



**NationalLAB** **RealtimeLAB** **ScreenLAB** **LiveLAB**

## CoSTAR Ideate: Growth Lab and Residency

### OVERVIEW

A CoSTAR Network Growth Lab and Residency programme

CoSTAR Ideate supports the development of micro, start-ups and early-growth companies looking to scale new IP in the creative technology sector. Delivered via the National CoSTAR network, Ideate marries access to cutting-edge facilities, creative and technology expertise and world-leading research that is attuned to the unique growth stage(s) of creative enterprises.

The programme presents a unique offer of support to industry from four CoSTAR Network Labs, creating a pathway for companies to engage directly with CoSTAR expertise and infrastructure, to harness IP for business growth.

CoSTAR Ideate provides:

- A 5-month residency for 24 enterprises, six in each of the four CoSTAR Labs: National Lab, Realtime Lab, Screen Lab and Live Lab.
- Growth Lab business development sessions delivered by CodeBase and sector experts, helping entrepreneurs to develop specific skills and strategies to benefit and accelerate their business growth plans.
- A low-risk route for company and product development through lab development time at CoSTAR Network facilities.
- Access to technical support and resources at CoSTAR lab facilities, designed to ‘fill the gaps’ in IP and company development pipelines.
- Access to specialised research within the CoSTAR Network.
- 1-2-1 business growth, IP development and best practice in inclusive and sustainable innovation mentorship from UK sector experts that can tangibly help develop the business and IP further.
- Co-location services (desk space/ lab space) for participants on the programme.
- Access to a community of like-minded startups and entrepreneurs developing creative technology solutions for the creative technology sector.
- The program takes no equity and there are no fees to apply.

The structure of the programme allows for companies to integrate support into their day-to-day business activity. Through the application process, companies have an opportunity to present their ideas and outline how the support on offer at a CoSTAR Network Lab, matches their IP and business growth ambitions. The programme is ideally suited to companies who are looking for a de-risked route to develop new IP to drive business growth.

## **About our CoSTAR Network Lab Partners**

About CoSTAR National Lab [bit.ly/NationalLabweb](https://bit.ly/NationalLabweb)

About CoSTAR Live Lab [bit.ly/LiveLabweb](https://bit.ly/LiveLabweb)

About CoSTAR Realtime Lab [bit.ly/RealtimeLabweb](https://bit.ly/RealtimeLabweb)

About CoSTAR Screen Lab [bit.ly/ScreenLabweb](https://bit.ly/ScreenLabweb)

## **Codebase**

CodeBase is an ecosystem builder, building better startup ecosystems. CodeBase connects founders and their teams with governments, local authorities, corporates, investors and academia to increase the number of successful businesses.

By lowering the barriers to entry for startup founders and teams, they accelerate their growth, and by providing SMEs with the support they need to scale, they create a healthier, wealthier and more sustainable society. CodeBase has forged strategic partnerships across industries and sectors to create high-impact outcomes for startups, SMEs and communities. CodeBase provides support through startup, scaleup and SME education, one-to-one mentorship, building communities online and through events, and providing workspace. Their unique approach to collaboration drives growth, innovation and success in the tech landscape.

In Scotland, they run the Techscaler programme for the Scottish Government, a £46.7 million investment to grow the Scottish tech ecosystem nationwide through education programmes, community, mentorship, workspace and access to funding. Across the UK they run the LawTech UK programme and brand for the Ministry of Justice, and in partnership with Barclays they run UK-wide vertical programmes in Energy, AgriTech, Sustainability, Cybersecurity, Health and Care, for the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology. CodeBase also delivers the startup mentorship function for all Barclays Eagle Labs across the UK.

Since 2019, they have been partners on the Creative Industries Clusters Programme Creative Informatics working with University of Edinburgh, Napier University and Creative Edinburgh. Through this partnership, CodeBase ran Creative Bridge, an award-winning course for 220 creative practitioners, over 10 cohorts, to demystify startup thinking, innovation and product development, and uncover new business models for the industry.



