

Inspire

Monitoring, Development and Accreditation Process



Introduction

Thank you for enquiring about the Inspire monitoring, development and accreditation process ©.

The process enables you to identify and develop best practice within your environment, city or region, maximise investment, prove your impact, identify strengths and weaknesses and provides detailed action plans and strategic input to ensure that your business support infrastructure is providing the right environment for sustainable growth and development.

Inspire provides a framework for you to:

- Measure your environment's impact on socio-economic factors – placing your environment at the heart of the business support infrastructure
- Evaluate investment in supporting innovative and entrepreneurial ideas and business
- Provide an essential monitoring and evaluation tool focussing wider impacts than purely jobs created/safeguarded ensuring you are creating a sustainable business community for the future.

Inspire awarded status:

- Proves that you have the commitment to grow innovative businesses,
- Provides proof that your environment is an ideal place to start and grow businesses
- Provides your environment with a competitive advantage over others – essential when attracting clients, funding and support.

In this pack you will find:

- **Inspire 4 step process** – detailed description of the process of achieving Inspire status
- **Inspire Process Actions** – detailing what you will need to do at which stage and what support you will receive from your Inspire Co-ordinator and Assessor
- **Inspire Evidence and Materials** – provides information on the documents and evidence your Inspire Assessor will require at the various stages to help you plan during the process
- **Inspire Workshop programme** – details of the next workshop to help you understand the process completely and ask any questions you may have
- **Inspire Your Questions** – frequently asked questions from those already going through the process
- **Individuals who Inspire** – learn more about the benefits of the process from colleagues around the UK.
- **Inspire Pricing Structure** – details the costs for the various elements of the process.

Over the next few pages we will explain in more detail how Inspire will work, answer your questions and speak to some of the organisations who Inspire.

If you want any further information please do not hesitate to contact us at the following address:

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Four Steps to Delivering Best Practice

The Inspire monitoring, development and accreditation process for business incubation © is a simple, 4 step process, which takes into account the stage of development of the environment and the community it serves: established business incubation environments who can demonstrate best practice can apply for the full Inspire Accreditation Process or those who are still developing their processes and procedures can apply for the Commitment to Inspire Accreditation, to support their development of best practice.

- **Step 1 – Introduction to Inspire Accreditation Workshop**
- **Step 2 – Self Assessment Questionnaire**
- **Step 3 – Either: Full Inspire Verification Visit or Commitment to Inspire Verification Visit**
- **Step 4 – Inspire Awarded**



Step 1: Accreditation Workshop

Attend an initial introduction to Inspire Accreditation workshop, or request a one-to-one meeting, to learn about the benefits for you and your stakeholders, as well as the structure and requirements of the Inspire process.

Step 2: Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Complete the straight forward self-assessment questionnaire detailing your organisation's services and support. Some organisations find this a useful strategic review and planning tool in itself.

Step 3: On-Site Visit – Full Inspire Accreditation Verification:

A UKBI Assessor will arrange a mutually convenient date to visit. You will have the opportunity to provide evidence of your services in order for them to verify the Self Assessment Questionnaire. Allow one day for this (more than 1 day will only be necessary if there is a multi-site delivery).

Or

Step 3: On-Site Visit – Commitment to Inspire

If you are not ready for full verification you may choose to make a commitment to accreditation, via the Commitment to Inspire process. The verification visit is carried out and UKBI will prepare an agreed SMART Action Plan for the areas where further evidence or action is needed to achieve full accreditation within 12 months. Organisations will receive a named UKBI contact, who will provide them with guidance as they progress towards full Inspire accreditation.

Step 4: Inspire Awarded

Organisations achieving Accreditation will be able to use the Inspire Quality Mark in their materials and will be highlighted on the UKBI website and in publicity materials. To ensure you are able to maximise publicity we will assist you with template press releases, photos and support your own PR activity. Once awarded, Inspire will be annually re-verified, and a complete review will be undertaken 3 years from award – this ensures that you:

- Can further prove your socio-economic impact
- Still comply with recognised best practice
- We provide you with the advice and guidance you need to further enhance and develop your business incubation process



Step 1 - The Inspire Workshop

The first step on the Inspire process is to attend the Introductory Workshop. These workshops are run on a regular basis and are free to attend. Environments are assessed against UKBI's Business Incubation Development Framework. During the workshop, UKBI will provide participants with an overview of the structure of the Framework and the types of evidence needed during the Inspire process.

