OCIF Grow 2026 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Application / Eligibility

- **Do all the co-founders need to be under 35?**
  - No, but the majority ownership (i.e., 51%) must be owned by youth.
- **I was considered a youth when I first joined Orange Corners Design Programme. Am I still eligible to apply?**
  - Applicants must be between 18 and 35 years old at the time of application for either OCIF Grow (or OCIF Ignite if you participate in the CDI Orange Corners Design programme).
- **Do all the co-founders need to be South African?**
  - No, but the majority ownership (i.e., 51%) must be owned by South Africans.
- **Can I apply if I am a different nationality?**
  - Yes, as long as you have permanent residency (i.e., hold a South African ID) and your business is operational in South Africa.
- **Can we apply if our team is based outside of Johannesburg or Cape Town?**
  - Yes. OCIF GROW is open to all eligible businesses in South Africa.
- **Does your business have to have traction, or can early or idea-stage businesses still apply? Is the turnover negotiable?**
  - The business must demonstrate that its historical turnover is within the range of R250,000 to R10m per annum through annual financial statements. The turnover is not negotiable. This is not a programme for idea stage businesses.
- **What financial documents do we need to provide in the application?**
  - You must submit your annual financial statements (audited or unaudited) or management accounts. These documents help us verify your financial traction, revenue, and ability to afford the debt component. Financial projections are optional as they can strengthen your application by illustrating your business' growth plans, but they are not mandatory.
- **Can I apply if I have already received funding from Orange Corners?**
  - Yes, you can apply if you have received funding from Orange Corners in previous rounds or through other Orange Corners funded programmes.

● Can I apply if I am not an alumni of an Orange Corners funded programme?
○ Yes, you can still apply.

● Can I apply for only the grant portion and not the loan?
○ No, it's a blended financial product and you have to demonstrate that you can afford the debt component. There is a strict 50:50 ratio between grant and debt which can not be modified. For every R1 of grant funding you receive you take on R1 of debt.

● Can a company with one partner under 35 and another over 35 apply?
○ Yes, provided the applicant under 35 is the majority shareholder, can make financial decisions, and can sign the loan contract.

● What if my personal credit score is poor, but my business' financials are strong?
○ The programme reviews only your business's financials. Personal credit scores are not considered.

● If I applied for the OCD programme, do I still need to apply for OCIF Grow?
○ Yes. Each programme has a separate application process and requires supporting documentation, including financials.

● How does the programme define innovation?
○ Innovation can include:
· **Product innovation:** A new or significantly improved product or service.
· **Process innovation:** A new or improved method of production, delivery, or operations.
· **Marketing innovation:** A new approach to product design, promotion, pricing, distribution, or logistics.
· **Organisational innovation:** New business practices, workplace organisation, or external relations.

Phase 1: OCIF Training & Support

● How much time commitment is required for the 8-week Raise Ready programme?
○ On average, you will need 3–4 hours per module. Modules 2 and 3 may require more time, as they involve your growth plan and financial modelling. Modules 2 and 3 are compulsory for the OCIF main applicant to attend in person. Depending on your experience with these areas, you may need additional time to work through these modules.

● **Is it okay if I miss a few sessions due to other commitments and can someone else from my team take my place?**
○ Yes. A co-founder or team member who is actively involved in decision-making or in the areas covered (e.g., finance) may attend on your behalf. This ensures the content can be applied effectively in your business. We do not recommend sending someone whose role is unrelated to the programme content. Recordings will be available for all sessions, and you may send questions to the programme manager at any time.

●**Are the one-on-one sessions optional or can we skip them if we know our financial model and how to pitch our business?**
○ The one-on-one sessions are essential for ensuring your growth plan and financial documents align with the required templates and standards for the Investment Committee. Even if you are experienced, these sessions help you refine your submission, strengthen your presentation, and ensure you are fully prepared for the Investment Committee presentation.

● **Is the training delivered online, in person, or hybrid?**
○ Online.

● **If I am accepted into OCIF Grow am I guaranteed to get the amount of funding I apply for?**
○Acceptance into the OCIF Grow programme does not guarantee funding. You will need to present your growth plan, financial documents and pitch to the independent Investment Committee, who will make the final decision on whether you receive funding and, if so, the approved amount. Funding requests may also need to be revised based on feedback from the Investment Committee and on the amount of total funding available.

Phase 2: OCIF Funding & Funding Conditions

● **What is the interest rate on the loan?**
○ The loan is interest-free and must be repaid over 18 months.

● **Are the repayment terms negotiable?**
○ Repayment schedules are designed during the financial modeling session and reviewed by staff and the Investment Committee. While some flexibility is possible (e.g., delayed start), plans with very late repayments may be considered higher risk.

● **What kind of surety will be required for the loan portion of the funding?**
○ No surety is required.

● **Once approved for funding, what documents will you require?**
○ You will be required to submit:

- A survey every 6 months
- Financial statements
- Certified copies of IDs of all the founders/owners
- Proof of address e.g. lease agreement etc for the business as well as all the owners
- Company registration documents (obtained from CIPC Cor14.3) less than 3 months old & tax clearance certificate (pin) from SARS
- Latest IT34C from SARS
- Statement of account from SARS for VAT & PAYE
- Proof of bank account & bank overdraft (if applicable)
- Latest management accounts
- Latest debtors and creditors report (from your accounting systems)
- EMP201 (baseline for employment numbers) from SARS
- BEE statement & Beneficial ownership statement

● **Is there criteria around what the funding can and cannot be used for?**
○ Funding must be aligned with your growth plan and financial projections. High-risk or controversial businesses (e.g., gambling) are not eligible..

● **How are the funds disbursed?**
○ Selected applicants submit invoices to CDI Capital, which then pays suppliers or reimburses the business.