

Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund – Discovery phase, 2021-22

Communications / media guidelines for lead partners in funded projects

Introduction

Thank you for submitting a proposal to the Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund, or SIF. This document aims to give you useful guidance for communicating about your project, should it succeed in gaining funding.

First, please note the restrictions on timing; projects should not go public about their funding until Ofgem or Innovate UK have communicated the competition results.

Funded projects become part of a concerted drive to improve energy networks through innovation. The outputs of the SIF are important - not just for technologists, but for everyone with an interest in how we can manage energy better in a lower-carbon world.

It is important for a new programme such as the Ofgem SIF to be clearly understood, especially at this early stage as it is becoming established. So, we encourage you to take a proactive approach to communicating about your project while keeping us informed; this toolkit is designed to help with some suggestions and guidelines.

At the end of the document you will find some suggestions on how to guide the other partner organisations taking part in your project about their own communication activity.

We hope that you and your communications team will find this helpful. We would greatly appreciate your feedback so that we can continuously improve the support we offer, and share best practice and success stories.

Queries

If you have questions about SIF communication activities, please contact SIF_Ofgem@innovateuk.ukri.org

Announcing your funding - checklist

So you are ready to make your announcement. What next?

1. Tell us your plans

We encourage you to publicise your project. Both Ofgem and Innovate UK are keen for projects funded through the SIF to be widely known, as examples of progress and innovation that can help build the economy, reach net zero, and benefit energy consumers.

Please let the UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) press team know in advance what you plan to do, by emailing press@ukri.org and SIF_Ofgem@innovateuk.ukri.org.

If you are planning a press release, please share the text with us for information (to both these addresses) 48 hours before distribution.

2. Timing

Please note that you and your project partners must not go public with any information about your proposal being funded until Innovate UK or Ofgem have announced the results of the competition. We will aim to advise winning projects of announcement timing as soon as dates are confirmed.

3. How to describe the funding

Funding for SIF projects is provided by Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund and ultimately originates from consumers' energy bills. Innovate UK is managing the operation of the Strategic Innovation Fund in partnership with Ofgem.

In your communications (including press releases, articles, web stories etc) we suggest you use the following description:

“This project is funded by energy network users and consumers through the Strategic Innovation Fund, a programme from the UK's independent energy regulator Ofgem managed in partnership with Innovate UK.”

In your communications, we encourage you to explain why the funding and support will make a difference, the aims of your project, and the consumer value it could potentially lead to.

Please note that you should make very clear that these are early stage projects, receiving initial funding to explore their potential as part of the Discovery Phase of the competition process, and they are not guaranteed to progress to later funding phases or to become commercial reality.

Collaboration is a key element of the SIF, so please make clear who any other partners in your project are; we suggest you advise them of, or involve them in, your communication (see page 4).

In notes to press releases, you are welcome to use the following descriptions of the Strategic innovation Fund, Ofgem and Innovate UK:

About the Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund

The purpose of Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund is to support network innovation that will contribute to achieving Net Zero rapidly and at lowest cost; deliver real net benefits to network companies, energy users and consumers; and help the UK to become a 'Silicon Valley' of energy. It aims to work with other public funders of innovation so that activities appropriately funded by energy users and consumers are coordinated with activities funded by Government. The Fund is delivered in partnership with Innovate UK.

About Ofgem

Ofgem is Britain's independent energy regulator. Its role is to protect consumers now and in the future by working to deliver a greener, fairer energy system. We do this by:

- Working with Government, industry and consumer groups to deliver a net zero economy at the lowest cost to consumers.
- Stamping out sharp and bad practice, ensuring fair treatment for all consumers, especially the vulnerable.
- Enabling competition and innovation, which drives down prices and results in new products and services for consumers.

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency, part of UK Research and Innovation. It drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas, including those from the UK's world-class research base.

4. Quotes for press releases

For the Discovery phase Ofgem SIF competition, Ofgem and Innovate UK do not have the capacity to offer quotes on an individual basis to competition winners.

5. Use of logos

Please do **not** use the Ofgem or UKRI/Innovate UK logos in any publicity material about your project.

6. Social media

We encourage you to publicise your success in the competition through social media channels. Please use the hashtag #OfgemSIF and also tag @ofgem, @InnovateUK, and @UKRI_News.

Other project communications

1. Publishing of application videos

For funded projects, we plan to publish the short videos submitted as part of their competition entries so that we can showcase the great ideas coming forward through the SIF. We aim to host these on the Innovate UK YouTube channel. We are supplying separate instructions on how to send us the video files and transcripts for this purpose.

2. Future events and conferences

As your project progresses, we will ask you to participate in webinars and other virtual or in-person events to communicate your progress and disseminate learnings, including the activities outlined in the SIF Governance Document and the Project Direction relating to your project.

We may also come to you with other opportunities to talk about your project as part of the SIF programme communications. In time we may also develop case studies about your work on this project. We look forward to working with you to tell the story of the SIF and the great innovations that it is enabling.

Communication by the other partners in your project

As the leader of your project, you will no doubt want to ensure that the other partners involved in your project communicate about it appropriately and in co-ordination with your own activities – for example clearing press releases with you etc. This is for you to decide.

It is in everyone's interest for communications about the SIF to reinforce each other and to tell a consistent story, so we recommend you make clear to other project partners that:

- They should not use Ofgem or UKRI/Innovate UK logos in their communications
- Descriptions of the SIF and the Discovery Phase early stage funding should be consistent with the wording given above in Section 3, 'How to describe the funding', including making clear that this is early-stage funding.
- Social media posts are requested to include the hashtag #OfgemSIF and tag @ofgem, @InnovateUK, and @UKRI_News.