



# **Guidelines on Invest NI'S Process and Organisational Improvement Scheme**

**March 2021**

**1. Title of aid scheme**

Process and Organisational Improvement Grant

**2. State**

United Kingdom

**3. Region**

Northern Ireland

**4. Legal basis**

The Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982

The Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Act 2002

**5. Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company**

£1M per annum

**6. Maximum Aid Intensities for Process and Organisational Improvement Grant**

Projects must have a minimum spend of £40,000. The maximum level of support for labour and consultancy costs associated with identifying process and organisation improvements is £50,000 for small and medium size companies, £200,000 for large companies.

Aid to large undertakings shall only be provided if they effectively collaborate with SMEs in the aided activity and the collaborating SMEs incur at least 30 % of the total eligible costs.

**7. Date of Implementation**

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

**8. Duration of Scheme**

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**9. Objective of Scheme**

The scheme will support businesses to enable them to investigate and implement a range of potential improvements which will help them to address the impact Covid-19 is having on their operations. The programme will provide grant to participating companies to support labour and consultancy costs associated with identifying process and organisational improvements.

The scheme will operate under the General Provisions of the General Block Exemption and Article 29 - Aid for Process and Organisational Innovation.

## **10. Economic sectors concerned**

POIG is open to any businesses operating in one of the following NACE 2 / UK [Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\)](#) sectors:

- manufacturing
- construction
- information and communication
- professional, scientific and technical activities

The scheme will respect the Common Provisions as set out in Chapter 1 of the GBER including sector ineligibility, definitions and notification thresholds. In particular:

- Companies in difficulty, as defined in Article 2 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) are not be eligible for support; and
- Companies subject to an outstanding order for the repayment of state aid are not eligible for support (Deggendorf Principle).

## **11. Eligible costs**

Projects must have minimum eligible costs of £40,000. Company internal personnel costs must be at least 20% of overall eligible project costs.

Eligible activities include:

- Personnel costs;
- Costs of instruments, equipment, buildings and land to the extent and for the period used for the project;
- Costs of contractual research, knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's length conditions;
- Additional overheads and other operating costs, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products, incurred directly as a result of the project.

## **12. Transparency of aid**

The scheme comprises transparent aid in the form of grant assistance.

## **13. Cumulation**

Process and Organisational Improvement Grant may be cumulated with other Invest NI aid schemes as long as those schemes concern different, identifiable eligible costs.

## **14. Incentive effect**

Process and Organisational Improvement Grant must have an incentive effect.

## **15. Monitoring**

Invest NI shall maintain detailed records regarding support provided under this scheme. Such records shall contain all information necessary to establish that the conditions laid down in the General Block Exemption Regulation are fulfilled, including information on the status of any Client whose entitlement to aid depends on its status as an SME, information on the incentive effect of the aid and information making it possible to establish the precise amount of eligible costs for the purpose of applying the Regulation. Records regarding the grant scheme shall be maintained for 10 years from the date on which the last aid was granted under such scheme.

On written request, Invest NI shall provide the Commission within a period of 20 working days or such longer period as may be fixed in the request, with all the information which the Commission considers necessary to monitor the application of the General Block Exemption Regulation.

Where Invest NI does not provide the information requested within the period prescribed by the Commission or within a commonly agreed period or where Invest NI provides incomplete information, the Commission shall send a reminder setting a new deadline for the submission of the information. If, despite such reminder, Invest NI does not provide the information requested the Commission may, after having provided the Member State concerned with the possibility to make its views known, adopt a decision stating that all or part of the future aid measures to which the Regulation applies are to be notified to the Commission in accordance with Article 88(3) of the Treaty; Article 11, GBER refers.

## **16. Name and address of granting authority**

Invest Northern Ireland  
Bedford Square  
Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7ES