11.00am	Welcome, Introduction & Aims for the Day.
11.30am	Session 1 Gaining a Greater Understanding of the Inspire Process. Where are you from? What are you hoping to achieve from the day? What do you want the process to bring to your organisation? What do you think will be the greatest challenge in achieving Inspire status
12.00pm	Session 2 How does the Process relate to the Business Incubation Development Framework (BIDF)?
1.00pm	Lunch & Networking
1.45pm	Session 3 The 4 Steps of the Inspire Process
2.00pm	Session 4 How do I complete the self assessment questionnaire? How many questions are there? What is expected of me? How long will it take to complete? Do I have a timeframe in which to complete it? What happens once it's complete? How will UKBI evaluate my responses? How will it impact on me and my team? Will I need to involve my clients? What support will be available to me?
2.30pm	Session 5 What can I expect from UKBI's on site visit
2.30pm	Session 6 The Inspire Evaluation Report and Development Plan
3.00pm	Session 7 What happens once my environment has achieved Inspire status?
3.15pm	Summary & Close

The Business Incubation Development Framework (BIDF)

UKBI undertook primary and desk based research in 2003/04 and developed the National Business Incubation Framework (NBIF). The framework was subsequently updated in 2007-2008; the research and results were regularly reviewed by a Steering Group composed of expert practitioners and business incubation stakeholders. The Framework has been updated again in 2009 and underpins The INSPIRE monitoring, development and accreditation process[®].

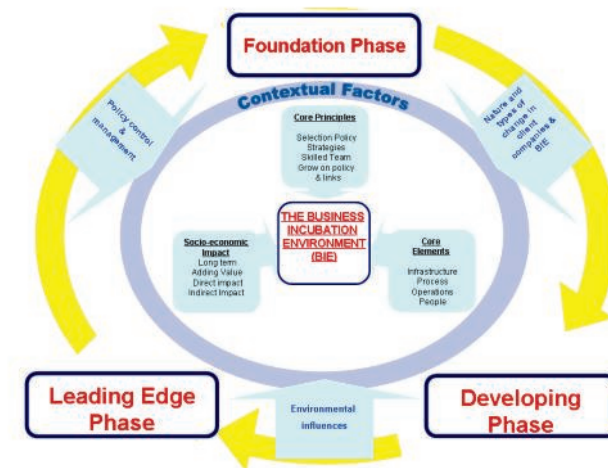
The Framework recognises that there is no single model or template for the running and structuring of a business incubation environment. Each one reflects a unique combination of internal and external factors. Such diversity (and complexity) poses problems for the development of a 'one size fits all' Framework for the benchmarking of business incubation environments, both in terms of indicators used (qualitative indicators are needed in addition to quantitative indicators) and in terms of methodology (who should and how to collect the data).

Based on an aspirational model, the Business Incubation Development Framework consists of:

- Three development phases: foundation, development and leading edge phases;
- Four core principles: selection policy, business incubation strategy and delivery, skilled business incubation team, exit policy;
- Four core elements: processes, infrastructure, operations, people (management);
- Socio economic impact elements: direct impact, indirect impact, long term added value.

UKBI also developed a methodology for benchmarking business incubation environments based on a set of best practice standards which focus on the management of the business incubation process as well as on generic indicators to measure the performance of business incubation environments operations as well as its socio economic impact/added value over time.

Over the years, the Business incubation Development Framework has been used by various national and international business incubation and government bodies.



As illustrated above, the Business Incubation Development Framework - used for the 'recognition' process - consists of:

Three Development Phases:

- Foundation
- Development
- Leading Edge

Four Core Principles:

1. Selection policy,
2. Business incubation strategy and delivery,
3. Skilled business incubation team
4. Graduation policy

For the next available workshop date and to book your place, visit our website www.ukbi.co.uk



Step 2 - The Self Assessment Questionnaire

Once you have completed the Inspire Workshop and have decided that accreditation is something your environment wants to work towards, the next step is to complete the Self Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ).

The SAQ is completed online and usually takes two to three hours if you have all the available information to hand.

You can of course complete the questionnaire in multiple sittings if you wish as our system automatically saves your answers and allows you to revisit your answers if you need to.

What sort of things does it ask?

During the workshop you will have learnt about the Business Incubation Development Framework (BIDF) and the four core principles of Business Incubation that underpin it; Selection Policy, Business Incubation Processes and strategy, the Management Team and Graduation Policy. The SAQ is broadly split into five sections. The Four Core Elements mentioned above and the Added Value or Impact Indicators such as jobs created.

