**Hi3 NETWORK INNOVATION VOUCHERS**

**A call for proposals for innovative products, services, or experiences**

**December, 2021**

**About Hi3 Network**

The European Regional Development Fund part funds the Hi3 Network. This grant encourages SMEs and researchers across the South East of England to engage with emerging high technologies, with a specific interest in the moving image and related creative activities. This is partly through three sets of production studios in Folkestone, Canterbury, and Maidstone and partly through the creation of a sustainable framework to enable SMEs and university researchers to collaborate. Lastly, this is via advanced connectivity and cloud between the three studio centres.

**Innovation Vouchers**

24 Innovation Vouchers will be awarded to businesses and researchers with an innovative research topic from now until 2023, These will be awarded across three calls for innovation vouchers, this is the first of the three calls. These vouchers give free dedicated access to the network’s pre-production, live shooting, post production and/or other creative workflows. Hi3 Network has experimental studio spaces, state-of-the-art equipment, as well as co-working production spaces with fast processing power and cloud computing. These are non-monetary awards which equate to multiple dedicated sandbox sessions at any of our three hubs. Furthermore, successful applicants can present their findings at conferences, get publication and press opportunities, and there is potential for further consulting from industry experts or introductions to venture capitalists where applicable.

**This call opens on Dec 16, 2021.**

**The deadline for applications is at 23:59 on 28 February, 2022.**

**What are we looking for?**

* Projects that have *the potential* to launch future novel products, services, or experiences. We wish to support well-articulated and tested demonstrators that have the potential to generate real world impact.
* Projects that could benefit the Third Sector, Cultural Sector, service industries, manufacturing, the build environment or any other industry which might use the moving image and any related field, to create outputs in a novel way.
* Innovative products, services, experiences, or processes that take the SE of England towards carbon neutrality in any form, through the use of the moving image or any related creative output. The film and television industry have adopted the [Albert standard](https://wearealbert.org/), but we could do more.
* Progressing the [SELEP Skills Agenda](https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2018/09/SELEP-Skills-Strategy-v14-0818-WEB.pdf) through the novel application of image, sound, or volumetric capture (3D) for knowledge transfer could produce high impact and would also be of high interest:
* The Maidstone Hub is particularly interested in the exploration of Virtual Production and any creative process related to Virtual Production. This can include novel uses of pre-visualisation, live action shooting, and post-production.
* The studios at Canterbury Christ Church University are interested in motion capture, innovative uses of drone videography, and the exploration of immersive technologies, as well as experimentation within the gaming or music technology fields.
* At the Folkestone Studios projects that explore the moving image for the creative industries and beyond is of interest. Creative development for innovative storytelling for live and interactive immersion and exploring production workflow processes for creative tech production.

**How to apply**

The online proposal form will ask for:

* **Project title**
* **Business contact details**
* **Researcher Information**
* **A 500 word description of your project** in easy to understand terms that can be used to publicise your project should the proposal be successful.
* Upload one PDF file containing the following:

1. **CV for SME representative** (maximum two A4 pages, Ariel, 11 pt).
2. **Company Information Sheet** (maximum two A4 pages, Ariel, 11 pt)  
   Please include any State Aid received.
3. **CV for researcher** (maximum two A4 pages, Ariel, 11 pt).
4. **Proposed project Gantt Chart/project workflow schedule**
5. **Project Summary** (400 words maximum, written in plain English)
6. **Project Overview** (800 words maximum).   
   Please include the research question you are addressing, the current state/literature review, the context of the challenge you are addressing, the potential impact and value, the expected beneficiaries, and the methodology you will use.
7. **Demonstrator Information** (maximum 400 words).  
   Please give an overview of what you expect to create to demonstrate your proposed service, experience, product, or process. This could include diagrams, market analyses, user-diagrams, user-profiles, site maps, construction diagrams, draft brochures, working models, test results, draft content, images, videos, sound files, 3D models, models, other expressions.
8. **Plans for future development** (maximum 400 words)

Please describe how you plan to take the demonstrator forward to market.

1. **How will you measure success?** (maximum 400 words)

Please describe what success will look like, how you will measure success, this could include KPIs, expected outputs, etc.

1. **Risk Analysis** (maximum 400 words)

Please list any risks you anticipate and how you will mitigate those risks. This could be a lack of equipment, time, materials.

1. **Intellectual Property** (maximum 200 words)

Give an overview of whether you expect to generate any Intellectual Property, and if so, how you intend to protect your demonstrator and/or any constituent parts of your demonstrator).

1. **Staffing**   
   Please give the names of who will be working in your team and describe what expertise they will bring and what they will be responsible for over the period of the project development.
2. **Tools and Equipment Required**   
   Please list any equipment or time in a production space that you don’t already have and are likely to need via the Hi3 Network. We may not have what you require, but if we know there is a dependency we will work with you during the scoping of the project to try to overcome any barrier). This will also assist the Hi3 Network team with planning and scheduling should your proposal be successful.

**Documents need to be submitted by 23:59 on 28.02.2022.**

**How we will assess your proposal**

Proposals will be assessed by a panel of experts from both industry and academia. The assessment criteria will include:

* The novelty of the proposed product, service, experience, or process.
* The potential impact and value to society, the economy, cultural life, infrastructure, diversity, and sustainability of the South East of England.
* The value for money of the proposal.
* The clarity of the methodology to produce the proposed demonstrator.
* The suitability of the project and project team.
* A realistic timescale and objectives.
* The transferability of the idea across sectors.

**Timescale to award**

The peer review panels will convene within one month of the submission deadline and the successful teams will be notified no later than two months after the call has closed.

**Successful Proposals**

If successful, the SME and the university must sign a collaboration agreement which details the key objectives of the project, role and responsibilities of each party as well as a tailored workplan that reflects the scope of the proposal. Resources and timeframes will be assessed according to project needs.