Smart IT

WHITEPAPER · 2027 EDITION

Funding your digital project

England, Scotland and Ireland

A practical guide to the grants, vouchers, loans and tax reliefs that can help pay for new business software and ERP projects.

ENGLAND

£20,000

Made Smarter Adoption grants for SME manufacturers, at 50%

SCOTLAND

£1k–£20k

Council and Business Gateway digital grants, usually at 50%

IRELAND

Up to 80%

Digital Discovery support, plus LEO Grow Digital vouchers

odoo Gold Partner

smart-ltd.co.uk/grants
Information checked November 2026

Public money can cover part of your next system

Grants for software and digital projects exist in every nation, but they are scattered across national agencies, councils and growth hubs, and the rules change every year. This guide brings the main options for small and mid-sized businesses together in one place, with what each one pays for and how to apply. It covers software and digital projects only: grants, vouchers, loans and tax reliefs that can help fund a new ERP, a move off an old system, or the consultancy around it.

Nation	Scheme	Who it's for	Typical support
England	**Made Smarter Adoption**	SME manufacturers, 10–249 staff	50% match, up to £20,000
England	**Growth Hub and council grants**	SMEs, criteria vary by area	Often £1,000–£35,000, match funded
UK	**Growth Guarantee Scheme**	UK SMEs borrowing through accredited lenders	Loans up to £2M, 70% government guarantee
UK	**Annual Investment Allowance and full expensing**	Businesses buying qualifying software and hardware	Up to £1M a year deducted from profits
Scotland	**Council and Business Gateway digital grants**	SMEs in the council area	£1,000–£20,000, usually 50%
Scotland	**Highlands and Islands Enterprise digital support**	Businesses in the HIE area	Specialist advice and capital grants
Ireland	**LEO Grow Digital Voucher**	Businesses with up to 50 staff	50%, €500–€5,000
Ireland	**Digital Discovery**	Enterprise Ireland and Údarás clients, 10+ staff	Up to 80%, max €5,000
Ireland	**Digital Process Innovation**	Enterprise Ireland clients	50%, up to €150,000

Tip Almost every grant must be approved before you sign a contract or place an order. Speak to the funder and your software partner early, and treat the grant as part of the project plan, not an afterthought.

England

England's biggest digital grant is aimed at manufacturers. Other sectors usually find support through their local Growth Hub, plus the UK-wide loan guarantee and tax reliefs below, which apply in Scotland too.

Made Smarter Adoption

50% match · up to £20,000

For SME manufacturers with 10–249 staff and turnover under £50M, now available in every English region. You register, a technology adviser builds a free digital roadmap with you, then you apply for match funding for the projects it recommends. ERP and stock systems have been funded where they fix a production or efficiency problem.

Also offers: leadership training and part-funded digital technology interns.

Business Growth Service and Growth Hubs

Often £1k–£35k

The Business Growth Service, launched in July 2025, is the government's front door for business support. It routes you to your local Growth Hub, which knows the council and combined-authority grants open in your area. Most are match funded at around 50% and open and close in rounds, so timing matters.

Growth Guarantee Scheme UK-WIDE

Loans up to £2M

Run by the British Business Bank through accredited lenders. The government guarantees 70% of the loan to the lender, which can make it easier to borrow for a larger project. You stay liable for the full amount.

Tax reliefs UK-WIDE

AIA up to £1M a year

The Annual Investment Allowance, and full expensing for companies, can let you deduct qualifying software licences, hardware and capitalised implementation costs from profits in the year you buy them. Cloud subscriptions are usually a normal running cost instead. Your accountant will confirm how your project is treated.

Start here Manufacturer? Register with Made Smarter. Everyone else: contact your local Growth Hub through the Business Growth Service.

Scotland

In Scotland, most money for software projects comes through local councils and Business Gateway, so what you can get depends on where you are based. The UK-wide loan guarantee and tax reliefs on page 3 apply here too.

Council digital grants: examples open in late 2026

Council	Support	Good to know
North Lanarkshire	£1,000–£20,000 at 50%	Business Growth Fund; closes 12 February 2027
West Lothian	Up to £7,500 at 50%	Digital Development Grant
Renfrewshire	£1,000–£10,000 at 50%	Growth and digital investment
East Renfrewshire	Up to £5,000	Off-the-shelf software excluded; implementation may qualify
East Dunbartonshire	Up to £2,500	Smaller grant for digital improvements

Other councils run similar schemes. Your local Business Gateway adviser will know what is open.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Businesses in the HIE area can get digital specialist advice and apply to its digital and technology adoption grants, including capital grants for new systems.

