

Ofgem SIF: Quality for Discovery application videos

Introduction

As the instructions for the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) Discovery competition explain, applicants are asked to submit a 60-second video explaining their project. It is important that videos submitted are of good quality.

First, they are part of communicating your project to the assessors. To be clear, assessors will **not** be judging the production standard as part of assessing your proposal's merits, but an engaging and effective video is important to help them understand the key elements of your proposal.

Secondly, for projects that are awarded funding, the videos will be also published on the SIF YouTube channel after the results are announced. This is part of our work to showcase the range of innovative ideas coming through the SIF and their potential. As the Government's innovation agency, we need to maintain quality standards in our communication channels.

Therefore, videos should be:

- An acceptable standard for the SIF corporate YouTube channel - visually interesting, engaging, and clear.
- Suitable for representing your company and the project in public - for example representing your company professionally in the way it wishes to be seen and adhering to the right branding.

Producing your video

These suggestions should help you ensure that videos are of a suitable standard:

- Many network companies will have in-house communication teams who can advise or help you create a short video to a good standard. If you have an in-house team, we suggest talking to them.
- With existing clear images (still or video) and a short script, a 60-second film can often be made to a high standard without excessive time input.
- Recording parts of your video on a camera phone can work well if done with care; If you plan to do this, then the guidelines in [Appendix 1](#) should help.

- You do not necessarily have to be formal in your presentation - informality can work, especially if you are conveying enthusiasm and passion. But it is easy for poor video or audio quality to get in the way of your message.
- Do not simply read a script to your laptop camera sitting at your desk in your office. The image quality is usually poor; headsets, earphones and backgrounds usually distract (even if backgrounds are blurred); and it is usually hard to be genuinely engaging this way.
- Do not include complex technical diagrams or small text elements that are hard to read or understand during the short film.

If your film has speech in it, please include subtitles in the film. If you cannot, we will add them, so ensure there is no wording already at the bottom of the screen that will clash with subtitles.

Examples

Here are some examples of videos that meet these standards from Round 1:

(Note: the branded Innovate UK/Ofgem entrance and exit screens, as seen in these examples, will be added by Innovate UK to the videos of projects that are awarded funding).

Eye in the Sky SEGIL	These use music, animated images, and captions to tell the story, showing that you do not have to actually record video to create an engaging 60-second film
INCENTIVE	Uses music and animation but with a clear, well-read narrative voiceover
A Holistic Hydrogen Approach to Heavy Duty Transport	Combines relevant graphics with a live presenter who speaks clearly and well, with a plain backdrop

If your project is selected for funding, we will ask you to send the film file to us via a file transfer system, with a transcript if needed, so that we can prepare for publishing. We will send you those instructions when the competition results are announced.

If you have any questions, please contact sif_ofgem@iuk.ukri.org

Competition video uploading requirements

The Ofgem SIF Discovery competition instructions on the Innovate Funding Service portal states:

You must provide a 'one line' description of your project, along with a video lasting no longer than 60 seconds.

In your video you must summarise:

- the problem you are addressing
- your idea in providing a solution
- the benefits it will bring to customers

You must upload a video to YouTube, provide a link to your video and any passwords to allow access to it, in your answer to this question. You must ensure your video is 'unlisted' in the privacy settings.

If we are unable to view your video or it is not hosted on YouTube, your application will be made ineligible.

The video must remain available for twelve months.

You can find more information on how to create an unlisted video on [YouTube](#).

If your project is successful in winning funding, Innovate UK will publish your 60 second video as part of its publicity for the projects.

This means, videos that are submitted need to be:

of good quality
suitable for representing your project and company in public
an acceptable standard for Innovate UK's YouTube channel

If necessary, we may ask you to remake your video to a better standard before publication.

If you are having problems uploading your video to YouTube, you must contact support@iuk.ukri.org at least 10 working days before the competition closes for advice.

APPENDIX 1: hints and tips for camera phone filming

Location

Lighting

- **If indoors**, use the room with the most daylight and the least noise/traffic.
- Large windows are ideal as a light source.
- North-facing windows are better as they provide softer, more even light without producing shadows.
- Windows facing the sun will produce harsher light and shadows that may change as the sun and clouds move during your recording. Where possible, avoid those – see Image 1 in section 4.
- **If outdoors**, avoid filming into the sun as the camera will expose for the brightest point, potentially silhouetting the subject.
- Avoid the subject facing directly into the sun, as they will end up squinting.
- Overcast days are often best.