## WHO IS IDEATE FOR?

Participants will be companies who typically are one or more of the following:

- Have committed to work on an idea OR have an early-stage product in development which is focused on emerging and enabling technologies in the screen and performance sector.
- Are companies looking to scale their business and IP in new creative or technical areas in the creative industries.
- Are looking to take their ideas to the next stage, experiment with new research or respond to the adoption of new technologies in the sector.
- Require access to facilities and expertise to de-risk IP development that can drive business growth and generate new revenue streams.
- May be pre-revenue or early revenue generating.
- Are technology-based businesses looking to develop solutions in the creative technology sector, responding to changing market conditions and opportunities.

CoSTAR Network is a welcoming and supportive programme. All are welcomed to take part regardless of age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, socio-economic background, (dis)ability (visible or hidden, physical or mental), sexuality, religion or belief. We strongly encourage applications from businesses led by those from diverse backgrounds and those currently under-represented in the creative technology sector.

Enterprise & Commercialisation programmes will monitor diversity across its range of participants, external experts and mentors we engage for delivery. The CoSTAR EDI framework measures our success against the annual EDI Action Plan. Our goal is to deliver programmes within an infrastructure which is fit for a future creative industry that values diversity and inclusion for its commercial and societal value.

## WHAT IS ON OFFER?

CoSTAR Ideate will offer support to six companies in each of the following four CoSTAR Network Lab locations, each lab has a sector specialism, facilities and capabilities as outlined below:

### **CoSTAR National Lab**

Currently located at Futures Studio in Egham, Surrey.

### **Offer to Industry:**

CoSTAR National Lab provides R&D infrastructure that combines state-of-the-art production technology and compute facilities with deep research expertise and industry partnerships to fuel growth across the UK's creative sector.

### **Applications from Industry:**

The CoSTAR National Lab invites companies passionate about the intersection of creative technology, advanced production, and generative AI to apply. We aim to support these companies in leveraging innovative tools, cutting-edge infrastructure and research to develop and scale new intellectual property (IP).

We are particularly interested in companies with ideas that deliver both commercial and social value, with a focus on the following areas:

- The creation of rich, interconnected virtual environments that enable real-time interaction.
- The development of inclusive, accessible, intuitive, and engaging multi-sensory experiences.
- Exploring how generative AI can enhance creativity and IP development, from design to distribution.
- Improving sustainability across the value chain.

### **National Lab Studio and R&D Facilities:**

RHUL Futures Studio, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham, Surrey.

### **National Lab Company Residency Space:**

Shilling Building, co-working space, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham, Surrey.

Piggery Gate Building hot desk, meeting and workshop space, Royal Holloway University, Egham, Surrey.

See full list of capabilities and facilities available at National Lab [here](#).

## **CoSTAR Realtime Lab**

Located in Dundee and Edinburgh in Scotland, this lab brings screen and performance technology to life.

**Offer to Industry:** The technologies and expertise at CoSTAR Realtime lab are designed to support companies developing innovative creative technologies for games, immersive and interactive development or Film, TV or animation production.

**Applications from Industry:** The CoSTAR Realtime Lab is inviting companies to apply with an interest in developing innovative new workflows, tools, processes, products or services that explore:

- Machine learning and AI
- GPU performance; Cloud based and high-performance network technologies to deliver production pipeline efficiencies and improve productivity in content creation.
- New innovations that include consideration of accessibility and environmental impact for games, immersive and interactive development or Film, TV or animation production.

**Realtime Lab Studio and R&D Facilities:**

- CoSTAR Realtime Lab, 5 Waters Edge, Camperdown Street, Dundee, DD1 3HY
- CoSTAR Realtime Lab, First Stage Studios, 31 Bath Road, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 7AY

See full list of capabilities and facilities available at Realtime Lab [here](#)

**Realtime Lab Company Residency Space:**

- Waters Edge, Camperdown St, Dundee DD1 3HY
- Edinburgh Future Institute, 1 Lauriston Pl, Edinburgh EH3 9EF

## **CoSTAR Live Lab**

Located in York/Wakefield, this lab focusses on technologies for live performance experiences, including virtual production.

**Offer to Industry:** The technologies and expertise at CoSTAR Live Lab are focused on the future of live performance. These have emerged out of more than 20 years of world-leading applied, outward facing, impact driven, collaborative research from the University of York AudioLab, and the XR Stories Creative Industries R&D Partnership.

