

What if your Endorsement application is refused?



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INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this, it's most likely that you've had an application for an Innovator Founder Visa Endorsement refused. This document can help you understand why this has happened, what your next steps may be, and also to set some expectations.

This visa route is intended specifically for applicants who have ventures that are highly likely to contribute to the UK economy through the generation of high revenue streams and the creation of high-quality jobs for UK residents.

Many of the applications we receive may result in a successful small-scale business. Others present overly ambitious propositions, sometimes way beyond their available resources and levels of expertise.

Unfortunately, neither of these are suitable for this Visa route. The UK Home Office is seeking "best-in-class" entrepreneurs (and budding entrepreneurs) with credible propositions that have a strong chance of high levels of success.

Please read this document in detail before taking time to consider your options.





THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

When a project is refused, it is a common response from an applicant to suggest that the assessors didn't read their plan properly, that they didn't understand the proposition, or that they are underqualified. This is certainly not the case, as we hope you will understand.

Our team of assessors have all been carefully selected due to their experience in assessing and understanding business propositions. Many of them are successful entrepreneurs themselves and/or have held senior positions in successful organisations.

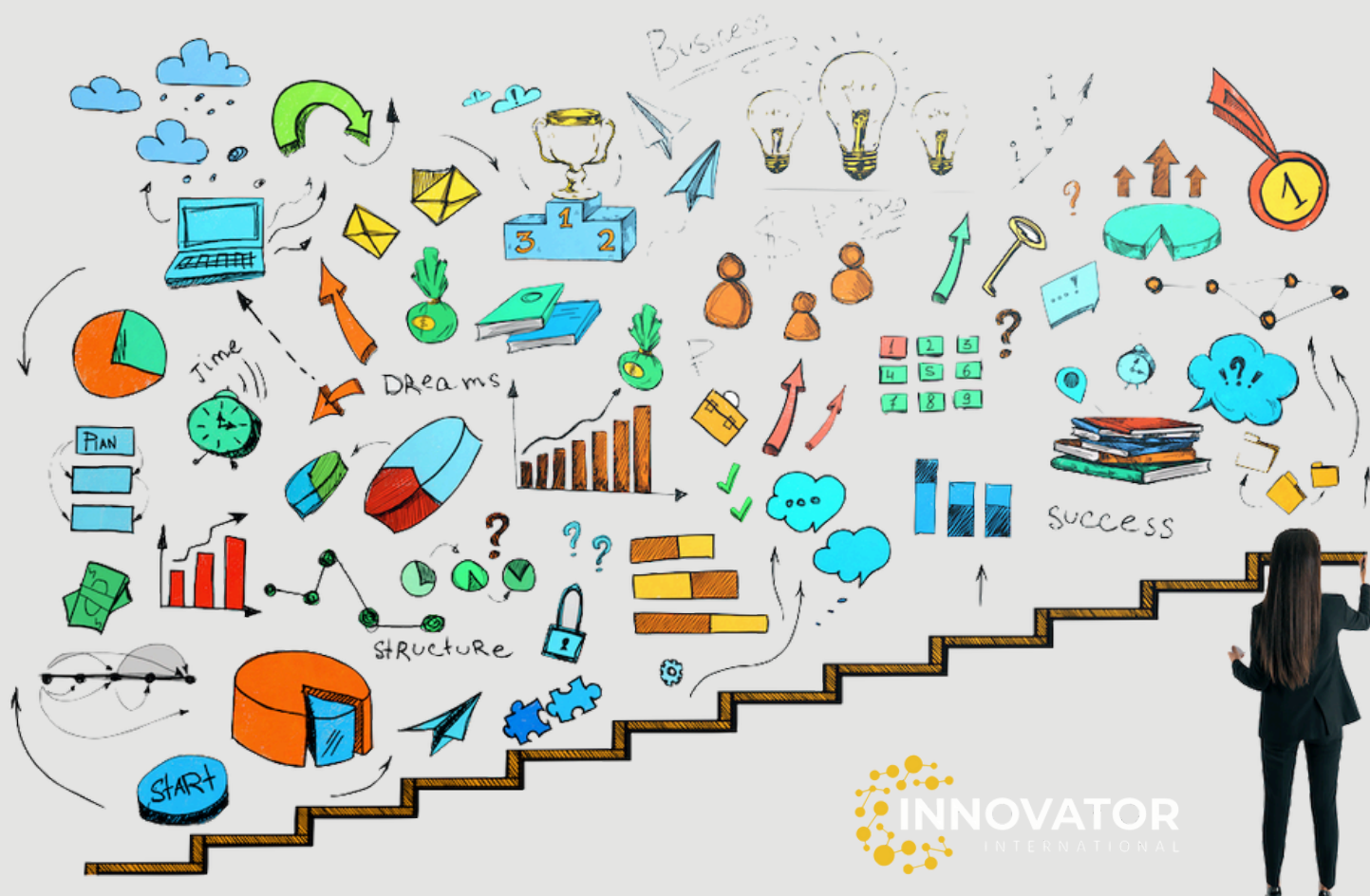
Each has experience in defined business sectors, so we can allocate each project to someone who has an understanding of that sector. They may not have direct experience in your specific marketplace, but their knowledge and experience will be broad enough to provide an accurate assessment of your proposition.