In total there are 122 questions on the SAQ.

These are the sort of topics within the questionnaire you can expect to find

Selection Policy

- Criteria
- Procedures Used
- Degree of Innovation Management displayed by applicants

Skilled Management Team

- Governance (Board or Advisory Panel)
- Management Team (Skills and Background)
- Ratios (Staff to clients)

Strategy and Delivery

- Components of the business incubation programme
- Client Needs Assessment
- Coaching
- Monitoring of incubatees
- Networking
- Business support and development services
- Seed Fund activities
- Advisory Panel (to advise clients)
- Facilities and shared admin support
- Dealflow
- Financial Management
- Institutional and industry links
- Programme evaluation

Exit Policy

- Exit Policy
- Exit Process
- Links with graduated ventures (post-incubation)

Each topic usually has several questions that relates to it. Some questions will not be relevant or appropriate depending on the maturity of your Business Incubation environment.

In addition to the four core principles of Selection Policy, Skilled Management Team, Strategy and Delivery and the Exit Policy, we also assess the Impact the Business Incubator has had on the local economy. These 'added value' indicators are as follows:

Added Value: 7 Indicators

- Jobs created
- Clients survival
- Capital raised
- Graduate revenues
- Innovation and R&D
- Selectivity
- Financial sustainability

When assessing the answers to the SAQ, UKBI will compare the data we have received to our BIDF Assessment Matrix. We will always take into account the environment and sector focus in which the Business Incubator operates.

Once the SAQ is completed we can then move onto the next stage of the process.



Step 3 - On site Visit

For the next stage of the Inspire monitoring, development and accreditation process[©], UKBI will need to visit your environment and verify the information you have supplied in the Self Assessment Questionnaire. We will also take the opportunity to interview the Management Team and a cross section of the clients within the Business Incubator

Before the Visit

Once the date is agreed for the visit, you will need to supply UKBI with documentary evidence to verify the information supplied in your Self Assessment Questionnaire. Examples of which would include:

- The Business Plan or Business Incubation Strategy Document
- Financial Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Operational Plan
- License Agreement
- Terms and Conditions
- Application/Entry Form for Clients
- Monitoring Forms

These can be sent electronically to us if more convenient. Any information sent to UKBI will be treated in strictest confidence and destroyed once the review process is complete.

Who needs to be involved?

When arranging the date for the visit, please be aware that the UKBI Assessor will want to interview the following people:

- The Centre Manager
- Representatives from the Management and Administration Team
- A member of the Board of Directors (Optional but desirable)
- A Cross Section of Your Client Companies

Typical Itinerary:

9.30am	UKBI Representative Arrives
10.00am	Initial Meeting, Programme for the day agreed
10.30am	Discussion with Centre Manager on Self Assessment Questionnaire Results
12.30pm	Working Lunch with representatives of Client companies
1.30pm	Discussions with other members of the management/ administration team/board member (s)
2.30pm	Final Q & A with UKBI Representative
3.30pm	Close
3.30pm	<u>Session 6</u> The Inspire Evaluation Report and Development Plan

We will of course adopt an itinerary which is appropriate for the operational needs of the Business Incubator

What if I manage multiple sites?

We would normally expect to spend time at each site however this is dependant on the management structure and sector focus of each site. The logistics of assessing multi site business incubation environments would be discussed when your organisation decided to embark on the Inspire process.

Once the visit is completed and the necessary evidence is collected, UKBI will compile the Final Evaluation Report and Development Plan, which is the next stage of the Inspire Process



Step 4 - Final Evaluation Report

UKBI will complete the Final Evaluation report within two weeks of conducting the On Site Verification Visit.

The report will look at how the Business Incubator has performed with each of the Four Core Areas identified within the Business Incubation Development Framework; Selection Policy, Strategy and Delivery, Management Team and Graduation Policy.

Each section of the report will highlight what is accepted Best Practice and those areas where improvement may be needed. If improvement needs are identified, the report will specify what they are and how to implement them.

The report will also analyse the impact that the Business Incubator has had on its local economy.

Most importantly a detailed development plan will be drawn up and agreed with the Business Incubator to progress the environment to the next stage in it's development.

Inspire Status Awarded

If your Business Incubation Environment has achieved Inspire Status. This will be awarded for a three year period subject to the successful completion of a yearly re-verification questionnaire. Once the three year period is complete Inspire Accredited Incubators must submit themselves for full re-verification to maintain their Inspire Status..

