

# Call 3

Tourism NI  
Pre-Briefing Session



# Overview

## Background to DTFF



DTFF is a **unique collaboration** between local authorities and several government departments.

At its core is a **£7.5m capital grant** funding pot with the revenue costs to operate the programme supported by all local Councils in Northern Ireland.

The £7.5m capital funding is made up of £6m from Complementary Funding Pot, an additional £1.1m from DAERA focusing on Rural Applications, and £450k from Derry and Strabane's Growth Deal.

It's delivered by all local authorities, administrated by NMDDC and supported by Invest NI.

The William J. Clinton Leadership Institute at Queens University Belfast have been appointed as the specialist delivery agent and will be delivering all briefing sessions and provide an independent evaluation of applications.



# Overview

What is DTFF?



DTFF is a **demand led grant scheme** aimed at **stimulating Digital Transformation** in Small and Micro businesses.

It seeks to **address the financial barriers** to the adoption of new and emerging digital technologies.

It's designed to enable '**business transformation**' rather than 'digitisation' of existing business models or operations.

DTFF is a **Capital grant programme** – it does not provide support or assistance to develop new projects or ideas using emerging technologies.





**What  
technologies  
are funded?**



## Funded technologies

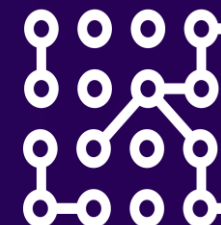
DTFF will enable the purchasing of capital equipment and/or resources for 'off the shelf' software solutions and/or bespoke system development, based on the following advanced digital technologies:



Smart  
technologies



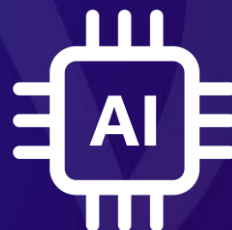
Robotics



Big data



Immersive  
technologies



Artificial  
intelligence



Blockchain

DTFF will not cover the on-going revenue costs of leasing software nor any ongoing maintenance, update or training costs, which should be borne by the applicant.



# Smart technologies/smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)

## Potential Use Cases for IoT

These devices are typically embedded with sensors, processors, and connectivity features that enable them to collect data, analyse it, and interact with users or other devices.

## Examples

### Smart building Automation:

Leverage of IoT-enabled sensors - various devices in a building, such as lighting, thermostats, door locks, and security systems, to a central hub. These can be monitored, and data captured to identify trends.

Using an in-room tablet, hotel guests can seamlessly control the music, lighting, and curtains, changing the atmosphere of the room and personalizing their experience to a whole new level.

### Smart Energy Management:

IoT solutions that track energy consumption patterns in homes or buildings, optimising energy usage and reducing waste. It may involve smart meters, energy monitoring devices, and automated control of appliances to achieve energy efficiency.

### Waste Management:

Using IoT sensors and cameras to detect wastage and increase efficiency.

### Traffic/Footfall Monitoring and Management:

Using IoT sensors and cameras to detect flow, congestion, and adjust traffic signal timings accordingly / parking.

A photograph of an industrial robotic arm in a factory setting. The arm is white and blue, mounted on a metal frame. It is positioned over a work area. In the background, there are other industrial machines and a person in a blue uniform. The ceiling has large rectangular light fixtures. The overall scene is brightly lit and industrial.

# Process Automation via Robotics/Cobotics





**Potential Use Cases for Robotics / Cobotics.  
(Process Automation)**

**Examples**

**Robotics for Manufacturing and Assembly:**

Typically, applications involved in manufacturing or assembly processes.

**Robotics for Inventory Management:**

Robotics employed to automate inventory management processes.

**Cobotics  
(Collaborative robots working alongside humans)**

They offer numerous benefits to small businesses, including increased productivity, improved efficiency, cost savings, and enhanced workplace safety.

