Qatar Research Development and Innovation Council

Small Business Innovation Grant (SBIG)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Small Business Innovation Grant (SBIG) is a national initiative by the Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council designed to empower innovation-driven SMEs in Qatar through phased, non-dilutive funding. This FAQ provides prospective applicants and stakeholders with essential information to understand the program's scope, eligibility, funding phases, application process, and post-award requirements.

1. **What is SBIG?**

SBIG stands for Small Business Innovation Grant, a program designed to support innovation-driven SMEs in Qatar by providing phased, non-dilutive funding to accelerate the development of innovative technologies, products, and processes.

2. **What are the objectives of the SBIG program?**

To stimulate innovation in SMEs to drive growth within the RDI ecosystem, to foster strong academia-industry collaboration to advance technology commercialization, to enhance research and innovation capabilities in strategic sectors prioritized under NDS-3, and to drive sustainable economic growth and job creation through SMEs.

3. **Who is eligible to apply for SBIG?**

Any SME headquartered in Qatar is majority-owned by Qatari citizens or residents.

4. **How does QRDI define SMEs?**

An SME is a for-profit entity with fewer than 250 employees and annual revenues not exceeding QAR 100 million.

5. **Can a university apply for SBIG?**

Universities cannot apply directly, but they can participate through spinout companies that meet the SME criteria or through collaborations with SMEs by providing IP, technical support, or research expertise.

6. **I am a university researcher with a novel idea. What can I do to apply?**

You can work with your tech transfer office to form a spinout company or collaborate with an eligible SME to bring your idea to market.

7. **Can a university spinout company apply?**

Yes, if it meets the SME criteria and commercializes or develops technology created within the university.

8. **Can I apply if I’m not based in Qatar?**

No, applicants must be headquartered in Qatar.

9. **I am a company located outside Qatar. Can I apply for the grant first and, if successful, move my operation to Qatar?**

No, companies outside Qatar cannot apply and relocate after receiving the SBIG grant. Applicants must already be based in Qatar to be eligible.

10. **What types of projects does SBIG fund?**

Projects that develop innovative products, technologies, or services aligned with Qatar's national priorities and that demonstrate good commercial potential.

11. **What are the SBIG program's priority sectors?**

Medical and healthcare, Logistics and Transportation, Smart Cities, Creativity, Arts and tourism, and Emerging Digital Technologies.

12. **What is the difference between Phase I and Phase II?**

Phase I focuses on technical feasibility and early validation, while Phase II supports prototype development, pilot testing, and market readiness.

13. **How much funding is available under each phase?**

Up to QAR 800,000 for Phase I (6–12 months); up to QAR 2,200,000 for Phase II (12–24 months).

14. **Can I apply directly to Phase II without going through Phase I?**

Yes, but you must show evidence equivalent to a successful Phase I outcome (e.g., MVP, validation results, TRL 4).

15. **What is a Technology Readiness Level (TRL), and how does it affect my application?**

TRL is a scale used to measure a technology's maturity. SBIG applicants must identify their current TRL to determine the appropriate funding phase.

16. **How do I choose which phase to apply for?**

Based on your innovation's maturity, use TRL benchmarks to assess whether you should apply for Phase I (early feasibility) or Phase II (validation/deployment).

17. **What are the supportable and non-supportable costs under SBIG?**

Eligible costs include manpower, equipment, travel, operating expenses, and IP-related costs. Ineligible costs include admin salaries, fringe benefits, office supplies, and marketing costs. The RFA provides a comprehensive list of supportable costs.

18. **Are collaborations with universities or other third parties allowed?**

Yes, especially if the university holds IP relevant to the proposal or offers technical capabilities. However, the SME must lead the project.

19. Who owns the IP generated under SBIG?

The applicant retains ownership, subject to QRDI's rights to monitor outcomes, and requires acknowledgment of funding support.

20. What documents are required in the application?

Executive summary, technical proposal, commercialization plan, team profiles, budget, IP strategy, and optional letters of support.

21. How are applications evaluated?

Submitted applications will undergo peer review and panel review, which will consider the following main criteria: innovativeness and technical merit, team capability, commercialization strategy, and market opportunity.

22. What happens after I am awarded the grant—what are the reporting and compliance requirements?

Awardees must submit periodic technical and financial reports and comply with QRDI’s grant policies, as outlined in RFA.

23. Are resubmissions allowed if my application is not selected for funding?

Yes. Applicants whose proposals are not selected may revise and resubmit in response to a future SBIG call.

24. Are extensions to the project period allowed?

QRDI may consider no-cost extensions to the project period on a case-by-case basis. These extensions allow additional time to complete the project objectives without additional funding. Requests must be well justified and submitted before the project's end date.

25. Can I apply for another SBIG grant if I have already received one?

Yes. Previous awardees can apply for additional SBIG grants for new project scope. Each application will be assessed independently and must demonstrate a distinct innovation or a significantly advanced stage of development from previous work.

26. Does SBIG support the entire project cost?

Yes. No co-funding is required; SBIG covers the full eligible project cost.

27. What if my final project cost exceeds the grant received?

You must cover any costs beyond the approved grant amount from other sources.

28. Can I collaborate with an overseas partner for the project?

Yes, but the principal applicant based in Qatar must carry out most of the work. Please refer to the RFA for subcontracting guidelines.

29. **Can I make changes to the project after receiving the grant?**

Yes. Grant recipients may request:

- **Standard changes**, such as timeline extensions, via the Grant Management System.
- **Exceptional changes**, such as budget refinements (within the approved grant amount) or milestone revisions, may be considered case-by-case and are subject to additional review.