. Applicants submitting for the second tranche will hear of the outcome within a week.

If you have not heard back from us by within these timeframes you can assume your application has been unsuccessful.

9. [Help and support](#)

9.1. [I have a question about my application. How can I get help?](#)

We will be running three webinars during February. If you can, we encourage you to join a webinar. At the webinars we will share some of amazing impact achieved by the IEP BOOST programme to date. You will also hear more about how to apply and be able to ask any questions you may have about the process and the programme.

Webinars are scheduled for:

Wednesday 3rd February, 11am to 12:00pm

Wednesday 10th February 11am to 12:00pm

Wednesday 17th February 11am to 12:00pm

Please secure your ticket to our webinar on our Eventbrite [page](#)

You can also email any specific questions to: iep@youngfoundation.org if the answer to your query is not covered above.