

Technology Investment Fund (TIF)

Guidelines and Terms & Conditions

November 2025

Background & Purpose:

The Technology Investment Fund (TIF) is a new initiative by the University of Cambridge, providing an annual investment of £2 million in crucial proof-of-concept funding to speed up technology development, reduce risks, and improve commercialisation chances. Our goal is to help technologies developed from academic research in the University reach a market, either through licensing to 3rd parties or securing commercial investment into spinouts. It complements other funding sources within and outside the University.

In addition to funding, the TIF team offers expertise in project design and management. We can help find external consultants, handle contracts, support market research and business development. The recipients of TIF funding work with the wider Cambridge Enterprise team who provide advice on commercialisation strategy, intellectual property (IP) protection, access to entrepreneurs in residence and a network of mentors.

I. Program Eligibility

Applicants: Anyone employed by the University of Cambridge who [opts-in](#) to work with Cambridge Enterprise on commercialisation. If the applicant is a postdoc or a PhD student, a letter of support from the supervisor/manager will be required.

How to apply:

There are two ways to initiate a TIF funding discussion:

- If you already have a case with the Cambridge Enterprise technology development and licencing team (TDL), speak to your case manager and they will refer you to TIF team for a follow up discussion.
- Fill in an Expression of Interest' form, which can be found on the CE website.

If your project meets all eligibility criteria, you will be invited to make a formal application. A TIF project manager will provide further information on the application process (see section III).

Examples of Eligible activities:

- *In vitro* and *in vivo* proof of concept studies for therapeutic development
- Prototype development
- Software development
- Market research and commercial strategy
- Life cycle and techno-economic analysis
- Regulatory consultancy and expertise

Eligible costs:

Funding can be used to support activities within the University or externally through development partners. Eligible costs include:

- Subcontracts to 3rd parties (e.g. CRO, consultancies, external software development services)
- Salaries for project participants within the University
 - Deliverables must be clearly defined deliverables
 - Only one postdoc could be funded per project (maximum of 12 months PDRA time)
- Capital equipment purchase (limited to £50k per project, spending above £50k will be considered on case-by-case basis)
- Access to facilities
- Project consumables

Ineligible costs:

- Patenting or legal fees. Cambridge Enterprise supports patents costs separately, and these should not be included in any TIF budget proposals.
- Publication costs.
- Travel and attendance at conferences (unless specifically required for advancement of the project deliverables and agreed in writing with your TIF project manager).

For activities or costs not considered above or if you are in doubt about eligibility, please discuss with your TIF manager who will be able to advise you.

II. Award Funding Levels, Timeline and Project Requirements

TIF awards are categorized into three funding levels:

- **Under £30,000:** Small-scale projects approved internally within Cambridge Enterprise.
- **£30,000 - £100,000:** Medium-sized projects require approval from at least 3 members of the Investment Committee (IC) approval.
- **Over £100,000:** Large-scale projects require approval from the full Investment Committee.

Project Requirements:

- Projects that are expected to last more than 3 months must be split in phases with clear milestones, go/no-go decision points and deliverables. These should demonstrate clearly how the technology will be de-risked to get it to market.
- In all cases, regardless of the funding level, each project must have a clear commercial endpoint (validated through interactions with industry) and you must demonstrate that TIF funding will facilitate a license or transaction.
- TIF projects should cover the full scope, plan and budget required to get to a licence or transaction at the end of the project.

Project timelines: Projects may last up to 12 months in total. Each project phase should not exceed 6 months.

III. TIF Application Process

Projects invited to apply for TIF funding follow a structured application process:

- **TIF Application Form:** Completion of the application form outlining the business case, commercial need, project plan, and deliverables.
- **Pitch to Investment Committee:** For projects exceeding £100,000, applicants will present their proposal to the TIF Investment Committee

(IC), consisting of cross-industry experts and commercial leaders. For projects between £30,000-£100,000, applicants will pitch their proposal to at least 4 members of the Investment Committee. Presentations should not exceed 15 minutes and will be followed by 15-20 minutes for Q&A from the panel. An outcome will be communicated shortly after the IC committee meeting.

Preparation of the application form and pitch deck will be led by the research team with support from a dedicated TIF project manager.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria are used to evaluate TIF project proposals:

- **High Commercial Value and Impact:** Clearly defined unmet market need with significant commercial potential.
- **Validated Market Opportunity:** Support and feedback from industry partners, demonstrating market demand.
- **Competitive advantage:** Demonstrated differentiation from other competing technologies in the field that would increase the chances of technology adoption.
- **Clear Commercial Endpoint:** Defined commercialisation strategy, whether through licensing to third party or spin-out company.
- **Deliverables, Milestones, and Plan:** Clearly defined project plan with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) deliverables and milestones to de-risk the project.
- **Active Case in TD&L Portfolio:** The project must be a part of Cambridge Enterprise's Technology Development and Licensing (TDL) portfolio with IP assigned to Cambridge Enterprise (in the process of IP assignment or clear agreement that the participants agree to opt-in to the University IP policy).
- **Clean Intellectual Property:** No significant prior art (relevant to patentable technologies only) and completed funding due diligence (evaluation to be completed by the TDL case team).