Sound

- Audio is the most important part of your recording and should be prioritised.
- Stay within 30-60 cm or 12-14 inches of your phone while recording, or the recording could be unusable.
- You should be somewhere isolated with minimal background noise.
- If indoors, avoid tiled or wooden floors or empty rooms with bare walls – these cause echoes.
- Rooms with soft furnishings (sofa, carpet, curtains etc) make for the best acoustic environment.
- Check acoustics by clapping your hands and listening for echoes.
- Examples of good and bad acoustics can be found here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8kjiyjb9pdoinw9/Good%20%26%20Bad%20acoustic%20examples.wav?dl=0>

Aesthetic

- If indoors, avoid having a close wall directly behind you. Where possible, use a room that has depth to it.
- Consider clothing – choose something that contrasts with the background. Don't wear a white t-shirt in front of a white wall, for example. Avoid stripes.
- Consider privacy – remove any photos or personal/confidential information you don't want on show.

Device setup

Front or back camera?

- The back camera on most phones is better quality than the front – but you might need help to set up the shot and press play and stop.
- The easiest option is the front (selfie) camera: You can see what you're doing, frame the shot (which means you and your background are well positioned and balanced) and you can press record and stop yourself.
- If you use the selfie camera – look at the camera dot, not your face! We are all guilty of looking at ourselves on the screen, and it looks odd on television and social media. Look into the lens. It can feel strange, so practise.

Positioning

- If indoors, the ideal location for filming is 1-2 metres from your window. You need to be this far away to stop your voice reverberating off the glass.
- Use a tripod or makeshift prop to hold your device steady and secure.
- You can use a car suction mount, but it might affect the sound. See Images 1 and 2 on page 7.
- Film in landscape (horizontal) orientation and make sure the camera is about 18 inches (45cm) from your nose, and that the lens is at eye level.

Framing

- If using a phone, turn on the 3 x 3 grid in your phone settings; this will help you frame the video better. See images 3, 4, 5 and 6 on page 7.
- If you are framed on the left, the camera's lens should be on the right, and vice versa. This means you'll always be looking across the open space in the frame – you'll look better, and viewers won't be distracted.
- See images 3 and 4 on page 7 for the correct eye line. Image 6 shows an incorrect eye line.

Focus

- Ensure the camera is focused on your eyes and face – these shouldn't be blurry. If you have an iPhone, you can touch the screen where you want it to focus.
- If your phone or camera provides a depth of field option, feel free to use it, but ensure your eyes and face are always in focus.

Summary 'dos and don'ts'

DO...

- stay within the guidelines on distance from your device; increasing the distance will lead to poor audio
- set your device to record at its highest video quality
- use the back camera if you have an assistant who can help with framing and camera operation
- make sure your battery is fully charged and you have storage space in your phone for a large file
- take two minutes to do a test recording to check audio and framing
- look directly into the lens. Don't look at yourself on the screen when recording
- film in horizontal/landscape orientation.

DON'T...

- attempt to do your recording handheld; the footage and audio are likely to be unusable.
- film with a window behind you as it will cause you to be silhouetted
- use any filters that colour or alter your recording (aside from multi-lens depth of field shooting modes)
- film in poor light conditions; the result might look OK on your phone, but when viewed on larger screens it will be too grainy
- film in vertical/portrait orientation.

Images



Image 1
Tripod or makeshift mount used to position the phone. Approximately 1.5m – 2m from the window.



Image 2
Window provides good light.
Car mount used to hold and position the phone.



Image 3
Depending on the focal length of the camera lens on your particular device, your framing should look something like this.

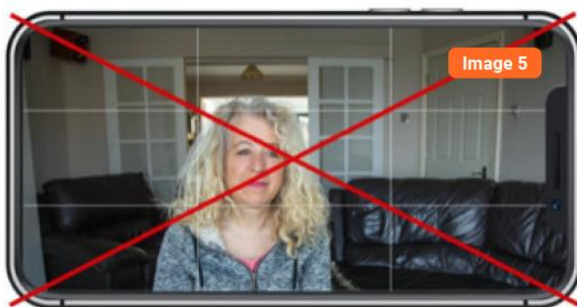


Image 5
This is framed too low and, importantly, too far away from the phone to achieve good audio capture.

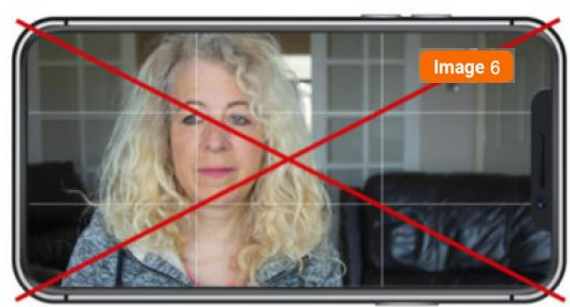


Image 6
In this example the subject is looking the wrong way.