Applications from Industry: The CoSTAR Live Lab is inviting companies to apply with an interest in developing innovative new workflows, tools, processes, products or services that explore:

- Immersive live performance experiences using interactive, virtual and/or networking technologies.
- Technologies for supporting immersive live performance, workflows and scalable experiences.
- Audience experience and user experience design.

**Live Lab Studio and R&D Facilities:**

See full list of capabilities and facilities available at Live Lab [here](#)

## Live Lab Company Residency Space

- Incubation desk space within CoSTAR Live Lab, Production Park for six companies, Unit 2, Production Park, Lidgate Crescent, South Kirkby, West Yorkshire, WF9 3NR

## CoSTAR Screen Lab

Located in Studio Ulster, Belfast, a virtual production facility in Northern Ireland.

**Offer to Industry:** The technologies and expertise at CoSTAR Screen Lab at Studio Ulster offer access to cutting-edge technology, expertise, and state-of-the-art production environments for companies that are developing innovative creative technologies for virtual production, immersive storytelling, and next-generation content creation across Film, TV, Animation, and Games.

**Applications from Industry:** The CoSTAR Screen Lab is inviting companies to apply with an interest in developing innovative new workflows, tools, processes, products or services that explore:

- In-Camera Visual Effects (ICVFX) & Virtual Production – Advanced LED volume-based production, real-time rendering, and AI-assisted filmmaking.
- Motion Controlled Robotics for Virtual Production – Precision control of camera and lighting systems to enhance dynamic cinematography
- AI and Machine Learning for Production – Generative AI, deep learning applications in VFX, and real-time animation and gaming tools.
- Serious Gaming & Interactive Media – Cross-sector innovation between game engines and virtual production.
- Advanced Audio Technologies – Ambisonic sound, discoverable audio for immersive and gaming environments, and on-set audio recording solutions for ICVFX stages.
- Sustainability in Virtual Production – Environmentally sustainable workflows, automation, and cloud-based solutions to reduce production impact.

## Screen Lab Studio and R&D Facilities:

See full list of capabilities and facilities available at Screen Lab [here](#)

Six companies will be resident in one primary CoSTAR Lab (a total of 24 companies at each of the 4 facilities) with flexibility and a stipend to travel should they require specialist facilities and expertise in another CoSTAR lab location.

Applicants will be asked in the application process to present their ideas and outline how the support on offer at a CoSTAR Network Lab, matches their IP and business growth ambitions. Each of the CoSTAR Network Labs have outlined their offer to industry and the areas they are looking to collaborate and support companies in, below.

## Ideate mentorship

Personal and professional development is an important aspect of the Ideate programme and mentorship will be provided throughout the programme. Participant companies will receive around 20 hours mentorship on the programme, more if required to meet the needs of the company and IP in development.

During Stage 2, CodeBase will connect your company with mentors for tailored, individual support. These sessions provide founders and senior leaders the chance to engage with experienced tech industry operators, founders, experts, and educators, fostering transformational relationships that drive business and professional growth. CodeBase Mentors come from diverse backgrounds, offering a wide range of expertise and perspectives. Our approach to building our mentor pool is rooted by years of observing ecosystem growth and the critical role of horizontal, peer-to-peer support. For this reason, we prioritise mentors with direct experience in founding and working within successful tech startups.

Stages 3 & 4 will bring in specialised programme mentorship aligned to the needs of your growing company including creative content, technical development and business operations at CoSTAR Host labs. This is supplemented with a pool of UK wide specialised mentors in areas such as IP exploitation, AI EDI, sustainability.

## HOW CAN IDEATE HELP YOU?

- Supporting businesses through an extended phase of research and foundational business development ahead of commercialisation.
- Access to lab facilities and the creative and technical support needed to start to develop POC and prototypes in CoSTAR facilities.
- Strong understanding of IP, commercialisation and product-to-market strategies.
- Supporting businesses to become funding and investment ready, and where to look for opportunities.
- A framework of support that draws on expertise from all partners across the network.
- A shared language and understand playbooks to accelerate the growth of their creative tech product.
- 1-2-1 mentorship and support to meet the unique needs of your company.
- Training and mentorship in social impact including equitable design, developing environmental sustainability principles and working with diverse user groups.
- Build up a creative growth mindset and greater resilience among creative start-up founders.
- Exposure to and feedback from angels and investors.
- Over £55,000 of in-kind support to participating companies.