Cobots can perform repetitive or mundane tasks with high accuracy and speed, allowing employees to focus on more complex and value-added activities. By automating repetitive tasks, Cobots can significantly boost overall productivity and output.

# Big-data and Analytics

```
res.json({ success: false, message: 'Could not register user, username or email might be used' })
} else {
  res.json({ success: false, message: 'Could not register user, Error: ', err })
}
}
else {
  sgMail.setApiKey(configSendgrid.SendgridAPIKey);
  fs.readFile("./templates/emailtemplate.html", 'utf8', (err, data) => {
    if (err) {
      if(err.code == 11100){
        res.json({success: true, message:""})
      }
      res.json({ success: false, message: 'Error: ' + err })
    }
    data = data.replace("###Title###", "Confirm Account");
    data = data.replace("###Message###", "Please click the button below to confirm your account");
    data = data.replace("###Link###", host.baseurl + "api/accounts/confirmemail?email=" + req.body.email);
    const msg = {
      to: req.body.email.toLowerCase(),
      from: 'info@codenetic.co.za',
      subject: 'Account Confirmation',
      content: [
        {
          "type": "text/html",
          "value": data.toString()
        }
      ]
    }
  })
}
```

```
res.json({ success: false, message: 'Could not register user, ...' })  
} else {  
  res.json({ success: false, message: '...' })  
}
```

## Potential Use Cases for Big Data / Open Data / Analytics.

The term "big data" is characterized by the three V's: volume, velocity, and variety.

## Examples

### Customer Analytics

Hospitality and Accommodations sectors are using big data solutions to more effectively track customer behaviour and preferences. This information is later used to improve the guest experience. Big data measure precisely business performance.

By analysing customer data, including purchase history, browsing behaviour, and demographic information, small businesses can gain a better understanding of their customers' preferences, interests, and buying patterns

### Tourism Market Intelligence

Interactive Trails / itineraries tailored to customers

The Tourism sector can utilise big data to track customer habits and tastes more effectively.

Later, this data is used to enhance the visitor's experience. Big data measures business performance exactly.

```
type": "text/html",  
"value": data.toString()  
}
```

A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a VR headset and holding a glowing blue controller. Their hands are raised in a virtual environment, with a blue and orange glow. The background is a blurred virtual space with floating particles. A dark horizontal band across the middle of the image contains white text.

# Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)

<b>Potential Use Cases for Augmented, Virtual, Mixed Reality and Haptics.</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Visualization: Creating Immersive Experiences</b>  Augmented Reality	<p>AR can bridge the gap between the physical and digital worlds, offering tourists a more immersive and interactive journey.</p> <p>Tourism experiences can benefit from the use of augmented reality (AR), a technology that offers tours in digital augmentation of reality, real-time language translations, and maps that interact with humans.</p>
Virtual Reality	<p>VR can offer more realistic and immersive travel experiences, allowing users to virtually explore landmarks and even participate in virtual tours guided by locals.</p> <p>This trend will not only cater to those unable to travel physically but also serve as a valuable tool for trip planning and destination marketing.</p>



**Artificial Intelligence and  
Machine Learning**

Potential Use Cases for AI and Machine Learning	Examples
<b>Customer Support and Chatbots:</b>	<p>The development of AI chatbots has progressed significantly in recent years. Also, it may have a significant impact on how the travel and tourism sector grows.</p> <p>With the help of text-based interactions on numerous websites and services, AI chatbots inspire human conversation. Their main goal is to reduce query handling traffic by offering 24/7 customer service.</p>
<b>Demand Forecasting: AI dynamic pricing engines</b>	<p>Machine learning algorithms will continuously refine suggestions, ensuring that each trip becomes a unique and tailored adventure. AI will also play a crucial role in customer service, with chatbots providing instant assistance and support throughout the travel journey.</p> <p>Machine learning algorithms can analyse historical sales data, market trends, and external factors to predict future demand. This helps small businesses optimize inventory management, plan production, and ensure they have the right products available when customers need them, reducing costs and minimizing stockouts.</p>



# Distributed Ledger Systems/Blockchain Technologies



**Potential Use Cases for Distributed Ledger / Blockchain.**

**Examples**

**Decentralised Management:**

Blockchain technology is gaining traction in the tourism industry, offering secure and transparent transactions.

