

# Pro FIT – Frühphasenfinanzierung

## Pro FIT early phase financing

### Grants and loans for innovation projects

#### Who is eligible for support?

Newly established, small technology-orientated enterprises based in Berlin. Your company is planning an innovation project (R&D anchor project) and should be no older than 12 months in order to receive financing under early phase 1, and no older than 24 months if applying for financing under early phase 2.

#### What is supported?

- Personnel expenditure (especially for executives)
- Investment expenditure
- Ongoing operating expenditure

During both early phases, financing is available for all of your company's necessary and reasonable expenses which are neither directly linked to the 'anchor project' (innovation project) nor incurred in conjunction with sales-related customer orders.

#### What kind of support is available?

Funding depends on the respective early phase.

##### Early phase 1

- Up to 50% of expenses in early phase 1 are financed with a non-repayable grant and a loan.
- Early phase 1 lasts for a maximum period of one year. The innovation project must have begun before the end of early phase 1.

##### Early phase 2

- Expenses in this phase are financed with a loan.
- Early phase 2 ends no later than on completion of the innovation project.

In both early phases, financing is available to cover 100% of expenses eligible for support. Total financing for both phases can amount to a maximum of EUR 500,000 with financing in early phase 1 limited to EUR 200,000.

#### Terms and conditions

- Loans in early phase 1 are usually granted as interest-free loans.
- The interest rates for loans in early phase 2 are based on KfW's terms and conditions for innovation financing and are below market conditions.
- The loans have a term of up to 10 years.
- The loans are granted without the need to provide collateral.

## How to apply



- In order to apply, submit the completed application form along with the supporting documents. You can apply online using the application process provided on IBB's customer portal. Alternatively, you can print out your completed application form and send it by post or submit it in person.
- Based on the documents submitted and a personal presentation by the founders, an external expert will assess the application in order to determine whether the planned business concept is generally suitable for and worth financing.
- If the outcome of this examination is positive, IBB will request additional documents from the applicant in order to perform its commercial examination.
- Only when the application has been received by IBB and after its approval can the early phase project begin at the applicant's own financial risk.
- The approval committee decides at monthly meetings whether to grant support.
- IBB also provides an advisory service for applications. IBB commissions external experts and specialist project sponsors for the purpose of confidential evaluation, qualification and supervision. The completeness and quality of the documents submitted strongly influence the time it takes to process and decide on the application.

Please contact us at the earliest possible date. Our customer centre will be pleased to answer detailed questions regarding the programme and assist you with your application.

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## FAQs regarding the Pro FIT early phase financing programme

### 1. What is the difference between early phase 1 and early phase 2?

Early phase 1 refers to the start-up phase of a company. During this phase, the establishment of the company infrastructure and preparations for the innovation project are supported with grants and loans (50:50). Early phase 2 runs parallel to the innovation project. During this phase, loans are provided to finance further expansion of the company.

### 2. Is it also possible to apply for financing for one early phase only?

Yes.

### 3. How old can start-up companies be?

Only small start-up companies based in Berlin can apply for **early phase 1** financing. These companies may not be older than 12 months at the time the project application is submitted to IBB.

The point in time when business operations commence is decisive for determining how old a company is. Before business operations commence, the decisive point in time is the time when the articles of association were signed and first costs were incurred by the company.

If an application is submitted for **early phase 2** financing only, the applicant company must be no more than 24 months old at the time the project application is received by IBB.

### 4. What is an 'anchor project'?

The innovation project is referred to as an 'anchor project' and establishes the technology and innovation reference which is a decisive precondition for early phase financing under the 'Pro FIT' programme. Financing for the innovation project under the 'Pro FIT' programme is recommended but is not mandatory.

### 5. Are all applications decided by the approval committee?

Decisions regarding project financing are generally made in monthly closed committee meetings or in a written circulation procedure.

### 6. Does Berlin's budget situation influence funding under the programme?

No. 'Pro FIT' is financed by the revolving 'Pro FIT' trust assets. Budget freezes in the Federal State of Berlin have no impact on the funding and disbursement activities under this programme. The 'Pro FIT' trust assets are financed by federal-state and ERDF funds as well as from repayable subsidies (loans). This provides our customers with security in terms of both planning and pay-out. It also means that medium-term financing is secured even in the event of an above-average increase in demand for the programme.

### 7. What do the technical experts and BAC do?

The technical experts perform a technical examination and evaluation of the projects submitted to Investitionsbank Berlin also with a view to their implementation. Representatives from Business Angels Club Berlin-Brandenburg (BACB) check and evaluate the business plan and business concept.

### 8. Is the support of a business consultant required?

No. We are convinced that we have explained the procedure clearly. The application documents provided by us along with the programme information are useful and help to ensure that applications can be successfully submitted. However, if you have any questions, we recommend that you contact our Customer Centre at an early point in time and that you make use of this free service.