- Building community around CoSTAR Labs, and across the national network.

## PROGRAMME DETAILS

### Intellectual property

We will not acquire (and no Collaborator nor any third party participating in the CoSTAR Programme will acquire) any rights in your intellectual property (whether created before, during or separately to the CoSTAR Programme) by virtue of your participation of the CoSTAR Programme.

### Programme costs:

- There is no fee to participate in CoSTAR E&C. The programme is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The value of in-kind value of support to participants on the programme is estimated to be £55,000 per company.
- A company stipend of £2,000 is available to companies to support travel and accommodation to attend in person activity. This will be managed by the National Lab.
- A Participation Support Bursary is available to support participation, in line with our Social Impact Plan, for eligible individuals who may face additional barriers to participation. Please email us at [costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk) to discuss your needs.

### Company Participation:

Please ensure that one senior business development lead and creative or technical roles are identified within the company team. Applicants must identify a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 roles from within the company (covering business development, creative and technical remits) to put forward to take part in the programme as follows:

- Attend the diagnostic session in April 2025. (Minimum 2 company representatives)
- Attend the programme kick off and induction sessions on the 6 and 7 May 2025 (2 company representatives).
- Attend at least 70% of the workshops, support meetings, webinars from April 2025 - September 2025.
- Ensure that relevant team members are attending scheduled sessions as indicated in the Ideate Programme Stages. (2-4 company representatives depending on the programme stage).
- Attend, present and demonstrate project outcomes at the industry showcase event in August 2025, and at final showcase event in September 2025 (minimum 2 company representatives).

## Programme Obligations

### Company Participation

Participants must be willing to commit to the following key programme and attendance obligations:

- A 'Give-Back' of 16 hours mentorship to future E&C programme participants over the following 2 years.
- Companies will be required to provide case studies on programme completion.
- Companies will be supported with mandatory training and mentorship in social impact areas that include; equitable design, developing environmental sustainability principles and working with diverse user groups. On application, companies will be asked to stipulate their approach to social impact and how they intend to deliver social impact commitments over the given period.

### Social Impact (EDI & Sustainability)

Environmental Sustainability and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are central to our work at CoSTAR and all our Access Programmes. All projects, regardless of their main R&D focus, are expected to have a demonstrable engagement with either EDI, sustainability or both.

Please see our

EDI Policy and Action Plan here [bit.ly/CoSTAREDIpolicy](https://bit.ly/CoSTAREDIpolicy).

With regards to Monitoring and Evaluation, Social Impact data will be regularly reviewed in partnership with CoSTAR's Inclusion team.

### Data, Ethics & AI Framework

All participant companies will be asked to:

Adhere to CoSTAR Network Privacy Policy where relevant, which can be found here [bit.ly/CoSTARPrivacyPolicy](https://bit.ly/CoSTARPrivacyPolicy).

Agree to CoSTAR Network AI Principles Policy, which can be found here [bit.ly/CoSTARNatLabAIPrinciples](https://bit.ly/CoSTARNatLabAIPrinciples).

## CoSTAR IDEATE SCHEDULE

- CoSTAR Ideate runs from 6 May to 17 September 2025.

The programme will be split across 4 phases delivered by a combination of our delivery partners, CodeBase, the CoSTAR Enterprise & Commercialisation team, and the CoSTAR Network Labs.

**Phase 1: May 2025 (1-2 company participants)**

Diagnostic Session: A pre programme online meeting to assess your programme needs and ambitions on the programme.

Programme kick off - 6 & 7 May

- Kick Off Event hosted in person at Production Park, Lidgate Crescent, South Kirkby, Pontefract WF9 3NR
- CodeBase 'Getting Started & Understanding Problems'.
- This session will focus on the startup landscape, highlighting the mindsets and playbooks that exist and why they're important, plus start considering how to adopt a problem-led approach to build your startup.
- Hosted at Production Park, hybrid attendance optional

**Phase 2: May & June 2025 (1-2 company participants)**

Exploration & Validation – Delivered by CodeBase

- Understanding Markets
- Learn more about customer-led design and use it to create a customer research plan. Focus on the client-centric approach as the key to building successful startups.
- Understanding Customers
- Find out why customer-led design is the key to building successful startups, and use this approach to create a customer research plan for your startup.
- Experimentation
- Learn how you can experiment and iterate to develop your product and business by engaging directly with users. Shift your thinking from 'building my idea' to 'learning what works'.
- Product Discovery & MVPs
  - Develop a product that users love and customers pay for: understand what it takes to move beyond early experiments and on to 'discovering' and developing your product to market.