Blockchain will likely become widely adopted for booking accommodation / activities. Its decentralized nature ensures transactions remain tamper-proof while simultaneously lowering fraud risk.

**Smart Contracts:**

Small businesses can leverage blockchain to automate and enforce contract terms through smart contracts. These self-executing contracts can automatically trigger actions or transactions when predefined conditions are met

**Eco / Sustainability**

Blockchain and AI will also be used to monitor and optimize resource consumption, contributing to the industry's efforts to minimize its environmental footprint and promote responsible travel.

# What is not funded?

## Ineligible Investment Types



DTFF **will not fund** capital investment in the following which could be viewed more as ‘digitisation of existing operations’, rather than digital innovation/transformation:

- Website and e-commerce development
- Social media strategies
- Mobile marketing, paid advertising, blogging and content creation
- Search engine optimisation
- Purchase of generic IT equipment (laptops, printers etc)
- Customer relationship management, database systems
- Non-industrial 3-D printing
- Standalone EPOS
- DTFF cannot fund subscription costs or models.

**This list is not exhaustive and the DTFF Operations Team have the discretion to omit costs if deemed ineligible and/or not within scope of the project.**

# How much grant is available?



**Funding is available between £5,000 - £20,000 (ex VAT) for an investment project.**

Successful applicants will receive up to **70%** of the total value of an investment project and be required to provide a **30%** matched co-investment.

Equipment/software is purchased up front after you receive a Letter of Offer (LoO) and then the 70% claimed back.



# Grant Funding Levels



## Minimum project and Maximum grant levels.

	Minimum Fund	Maximum Fund
Funded Value	£5,000	£20,000
Total Project Value	£7,142.86	Minimum of £28,571.43
Match funding required	£2,142.86	£8,571.43

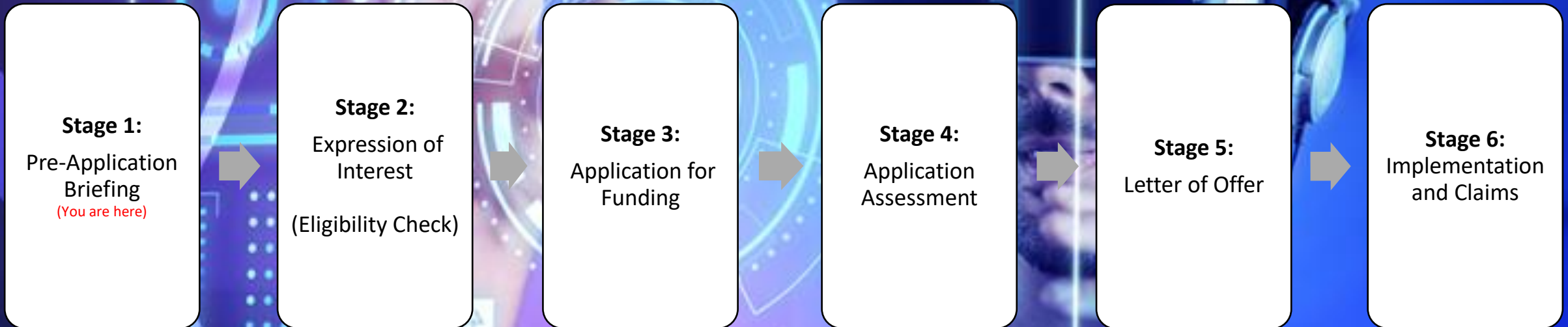
- The minimum grant available to applicants is £5,000 ex VAT (minimum total project value £7,142.86).
- The maximum grant available is £20,000 ex VAT with a minimum total project value of £28,571.43.
- There is no upper limit to the total project value, but maximum funding remains at £20,000 ex VAT.

