



## COVID-19 DIGITAL SELLING CAPABILITY GRANT

### Third call for applications

#### FAQs

These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the [DSCG Guidance Notes](#). The information and evidence required, as outlined in the Guidance Notes, is necessary to demonstrate the business meets the eligibility criteria, and ensure public funds are managed properly. Please take time to read the Guidance Notes and FAQs carefully before applying.

#### OVERVIEW

The scheme, developed by Invest Northern Ireland, will help established retail and wholesale businesses in Northern Ireland to grow their business online. This third call for applications is open to any small or medium sized retailer or wholesaler with 5 employees or more. The business must have an existing online presence and want to enhance its digital offering to expand its customer base, improve e-commerce capability and increase online sales.

#### ELIGIBILITY

##### Who is eligible to apply for the Digital Selling Capability Grant (DSCG)?

DSCG has been designed to provide financial support to [small or medium sized](#) retail or wholesale businesses that want to enhance their digital offering, build e-commerce capability and increase online sales.

Please review the Eligibility Criteria detailed in the Guidance Notes and complete the Eligibility Checker to see if you are eligible to apply.

##### What do you mean by small or medium size?

Please refer to the following [definition](#).

When evaluating if a business is a small or medium sized business, Invest NI will consider the group structure as a whole, including the resources of all companies where there is common ownership.

##### I received support under previous DSCG calls. Am I able to apply?

If you have a current live offer from DSCG call 2 (June/July 2021) you cannot apply for this call. If you have received support for a project successful under DSCG call 1 (Sept/Oct 2020) you may apply for DSCG call 3 but any new project must show a further uplift in your digital marketing/e-commerce capability and not be considered business as usual.

##### Can I use another grant to top up funding for this project if I receive a DSCG funding offer?

If you receive funding for this project from another public funding/grant scheme you cannot be double funded for the same project. Your project cannot receive any other public funding such as government, local council or European Union funding.

##### I have a number of businesses, can I apply more than once?

If you are a business, which is part of a group structure or has the same ultimate ownership, you can only submit one application across the group.

##### If I think I am eligible but I failed validation on the online eligibility checker, what should I do?

The eligibility checker is based on the main criteria of the scheme. If you have not passed the eligibility checker this indicates you are not eligible to apply for DSCG. However, if you think there is a mistake please complete the enquiry form supplying the question number and answer you did not pass on and we will review your answer to confirm.

**My business is primarily a service business, can I apply?**

No, your business must primarily sell a physical product, or a range of physical products, that can be sold online and shipped to customers. You must also have a physical retail/wholesale premises, for example a high-street shop, which is accessible by the public.

**My business manufactures and sells products. Am I eligible?**

If you can provide evidence that more than 50% of sales comes from the retail/ wholesale operation.

Where your business turnover includes income from sources other than your retail or wholesale premises, more than 50% of your total turnover/sales/revenue must be from your retail/wholesale operation (i.e. you are NOT primarily a manufacturer, producer, engineering or services business, etc.)

**APPLYING FOR DSCG****How do I apply?**

Firstly, use the eligibility checker and answer each question, if you are eligible to apply for DSCG, you will be directed to the MyINI portal to complete and application.

**Do I need to register and create an account to complete an application?**

Yes, once you have completed the eligibility checker, you will be directed to the MyINI portal. If you do not have a portal account, you will need to register using an email address and a password. You will then be able to complete the online application.

If you already have an account you will be able to use the same login details.

**How long will it take to complete the form?**

The online application process takes approximately one hour to complete.

**Can I save my application and return to it at a later stage?**

Yes, you can save a draft of your application and complete later, but saved applications must still be submitted before the scheme closes.

**How do I submit my application?**

You need to click on the 'Submit' button when you have completed your application.

**I am unable to complete the online application form. Can I submit my application in a different format?**

Unfortunately we are only able to accept online applications. However, if you have a specific issue that means you are unable to complete the application form please contact the DSCG team at [dscg@investni.com](mailto:dscg@investni.com).

**What details will I need to upload to the online application form?**

The details you need to submit an application are outlined in the How to Apply section of the [Guidance Notes](#).

**How do I upload the required documents such as proof of ID and bank statement?**

To attach documents to your application, please click the 'Attach Documents' button at the relevant section. You will need to provide a description of the document to identify the document provided. Please note the maximum size of each attachment is 10MB. If you are using a camera or mobile phone, you may need to change the camera setting to reduce it to a lower resolution in order to meet the file size requirements.

**I don't have a Passport or a Driving Licence, can I submit another form of ID?**

If you do not have a valid Passport or Driving Licence ID card you can submit a scanned, photograph, or screenshot copy of your EU photo ID card, Adoption card or HM Forces ID card.