**Phase 3: June, July, & August 2025 (2-4 company participants)**

Build & Measure: Development Time in the CoSTAR Labs

Week Commencing 2 June: An Induction to the Network Labs – An orientation day to meet the team at your respective Network Lab, get to know the facilities on offer, and get settled into the space for the next phase of the programme.

Throughout June, July, and August, companies will have access to the facilities and technical expertise at the host CoSTAR Lab, a pool of mentors across a range of subjects from technical and business support to more specialist subjects ranging from IP exploitation and social impact.

Access to the technical facilities will be available to the Ideate cohort at each CoSTAR Lab for a minimum of two days a week for eight weeks during this 12-week period.

Phase 3 is designed to build out IP and test in an experimental, research-led environment surrounded by experts to support growing the business. Participants will have the opportunity to be resident at their host CoSTAR facilities for this phase.

Throughout Phase 3, the Enterprise and Commercialisation team will be hosting hybrid Masterclasses to inspire you and your team, with talks from industry experts across a range of subjects. Masterclasses will be hosted as “watch parties” with drinks and catering and the opportunity to get together in your respective CoSTAR Labs.

#### **Phase 4: September 2025**

Building a Sustainable Business - Delivered by CodeBase

- Product to Market
- Focus on your overall vision and the critical proof points in taking your product to the legal market, how you will look at validating problem-solution fit with customers, and fundamentals of working with early customers.
- Commercialisation & IP
- Understand key strategies for protecting and leveraging IP, how to navigate spin-outs, and learn from insights and approaches to IP, data, and AI market strategies.
- Funding & Future Proofing
- Funding and investment options: ensure that your startup has the right financial and operational underpinning to be set up for success, and avoid common pitfalls in financial management, investor relations, hiring, and regulatory compliance.
- Pitching & Proposal Development
- Practice the essential skills for pitching your product. Learn how to clearly tell your startup's story and for different audiences and purposes.

#### **Final Showcase & Wrap Event: Wednesday 17 September**

Celebrate the culmination of all your hard work across the Ideate programme with an opportunity to present your business to industry representatives and get together as a cohort to close off the last 5 months of work.

**Further details:**

Phase 1 will be hosted in person with a hybrid option for those unable to stay for the 7 May.  
Expected time commitment: 1.5 days

Phase 2 will take place online with an optional hybrid format depending on the availability of your respective CoSTAR Lab. Time commitment: 4 x ½ days

Phase 3 will be in person located at your respective CoSTAR Lab with the technical team and mentors. Time commitment: ~40hrs over 12 weeks

Phase 4 will return to online/hybrid sessions with CodeBase, before wrapping up with the final in person showcase & wrap-up event on the 17 September. Time commitment: 4 x ½ days for Codebase and 1.5 days for showcase

We expect a minimum of 2 company representatives to attend across Phase 1, 2, & 4.

We expect a maximum of up to 4 companies' representatives to participate in Stage 3.

Morning sessions will likely run 10:00 – 12:00, afternoon sessions will run 14:00 – 16:00. This may change depending on speaker availability.

### **Key Programme Dates:**

#### **Programme Start**

Tuesday 6 May - Kick Off Event hosted in person at Production Park, Lidgate Crescent, South Kirkby, Pontefract WF9 3NR

Wednesday 7 May - CodeBase session hosted at Production Park, hybrid attendance optional.

#### **Phases 2 & 4 CodeBase Sessions**

Wednesday 14 May – Afternoon

Wednesday 21 May – Afternoon

Wednesday 28 May – Afternoon

Wednesday 4 June – Morning

Monday 1 September – Afternoon

Wednesday 3 September – Afternoon

Monday 8 September – Afternoon

Wednesday 10 September – Afternoon

#### **Phase 3**

Dates for specific activities at your relevant CoSTAR Lab will be confirmed closer to the time.