# Eligibility



- Based in Northern Ireland and operate within 1 of the 11 local Council areas;
- A Small (10-49) or Micro (1-9 EE) business;
- VAT registered and actively trading for at least 12 months; (VAT exempt businesses trading above the VAT threshold can apply)
- Open to all sectors with the exception of primary agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- Have a Digital Transformation Plan or equivalent;
- Project centered on one or more of the six advanced digital technologies;
- Eligible expenditure must be capital equipment (hardware, devices) and/or software/system development; and
- Compliance with State Aid/ Subsidy control limits via De-Minimus/ EU-UK TCA.

# Grants Process





# DTFF Expression of Interest is now OPEN

- Expression of Interests must be **completed online** via [www.dtff.co.uk/apply-now](http://www.dtff.co.uk/apply-now).
- Deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest is **12 Noon - 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024**
- It is highly recommended that applicants refer to the **DTFF Applicant Guidance** prior to submitting an Expression of Interest



# The Digital Transformation Plan



- DTFF capital investments must be **aligned** to a **Digital Transformation Plan**.
- This has been embedded into the online Application Form and will be **assessed** and **scored** by an **Evaluation Panel**.
- A word version is available on the DTFF website to allow applicants to begin drafting a response.
- DTFF Operations Team / QUB **cannot** assist in the development of these plans.
- It is the **responsibility of applicants** to develop these plans independently or with support from complementary programme interventions.

## Appendix A – Digital Transformation Plan

All capital investments through the DTFF will be required to be aligned to a Digital Transformation Plan. The purpose of this plan is to demonstrate that a business has thought through the digital transformation they are seeking to make, its relevance to the business and the expected benefits they are aiming to achieve.

As part of the Application Form, applicants **must** complete Section 2: Digital Transformation Plan. It will be this section of the online Application Form that will be assessed and scored by an Evaluation Panel. A word version of the Digital Transformation Plan will be made available allowing you to draft a response.

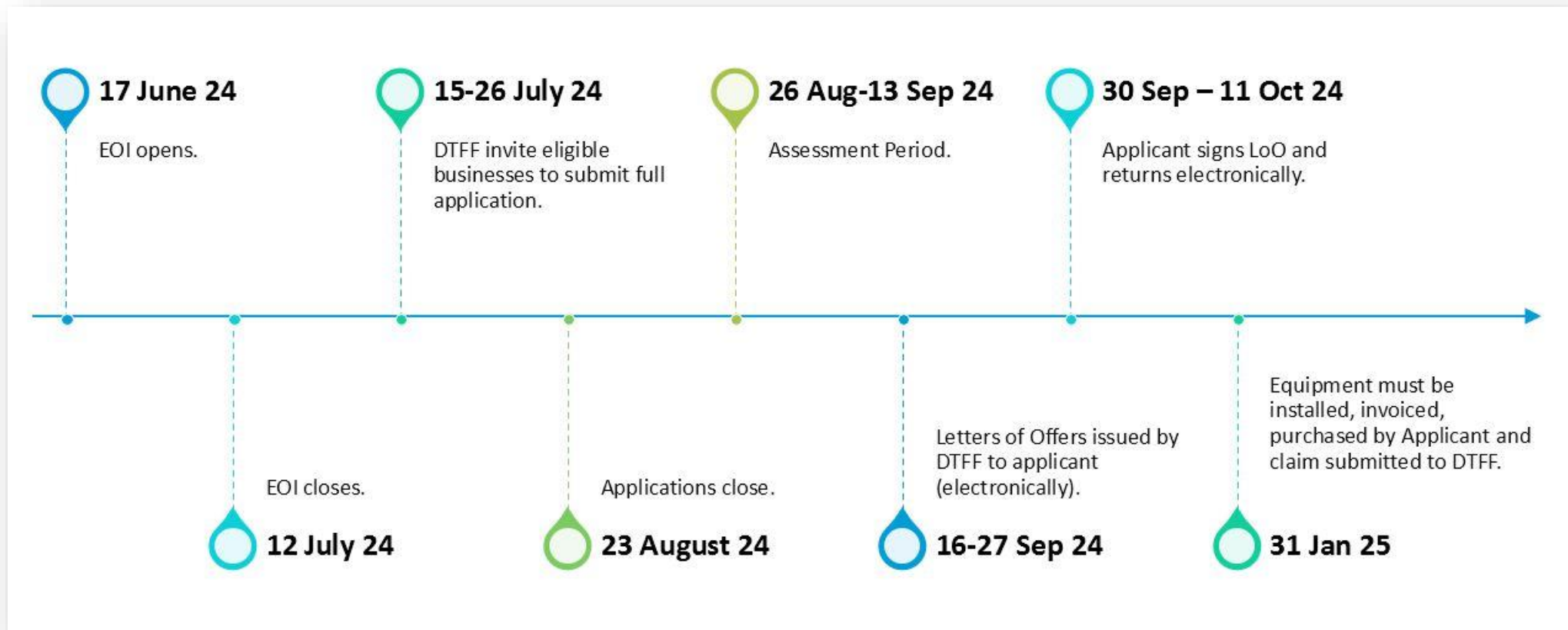
The Digital Transformation Plan will consist of the following questions for scoring:

<b>Criteria 1</b>	How will the proposed investment contribute to Digital Transformation within your business? (Max 4000 characters)	Weighting of 40%
<b>Criteria 2</b>	Summarise the economic outputs and/or benefits that are likely to be delivered from the proposed investment. (Max 4000 characters)	Weighting of 40%
<b>Criteria 3</b>	Summarise the business performance improvements that are likely to be delivered from the proposed investment. (Max 4000 characters)	Weighting of 20%

**Please Note:** It is the responsibility of applicants to develop this Digital Transformation Plan independently or with support from complementary programme interventions. The DTFF Operations Team **will not** assist in the development of these plans.



# Anticipated Grant Timeline – Call 3



Registration for Call 3 Pre-briefing sessions now live on website: [www.dtff.co.uk](http://www.dtff.co.uk)

Call 4 – March 2025 / Call 5 June 2025.

# Further Support



**Applicants can contact the following organisations who may be able to provide support:**

- Queens University Belfast;
- Further Education College's across NI;
- University of Ulster  
Smart Manufacturing Data Hub, Artificial Intelligence Collaboration Centre;
- Local Authorities – Go Succeed;
- Innovate NI; and
- Any other support mechanism as identified by individual applicants e.g. Consultants.

**Further detail can be found on the DTFF website:**

[www.dtff.co.uk/further-support](http://www.dtff.co.uk/further-support)



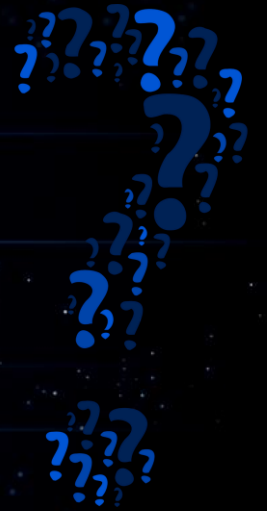
For more information  
contact the DTFF team:

[dtff@nmandd.org](mailto:dtff@nmandd.org)  
Tel: 0330 137 4052  
[www.dtff.co.uk](http://www.dtff.co.uk)



Digital  
Transformation  
Flexible Fund

# Any Questions?



Sign up to the e-zine for latest support / notifications

The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) is delivered by all local authorities in Northern Ireland under the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) and supported by Invest NI. The project is part funded by the NI Executive, UK Government, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and all local authorities in Northern Ireland.