The Three Phases in the Development of Business Incubators

Foundation Phase



During the Foundation Phase, a number of critical elements are put in place that will define the business incubation environment and its offering to and impact on its clients and the wider economy. These key elements include the defining characteristics that make business incubation different to other forms of business support and provide the cornerstones for the development of a mature and sustainable business incubation environment.

Development Phase



This period contains a number of different phases of development and can span many years. The early years, after launch, will continue to focus heavily on marketing and relationship building as it is primarily a time of building up a critical mass and 'dealflow' of client companies and cashflow. As business incubation environments mature, so they are able to spend more time building up the services and resources offered to clients, including specialist services/facilities. Incubation management teams may also start to look outside the immediate business incubation environment to identify ways in which the business incubator could influence wider economic development. They will also be concerned with issues such as availability of grow-on space for their graduating clients. However, this is also a period in which many business incubation environments are faced with and should anticipate a decrease and possibly the removal of any public and private subsidies they might have had in the early years of development. Therefore there will be an emphasis on developing the business model to be sustainable.

Leading Edge Phase



The aim/aspiration for most incubation management teams is to run a high quality, flexible, 'full service' business incubation environment that is sustainable in its own right, that has a quantifiable socio-economic impact on the wider economy, that can be seen to be a catalyst for economic development, and that is creating successful, sustainable ventures. The mature business incubation environment may become more specialised, bringing in a full range of advice, support and training opportunities for its clients. It may also be in a position to develop an 'alumni' or support network of past clients as part of the business development network.



Some of the Environments who have been Accredited



"We started the process because we believe it is extremely important to keep reinforcing the message of how high quality innovation and incubation support services make a significant difference to young technology companies' growth and chances of success. For us we want to continue national recognition of Hillington Park Innovation Centre and Alba Innovation Centre as Scotland's leading facilities, accredited through a thorough appraisal process, and also to be up there amongst the top providers in the UK. All the evidence is there, not just in the UK but globally, to confirm that at the highest level, such services are an excellent economic development investment. We need to ask policy and strategy makers not to forget this in their planning and decision making."

Tom Ogilvie Chief Executive , Innovation Centres Scotland



"We are absolutely delighted to have been accredited at this level, the accreditation reflects the hard work of our staff to deliver world class futures, based on quality service delivery, on behalf of the University of Manchester. I am very proud of both the UMIC team and with the nature and calibre of our tenants that we serve. I feel that the accreditation process developed by the UKBI is an important and will help us as practitioners of business incubation to quantify the benefits of our services, differentiate ourselves from others and identify ways in which we can improve the services we offer."

**Martino Picardo, Managing Director,
University of Manchester Incubator Company**



"I am delighted that The Quadrus Centre has secured UKBI Inspire accreditation. We have worked hard to establish Quadrus as a true business incubator in South Tyneside, an area in transition from old traditional industries. In the face of initial scepticism about business incubation, the team there has worked with businesses that have achieved real growth then moved to larger premises within South Tyneside. The Inspire model provides clear evidence to our stakeholders that we are committed to the incubation model and the UKBI accreditation process demonstrates our ability to deliver to those commitments."

Doug Scott, Chief Executive, TEDCO



"Going through the Inspire process has been of huge benefit to Sparkhouse at the University of Lincoln. It provided a focus for all the incubation team to examine together how we support our clients and operate the centre. The final report has provided us with a clear route forward and challenged us with a range of potential improvements as we strive to become a model of best practice within the sector"

Andrew Stevenson, Enterprise and Policy Director, University of Lincoln



"Thanks again for all your help and valuable feedback. This process has really turned out to my benefit, as the newest of the Techniums in the network, the verification visit has provided me with all the necessary hard evidence to move our centre on to the next stage."

David Thomas, Centre Manager, Technium Pembrokeshire



What do I do next?

If you would like to learn more about the Inspire Monitoring, Development and Accreditation process, please attend the next Inspire Workshop, details of which are on the UKBI website.

If you have any general queries please contact UKBI directly on +44 (0)121 250 3538 or email info@ukbi.co.uk

What will it cost?

The cost of Inspire Accreditation is (per centre)

UKBI Members £2000 (plus VAT)

Non Members £2650 (plus VAT)

The Non Member price includes a years UKBI Membership as we feel it is important for the development of Business Incubators that they are part of a larger network who they can call upon for advice and support

On top of the basic cost, we also recharge the travelling and accommodation costs (at cost) of the assessment team up to a maximum of £500 within the UK.