#### **Programme Showcase**

Wednesday 17 September – CoSTAR Ideate Showcase hosted in person at a TBD CoSTAR Lab.

## **APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligibility criteria**

The programme is open to enterprises and legal entities registered and trading in the UK. Applications must demonstrate a high level of ambition to deliver technological advancement and business growth in its application to the creative industries

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- have a lead applicant that is an enterprise or legal entity registered and trading in the UK
- be from or support the screen and/or performance sectors
- have an operations and/or project team based in the UK
- intend to exploit the results of work from or in the UK

See FAQ for DCMS definition of Creative Industries.

### **Application process**

- CoSTAR Network will run information sessions in advance of application closing date to share programme details and respond to questions.
- A programme FAQ is available with the application form.
- You will need to submit the full online application form by the date and time given. Applicants must ensure all questions are answered otherwise their application may be rejected.
- Participants will be selected on a portfolio basis to ensure the Programme is able to deliver consistent support and activities that provide value to all Participants across each CoSTAR Network lab and the CoSTAR Infrastructure.

We encourage applicants to let us know about any reasonable adjustments they may require for the application process or their proposed project. You may already know what you would like to request, or you may like to have a general discussion of your options. Individual requests for access support will be accommodated wherever possible and equitable.

### **Assessment and selection process**

CoSTAR Ideate will take a portfolio approach to selection of participants and ensure equal participation across each CoSTAR Network host lab.

Applications assessed and shortlisted in a three-stage assessment process.

- E&C applications will be screened for eligibility, following an assessment based on selection criteria by the CoSTAR team, in collaboration with partners, where applicable. Due Diligence processes and screening will be applied to the shortlisted applicants.
- Applications will then be assessed against the selection criteria by a diverse pool of external assessors and industry experts to create a longlist.
- Longlisted applications are assessed and reviewed by the CoSTAR Network Labs and CoSTAR National Lab to a final cohort of 24 companies.

Contracting: Successful applicants will be notified within six weeks and provided with a standard Participation Agreement. These contracts are standard and non-negotiable on all E&C programmes however they are designed to be fair, reasonable and in the best interests of participants.

Please forward requests to [costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk).

## APPLY

Call open: apply [bit.ly/CoSTARIdeateApply](https://bit.ly/CoSTARIdeateApply)

This application form contains 11 questions, each with a word limit. Before submitting, please make sure that all sections of your application are complete including the name and full registered address of your organisation and any partners or subcontractors working on your project. Please also check that your proposal meets the eligibility criteria.

Please note that if you are successful, you may be asked for more detailed documentation as part of the contracting process.

## FAQs

### Key information

All details about the CoSTAR Network can be found on our [website](#).

Please read this full downloadable brief before attending the webinar or submitting your application.

Please check your eligibility for this call.

## General call enquiries

***How does E&C fit within wider CoSTAR activity?***

Enterprise & Commercialisation is one of two Industry Access programmes at the CoSTAR National Lab, the second being the Pilots and Prototypes Programme. Both programmes provide a gateway for industry into the CoSTAR Network.

***Can I apply to other CoSTAR programmes such as PPP?***

Yes, you can apply for any other CoSTAR programme. If the programmes are being run simultaneously, applicants would need to demonstrate how they can adequately resource the team to deliver across both.

## **Programme overview**

### **What is CoSTAR Ideate?**

CoSTAR Ideate supports the development of start-ups, early growth companies and SMEs looking to develop new IP in the creative technology sector. Delivered via the National CoSTAR network, Ideate marries access to cutting edge facilities, creative and technology expertise and world-leading research that is attuned to the unique growth stage(s) of creative enterprises, meeting the diverse needs of growing creative technology companies

CoSTAR Ideate provides:

- A 5-month residency for 24 enterprises, six in each of the four CoSTAR Labs, National Lab, Realtime Lab, Screen Lab and Live Lab.
- Growth Lab business development sessions delivered by CodeBase and sector experts, helping entrepreneurs develop specific skills and strategies to benefit and accelerate their business growth.
- A low-risk route for company and product development through 2-months guided in lab development time at CoSTAR Network facilities including access to technical support, resources and lab facilities.
- Access to specialised research within the CoSTAR Network.
- 1-2-1 business growth, IP development and best practice in inclusive and sustainable innovation mentorship from UK sector experts that can tangibly help develop the business and IP further.
- Co-location services (desk space/ lab space) for participants on the programme.
- Access to a community of like-minded startups and entrepreneurs developing creative technology solutions for the creative technology sector.
- The program takes no equity and there are no fees to apply.