When your project is assigned to an assessor, they take time to read your plan and any attachments (often multiple times to absorb the detail). During this process, they also perform their own research and may contact applicants if they require further information. They will then complete an assessment form summarising their analysis of your proposition. This is the form that you will have received as a part of your feedback.

The assessor will make their own decision and present this to a lead assessor in a panel meeting. The lead assessor may agree with the decision, or they may request or suggest further research into any further aspects of the proposition. After this, the assessor and lead assessor will agree on a decision, and you will then be informed.

Please note: It NOT the role of the assessor to research and disprove any claims that you may make in your plan. Your plan must contain credible, well-researched information (supported by suitable evidence wherever possible) to support your proposition.





If you were refused on Innovation:

Whilst an idea may be different to what currently exists, in many cases, the differentiation is considered to be minor or not sufficient to form the foundation of a high-growth business. In many cases, the differentiation is far too small to persuade a customer base to move from their trusted solution to a new, unproven option with no market reputation.

This does not mean your project is not innovative - but it may mean that it doesn't meet the innovation criteria for this specific Visa route.

Look back over your project and ask:

- Is my offering **REALLY** that different from what currently exists?
- Would people take the risk of changing their current solution for mine?
- How do I know this for sure? Do I have any evidence?
- Am I really designing or developing this myself, or am I relying too much on other people?

We have to be convinced that this is your project, that it's not easy to copy, and that it is sufficiently different from what exists. Your proposition must present a reasonable chance of creating a high-growth business opportunity.

If that is not clearly the case, unfortunately, your project is not suitable for this Visa route.

If you were refused on Viability:

This reason for failure usually reflects either:

1. You have not clearly defined a market for your product and substantiated that the market would purchase your solution.
2. You have not clearly demonstrated that you have the knowledge base, sector experience or skill set to make this project a success.
3. Your operational and financial plans are not credible, e.g. sales forecasts are overly ambitious given the levels of competition.

You have to convince us that your offering is so good that people will want to buy it over their current preference. What market engagement have you completed, and have you provided evidence? More importantly, can you sell it to them?

Ask yourself - and be totally honest - would you purchase your solution over the current proven and dependable solutions? Why, or why not?

Look back over your project and ask:

- How do I KNOW for sure that people want my proposition?
- Do I really have the knowledge and skills to make this work?
- Do I have access to all of the resources I need (including finances)?
- Is my plan realistic and credible?





If you were refused on Scalability:

The best businesses grow beyond a single person operating in a small geographic area. This visa route expects to support businesses that generate high-quality jobs for settled UK workers, creating high revenue streams over a relatively short timeframe.

These businesses are expected to generate most of their income from the innovative aspect they have proposed. It is not meant for businesses that have a small, innovative idea but generate most of their income from other streams (such as other product sales or consultancy).

If your business is not viable, it naturally follows that it won't be scalable. It is common to start small and grow, but your plans have to be realistic and achievable. If you were to be endorsed, your progress would be assessed against the forecasts presented in your plan.

Look back over your project and ask:

- **Is the innovative aspect really core to the success of my business?**
- **Can my project grow to national or international marketplaces?**
- **Have I explained how I aim to achieve this?**
- **Is my staffing plan realistic and achievable?**



Your Options

Your Refusal Summary will provide our opinion regarding the points discussed in this document. If you disagree with the summary, take a moment to ask yourself why you think we have formed this opinion. Have you told us everything we need? Have you missed important points that may have led to a misunderstanding?

Maybe your project - no matter how good you think it is - isn't suitable for this Visa route. This is hard to consider, as we understand that you are so invested in your project and that securing a UK Visa is vital to you. But, we have to determine whether you are suitable for this Visa route.

If you think that there is something that we have misunderstood or not taken into account in the assessment process, you have a chance to ask us to look at your project again, taking into account the additional information.

This is NOT a chance for you to change your proposition, changing your plan to address the assessor's comments. It is a chance for you to provide additional information that you may have missed in your original submission.

To request a second assessment, please click the button in your refusal email. You will be taken to a form where you will have the chance to tell us what additional information you would like us to consider.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS. You just need to inform us why you think we have misunderstood your proposition, and what additional information you would like to provide. If your assessor decides to consider this information in your re-assessment, they will contact you to request it.



Thank you for taking the time to read this document. Hopefully, it will help you understand why your project has been refused and are clear on whether you should request a second assessment or not.

Remember, having your project refused doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad project - it might just mean that it simply doesn't meet the criteria for this specific Visa route.



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