V. Terms and Conditions of the Award

TIF awards are subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. IP ownership:
 - 1.1. All intellectual property and deliverables created during the project will be owned by Cambridge Enterprise.
 - 1.2. For any existing IP, an internal assignment of Intellectual Property to Cambridge Enterprise will need to be completed, to enable Cambridge Enterprise to commercialise your technology.
 - 1.3. If you prefer not to work with Cambridge Enterprise and want to have the IP handed back to you, TIF is not available.
2. Equity:
 - 2.1. Should the technology be licensed to a spinout company for further investment and development, Cambridge Enterprise will take equity in the spinout in line with the Fast Track equity framework ([Fast track equity option – Cambridge Enterprise](#)).
3. Investment recovery and revenue sharing:
 - 3.1. TIF investments will only be recovered if the project is commercially successful and revenue generating. No investment recovery will be sought if the project is not commercially successful.
 - 3.2. In the event the technology is successfully commercialised (via licensing to an existing company or a spin-out) and generates revenue the revenue share to inventors will be distributed in line with the University's IP policy. There is no cost or impact to the inventor share. The TIF investment will be realised from the Department share of revenue (see worked example in the Appendix).
4. Reporting requirements:
 - 4.1. A quarterly written update on key milestones and project progress to the TIF IC is required.
 - 4.2. Regular update meetings with Cambridge Enterprise (bi-weekly or monthly depending on the project). These meetings are to discuss project progress and identify areas where further support is required, e.g. managing suppliers / setting up contracts etc.
5. Research plan and milestones:
 - 5.1. Each TIF award is approved based on a translational plan with clear and attainable milestones agreed with the TIF IC or Head of Technology Development and Licencing team (depending on the value of the award). Completion of milestones will act as stage gates when evaluating

progress to support continuation of funding. Funding for a project may be discontinued if the technological or commercial hypothesis cannot be confirmed or if agreed technical milestones are not met within the specified timelines.

5.2. The research plan or budget may be modified during the funding period; however, any changes must receive prior written approval from the TIF project manager or if significant changes are required, by the TIF IC.

6. Overheads:

The funding can be used for direct costs only.

7. External contractors:

7.1. If the project requires the outsourcing of any work or services, Cambridge Enterprise shall be responsible for establishing outsourcing contracts and will pay the costs associated with such work or services directly to the external contractors or organizations involved.

7.2. The TIF project manager will be able to assist the project team with selection of appropriate contractors and obtaining quotations for the work. The TIF project manager must be consulted about the final choice of the contractors.

7.3. A TIF representative should be invited and be present, wherever practically possible, at key meetings with any project contractors (e.g., kick-off meetings, update meetings, design reviews, end-of-phase meetings).

Appendix

Revenue Sharing Under TIF

Revenue sharing from commercialized technologies will follow the University's IP policy:

- Inventors' share of revenue is not affected.
- TIF investment will be reimbursed from the departmental share of revenue.

A detailed example of revenue sharing is provided in the appendix of this document. TIF investments are recoverable from share of revenue from the department (Asterisk denotes RPI adjusted threshold, as per direction of the 2005 IPR policy adjusted for the period 12/12/2005 to 21/03/2024. *£197,649 RPI adjusted threshold, **£395,298):

Net income (from licence):	Inventors (jointly)		Department		Cambridge Enterprise	
	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery
First £100,000*	90%	No change	5%	3% to the department, 2% to TIF	5%	5% (plus 2% TIF contribution from dept)
Next £100,000*	60%	No change	20%	12% to the department, 8% to TIF	20%	20% (8% TIF contribution from dept)
Above £200,000**	34%	No change	33%	20% to the department, 13.2% to TIF	33%	33% (13.2% TIF contribution from dept)

Example 1: For a £100,000 TIF investment and net income of £1,000,000, revenue from the licence is distributed as follows:

Net income (from licence):	Inventors (jointly)		Department		Cambridge Enterprise	
	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery	Existing IP policy	Under TIF investment recovery
First £100,000*	£90,000	No change: £90,000	£5,000	£3,000	£5,000	£5,000 (plus £2,000 into TIF from dept share)
Next £100,000*	£60,000	No change: £60,000	£20,000	£12,000	£20,000	£20,000 (plus £8,000 into TIF from dept share)
Above £200,000**	£272,000	No change: £272,000	£264,000	£174,000	£264,000	£264,000 (plus £90,000 into TIF from dept share)
TOTAL	£422,000	£422,000	£289,000	£189,000	£289,000	£289,000 (plus £100,000 TIF recovery)