### **What are the benefits of the Ideate programme?**

The Ideate programme provides creative businesses with an opportunity to build technical and commercial capabilities within their business. It supports businesses through extended research and collaborative development, the goal of Ideate is to prepare SMEs across the creative sector for commercialisation. Participants gain a strong understanding of IP, relevant workflows and market strategies. Helping provide a solid foundation by which to grow and scale further. Ideate also provides access to a broad support network, expertise from multiple partners, and valuable exposure to startup founders, mentors, and the wider CreaTech ecosystem. Ideate also supports the entrepreneurial development of participants. By fostering a growth mindset. Whilst providing participants with the facilitates needed to develop a compelling prototype.

### **What are the key dates for the programme?**

Pre-programme diagnostics sessions – A pre programme online meeting to assess your programme needs and ambitions on the programme.

- 45 minutes per company between 15 April and 2 May TBC
- 6 May (w/c) Programme Launch and start of CodeBase sessions
- 2 June (w/c) Network Lab Development Phase Kick Off
- 1 September (w/c) CodeBase final phase
- 17 September Final Event – In Person, location TBC

## **Eligibility**

### ***Does the applicant company need to have been registered as a UK company for a certain period prior to application?***

We are aware that some companies won't have been trading long enough to have submitted any accounts or may have submitted abridged accounts if turnover is not of a sufficient level. This should not prevent you from applying for the programme, as long as your company is registered with Companies House. This has been communicated to the judging panel and will not affect the judging process.

### ***My startup is not incorporated yet. Can I still apply to the Ideate Program?***

No. Your company needs to be incorporated, and you'll need to provide the incorporation date in the application form.

### ***Can Universities apply?***

Universities and researchers may be named as a partner in a proposal, however, they may not be a lead applicant on an application to a CoSTAR Access programme. The lead applicant must be a company registered and trading in the UK.

### ***What companies can apply under creative industries?***

The CoSTAR Ideate programme is designed for SMEs incorporated in the UK, that are working in or are developing solutions in the creative industries. The DCMS groups creative industries into the following sub sector:

Advertising and marketing

- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design and designer fashion
- Film, TV, radio, and photography
- Museums, galleries, and libraries
- Music, performing, and visual arts
- Publishing
- IT, software, and computer services

## **Programme obligations**

What are the programme obligations?

Participants must be willing to commit to the following key obligations:

- Attend the diagnostic session in April 2025.
- Attend the programme kick off and induction sessions on the 6 and 7 May 2025.
- Attend at least 70% of the workshops, support meetings, webinars from April 2025-September 2025.
- Ensure that relevant team members are attending scheduled sessions as indicated in the Ideate Programme Stages.
- Develop a solution that addresses at least one of the areas identified by each Network Lab within the programme.
- Attend, present and demonstrate project outcomes at the industry showcase event in August 2025, and at final showcase event in September 2025
- Attend meetings hosted by programme delivery partners.
- Participant agrees to be visibly (name and logo) associated with the Programme, whilst in the Programme, and afterwards as a former participant and beneficiary. This includes marketing collateral, such as website, print and digital materials.
- Join the Ideate Alumni Cohort Group to continue to develop valuable relationships created on the programme.
- A 'Give-Back' of six hours mentorship to future E&C programme participants over the following two years.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular evaluation of the cohort will be conducted to understand how successful the programme is in supporting both the professional development goals of the cohort, and of their respective businesses. A short feedback survey will be provided after each stage to provide insight to the value of that workshop and facilitator and a final evaluation survey on programme completion.
- For a maximum period of five years following the Project end date, Participant shall use its reasonable endeavours to answer specific questions from CoSTAR National Lab relating to its growth and progress to assist CoSTAR in demonstrating the impact of its activities. This shall include: (i) participation in an annual telephone conversation of one hour, and (ii) participation in a survey issued by CoSTAR.