Digital Development Loan

An interest-free Scottish Government loan of £5,000–£100,000 for digital projects. Check whether a funding round is open before you plan around it.

Scottish Enterprise

Account-managed and growth businesses can ask their Scottish Enterprise adviser about support for larger transformation projects.

One to watch

SMART: SCOTLAND innovation funding is paused, with a replacement fund expected. It suits genuinely new technology rather than standard ERP.

Start here Contact your local Business Gateway office, or HIE if you are in the Highlands and Islands, and ask which digital grants are open for your council area.

04 · IRELAND

Ireland

Ireland has the clearest path of the three. Smaller firms go through their Local Enterprise Office (LEO); larger and exporting firms through Enterprise Ireland or Údarás na Gaeltachta. Funding comes from the government's Digital Transition Fund.

SMALLER BUSINESSES · UP TO 50 STAFF

STEP 1 · FREE

Digital for Business

A free review with an approved consultant, for businesses with 1–50 staff trading for at least 12 months. You get a report on where digital tools would help.

→

STEP 2 · 50%, €500–€5,000

LEO Grow Digital Voucher

Co-funds the software and IT configuration your report recommends, including ERP, stock and e-commerce systems. Apply through your LEO with the report.

ENTERPRISE IRELAND AND ÚDARÁS CLIENTS

Digital Discovery

Up to 80% · max €5,000

Pays most of the cost of an outside expert to assess your processes and plan a digital project such as a new ERP. For manufacturing and internationally traded services firms with 10 or more staff. Its EU co-funding period ended in June 2026; check the current round with your adviser.

Digital Process Innovation

50% · up to €150,000

For larger projects that change how the business works, with some innovation or risk involved. Agree the scope with your Enterprise Ireland development adviser before you apply.

Why now

Ireland's e-invoicing rules phase in from 2028–29. A new system funded now can be ready for them.

Start here

Up to 50 staff: book Digital for Business through your LEO. Enterprise Ireland client: ask your adviser about Digital Discovery.

Seven rules that apply almost everywhere

Each scheme has its own small print, but most applications fail on the same few points.

1 Approval comes first
Signing a contract or paying a deposit before the grant is approved usually makes that cost ineligible.

2 Get comparable quotes
Many funders ask for two or three quotes, each scoped to the same requirements.

3 Plan for payment in arrears
You pay the supplier first and claim the grant afterwards with invoices and proof of payment.

4 VAT is usually excluded
If you can reclaim VAT, grants are calculated on the net cost.

5 Watch subsidy limits
In the UK, Minimal Financial Assistance is capped at £315,000 over three years; Ireland applies EU de minimis limits.

6 No double funding
The same cost can't be covered by two grants. Different phases can be.

7 Show the business case
Funders back outcomes: hours saved, errors removed, growth enabled. Tie the system to a problem you can measure today.

A typical funded project, step by step

STEP 1
Map the problem
How orders, stock and finance flow today, and what it costs you.

STEP 2
Talk to the funder
Confirm eligibility, deadlines and what they will pay for.

STEP 3
Scope and quote
A written scope and fixed quotes the funder can compare.

STEP 4
Get approval
Wait for the offer letter before you sign anything.

STEP 5
Deliver and claim
Go live, keep the evidence, and claim on time.

06 · HOW WE HELP

Turn a funding idea into a project the funder can approve

Smart IT is an Odoo Gold Partner with 200+ projects delivered. We don't apply for grants on your behalf, but we give you what the application needs.

Free systems review
45 minutes mapping how orders, stock and finance move today.

Written scope
A gap analysis and project plan that doubles as your roadmap.

Funder-ready quote
Phased, itemised costs that fit the scheme's rules and timing.

Book a free systems review smart-ltd.co.uk/grants

Sources and where to apply

Made Smarter Adoption · madesmarter.uk

SME Digital Adoption Taskforce update · gov.uk, June 2026

Capital allowances and full expensing · gov.uk (HMRC)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise · hie.co.uk

Digital Discovery, Digital Process Innovation · enterprise-ireland.com

Business Growth Service · gov.uk

Growth Guarantee Scheme · british-business-bank.co.uk

Business Gateway and council grants · bgateway.com

Digital for Business, Grow Digital · localenterprise.ie

Grow Digital Voucher announcement · gov.ie, September 2024

Important

This guide summarises publicly available information checked in November 2026. Schemes open, close and change their rules often, and local grants run in rounds. Always confirm eligibility, amounts and deadlines with the funder before you plan around them. Smart IT is not a grants body or a financial adviser, and nothing in this guide is financial or tax advice; speak to your accountant about tax reliefs.