Payment is invoiced in two stages:

Stage One

50% payment before release of the Self Assessment Questionnaire to the Business Incubator

Stage Two

50% on completion and sign off of Final Evaluation Report plus travel and accommodation costs.

What if I am outside the UK and want to go through Inspire?

The costs would be the same as above but the travel and accommodation costs would be agreed beforehand on an individual basis.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Inspire based on?

Inspire has been developed using the nationally and internationally recognised foundations set out in the Business Incubation Development Framework – the best practice guidance for the industry. The Framework identified the elements of business incubation provision and the agreed best practices for them. It has been further enhanced by exhaustive literature reviews of existing accreditation systems worldwide, focus groups and face to face interviews with UK based business incubation managers and additional consultations with UK leaders in the industry of business incubation.

The evaluation and monitoring element of Inspire has been developed following UKBI's work with the counties outside the UK, as well as with the UKBI membership base and defines an evaluation matrix for assessing the impact of business incubation environments.

This covers:

1. Three development phases of business incubation: foundation, development and leading edge phases;
2. Four core principles: selection policy, business incubation strategy and delivery, skilled business incubation team, exit policy;
3. Four core elements: processes, infrastructure, operations, people (management);
4. Socio economic impact elements: direct impact, indirect impact, long term added value.

Do I have to be a UKBI Member?

You don't have to be a Member of UKBI to undertake the Inspire process, but by being a member, you will receive access to support and advice from the membership base and from our publications and other resources. For this reason a years UKBI membership is included in the cost to Non Members.

Does Government support this?

Yes! Central, national and local governments are adopting the Inspire process into their funding criteria and they also recognise the benefits of their funded and supported environments going through a development process. In England, it is a requirement of Business Support Simplification and Solutions for Business that funded environments are accredited against Inspire. For more on this, please download the Product Descriptor covering Specialist Growth Environments

Why should I get accredited?

There are many reasons why environments choose to be accredited by Inspire:

- It proves your worth to your stakeholders and how you add value
- It proves your impacts wider than just jobs created/safeguarded
- It enables you to improve your services
- It identifies strengths and weaknesses of your current operations and future proofs it
- It is an essential evaluation and monitoring tool
- Your funders and other stakeholders will want you to have Inspire status, so that they can be sure they are maximising their investment.

How long will it take to achieve Inspire?

The simple answer is that it depends on your needs and stage of development. The process is designed to reflect your requirements, structure and availability of information and your own resources. From the start of the process (accreditation workshop) through to finish (Inspire awarded), the process can take as short a time as 3 months. If you need support and advice, this will obviously lengthen the time it takes to achieve Inspire, but UKBI will work with you to ensure that you achieve Inspire status as quickly and efficiently as possible.

If I know that we're not providing business incubation in line with best practice but want to, can INSPIRE help?

Yes! The whole ethos of Inspire is to embed best practice into normal

practice in business incubation. We recognise that not all practitioners currently adhere to best practice in every element of business incubation provision and the Inspire process identifies where development is needed and how to improve. Along the way, you will receive support and guidance from your named UKBI contact and examples of others' best practice from the community. Inspire is a development tool, providing a 3 dimensional analysis of current operations and strategic action plans to achieving best practice.

How much does it cost?

The pricing structure has been developed to enable all members of the industry to begin to access the Inspire process. For more on this and an explanation of what each stage costs, see the enclosed pricing structure information or please visit our website www.ukbi.co.uk or contact us directly.

How long is the Inspire accreditation valid for?

The Inspire status is awarded for 3 years from date of completion. You will need to undertake a simple annual re-verification, so that we can support you as you develop. If issues arise out of the annual re-verification (for example you no longer operate an exit/graduation policy) we will provide support and guidance to ensure that you continue to provide best practice business incubation. If you fail to provide best practice business incubation, UKBI will withdraw the Inspire status.

Who will review me?

At the start of the process, you will receive a named UKBI contact, who will provide guidance as you go through the process (tips of evidence to produce, examples of best practice in any given area, contacts). The Verification visit will be carried out by a named UKBI assessor who will review the information you have provided in the Self Assessment Questionnaire and compare this with the information you provide on the day and also conduct interviews with members of your team, your clients and stakeholders.





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