***Is the programme remote or in person?***

The Ideate programme will be delivered in a hybrid model. Most of the workshops are online, with no obligation to attend a CoSTAR-related premises. There will be some workshops that although they'll be delivered online, there will be an obligation to attend a relevant network lab to view. This will be beneficial for participants. Helping them to appreciate the cohort that they're in. Whilst will give them exposure to key regional resources and personnel. A large portion of the Ideate programme will require participants to be resident in their respective CoSTAR National/ Network lab for development purposes.

***Do I have to attend all of the activities?***

In general, attending all activities on the programme can be beneficial as it provides you with the opportunity to learn from experienced mentors, connect with other cohort members, and develop your business skills. However, it is important to prioritise your time and focus on activities that are most relevant to your business goals.

If there are certain activities that you feel are not relevant to your business or that you already have a strong understanding of, you may choose to skip them (with adequate permission from the CoSTAR National Lab E&C team) to allocate your time and resources more effectively. However, it is important to consider the potential benefits of all activities before deciding to skip them.

***How is data related to my business or product treated?***

CoSTAR National Lab and Network Labs will not be signing NDAs with programme participants. CoSTAR National Lab will ask you to share your data with programme delivery partners and, if access is given, these will be regarded as confidential information.

***Who will own the IP of my business or product, is equity taken?***

The participants will have full ownership of their intellectual property created. For full details, please refer to the programme terms and conditions. Whilst no equity will be taken in the businesses of any participants.

## Application process

### ***Can I speak to someone from the team before submitting?***

Yes. We will be holding a briefing event during the application window. This will be a good opportunity to understand further details about the programme. Whilst you'll also be able to have any queries or concerns addressed by members of the CoSTAR E&C team. These briefing events are intended to be informal, open, and accessible to anyone who wishes to participate in the programme, regardless of their background or experience level. They will not have an impact on the judging of your application.

### ***Do I have to use Submittable to complete my application?***

We encourage applicants to let us know about any reasonable adjustments they may require for the application process or their proposed project. You may already know what you would like to request, or you may like to have a general discussion of your options. Individual requests for access support will be accommodated wherever possible and equitable. Please forward requests to [costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk).

### ***What information is asked for in the application form?***

The application form will be the first method that we use to assess both the eligibility of all applicants, and their suitability to the programme. To determine eligibility, we'll need to understand details of your business and product/ service/ experience being developed. Whilst to understand suitability, we'll need further details on the problem and solution that you're addressing, your aims and objectives both in programme and afterwards and an understanding of any project members that will also be participating.

### ***I need support with making my application; what should I do?***

Please forward requests to [costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:costar.enterprise@rhul.ac.uk).

### ***Who will my application data be shared with?***

We only use your application information for the purpose of the programme. If information is shared outside of CoSTAR this will be made clear in the application form and/or programme agreement.

### ***Will I be able to save my application form?***

Yes, you will be able to save it during the application process, so that you can complete it in more than one session if you need to.

### ***How are applications selected?***

All applications will be initially assessed for eligibility in accordance with the programme's eligibility criteria. Once verified, all applications will be assessed against the selection criteria by a diverse pool of external assessors and industry experts. Whilst they'll also be assessed by members of the CoSTAR network for suitability.

***How long will the review process of applications take?***

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application within 6 weeks of the programme closing for applications.

***I want to include more detail than a section in the application form allows, is this permitted?***

No, only the information contained within the application form and within page limits specified for each section will be evaluated when selecting proposals. This is to ensure all proposals are scored fairly and equally, and also helps assessors to more easily compare proposals.

***Will I be asked to complete an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion form as part of the application process?***

Yes, for the lead applicant only.

***Will I receive feedback on my application?***

Because of the number of applications we receive, we can't provide feedback on applications that do not progress to the interview stage.

***If my application is not successful, can I apply for a later programme?***

Yes, you are welcome to apply for any other CoSTAR programme.

***What if I am involved in another CoSTAR programme?***

You can still take part in other CoSTAR-funded programmes, so long as the timings do not cause a conflict of interest and you are eligible to participate.

Please refer to our website [www.costarnetwork.co.uk](http://www.costarnetwork.co.uk) for all links.