**My driving licence has expired. Is it still acceptable as a form of photographic ID?**

All driving licences with an expiry date from 1 January 2021 must be renewed.

All driving licences with an expiry date between 1 February and 31 December 2020 will be treated as valid for a further eleven months.

**I made an error on my application form. What should I do?**

If your form is still saved as Draft, and has not been submitted, then you can go back to the relevant section and update with the correct information at any time up until the closing date.

If you have submitted your application form 24 hours or more before the closing date, please contact the DSCG team at [dscg@investni.com](mailto:dscg@investni.com).

Unfortunately, you cannot change your application after the closing date. Given the volume of applications and enquiries we receive on the last day of the call we cannot guarantee to action this type of request at such a late stage. It is advisable to apply early if possible.

**I don't have all the evidence requested to demonstrate that I meet the criteria. Can I still apply?**

You must be able to provide all the evidence requested in order to apply. The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they meet all the criteria.

Please refer to the Guidance Notes for full details of what information you will need to provide, and complete the online Eligibility Checker as part of the pre-application process.

**I don't know what to put in the sales performance/ projections section?**

The application asks for 4 years of sales performance/ projections comprising of employees numbers, sales and turnover for the last 2 years, and projections for the next 2 years.

The 2 years projections are assuming that the project goes ahead. If you are unsure, please replicate the figures for your base year and adjust if required. Financial Projections are estimates with uncertainties and will be treated that way but you must be happy they are achievable.

**What is the base year?**

The last complete financial year of your business. However, if 10 months have already elapsed in your current financial year, you should consider the current financial year as your Base Year.

**Is there a closing date when I have to have my application submitted by?**

DSCG will close for applications at 5pm on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

**How do I check on my application progress?**

Applicants will be able to check the status of their application online by logging into their portal account, going to 'Applications' and clicking on the 'Submitted' tab. This will show the progress of your application.

**How will I know if my application is successful?**

Invest NI will process applications as quickly as possible and once an application is approved, applicants will be informed via email that their application has been successful.

***\*Please do not start the project, sign supplier contracts, incur cost or pay deposits until you receive written confirmation of funding from Invest NI. If you incur costs because you have signed contracts, given permission to start work, raised invoices or made payments before funding is approved, these costs cannot be claimed for and could prevent you from accessing any of the funding awarded.***



## STRUCTURE OF SUPPORT

### How much support is available?

Businesses can access a maximum grant of £20,000 to support 50% of eligible costs for projects with a minimum eligible project expenditure of £10,000. Your grant amount will be based on the eligible project costs in your application at a 50% grant rate.

### How do I get the grant money?

Payment of the grant is made as a reimbursement of expenditure incurred and paid against the eligible costs of approved activities.

If you are successful, you will receive an Invest NI funding letter of offer. This will include the approved activities for your project, based on the information you provided in your application form. Once all supplier costs are paid and your project activities complete, you submit a claim. (Details of how to submit a claim are included in the letter of offer).

### What activities can I get support for?

Support is for consultancy services for retail or wholesale businesses that want to prepare for growth, develop their customer base and find new markets by enhancing their digital offering, building e-commerce capability and increasing online sales.

Further information on eligible/ ineligible activities are provided in the [Guidance Notes](#).

### When can I start my project?

Please do not start the project, sign contracts with suppliers, incur costs or pay deposits until you receive written confirmation of funding from Invest NI.

If your service provider starts your project or if you incur costs because you have signed contracts, given permission to start work, raised invoices or made payments before funding is approved, these costs cannot be claimed for and could prevent you from accessing any of the funding awarded.

### When do I submit a claim?

Once your project is complete and you have paid your supplier you can submit a claim to Invest NI. All details can be found on [investni.com](http://investni.com).

Your project must be fully complete and live before a claim can be paid out. For example, if your project is a new website, it needs to be fully live and operational, and not on a dev site, before a claim can be paid.

### What do I need to submit a claim?

You will need to use the Cost-based grants claim pack, available at [investni.com](http://investni.com). You will need a copy of the supplier invoice and proof of payment. All claims must be accompanied by a written progress report on the Project, using this [template](#).

### Exactly what do we mean by 'related parties'?

(i) A person or a close member of that person's family that is related to a person who has control, joint control, or significant influence over the company or related to member of its key management personnel.

(ii) An entity that is related e.g. is a parent company, subsidiary, fellow subsidiary, associate, or joint venture of the company, or it is controlled, jointly controlled, or significantly influenced or managed by a person who is a related party.

### How long do I have to complete the project?

Your project must be complete, supplier(s) paid and claims submitted to Invest NI no later than 5pm on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022. It is not possible to extend this deadline.