

CLEAN FUTURES ACCELERATOR 2025

Scoring Criteria Overview

This document explains how applications will be scored for the first stage of the Clean Futures Accelerator programme, run by Connected Places Catapult accelerators.

How We Score Applications

There are two main steps to selecting companies for the programme: first, we shortlist applications, and then we conduct interviews. This guide focuses only on how we score your initial application.

Step One: Application Shortlisting

This part is done by the Clean Futures Consortium and other industry experts. At least three people will review each application, looking at your proposed trial, how well you fit the programme, your solution, your business model (including how much progress you've made and if you're ready for investment), and your team. The applications with the highest scores will be invited for a technical and commercial interview. We score each part of your application using a 5-star system, with 5 being the best score.

Programme Fit - 25%

To get a good score here, your application should:

- Clearly show how your idea or trial helps solve one or more of the specific challenges the programme is focused on.
- Prove your organisation is already well-established in the West Midlands and clearly explain how your solution will make a significant positive difference to the region.
- Have a very clear and detailed plan for how you'll get the required matching funds, with strong evidence to back it up.
- Demonstrate that what you aim to achieve with your project will greatly help the programme meet its key goals, like attracting investment, creating jobs, securing contracts, and getting R&D funding.

Trial Plan - 25%

To get a good score here, your trial plan should:

- Be extremely clear, thorough, and well-supported with details for your "Standard Trial". You should clearly explain your funding request and why that amount is perfect for your trial.
- If you're also proposing a "Comprehensive Trial," it needs to clearly go beyond the Standard Trial. Explain in detail how it expands the project, what new things you'll test, how it's more complex, and what extra resources you'll need. Your justification for the extra funding should be strong, showing excellent value and impact.
- Show that your proposed project is achievable within the facilities and timeframe at Coventry University. It would also be great to see that you've already talked to Coventry University and have a clear plan of working with them.
- Confirm that your solution is at the right stage of development (between TRL 4-7) and clearly show this in your application.
- Include a detailed list of potential risks and a strong plan for how you'll deal with them, showing that the risks to partners and delivering the project are low.

Solution - 20%

To get a good score here, your solution should:

- Offer an exceptional and transformative way to solve the identified problem, with a significant and measurable positive impact.
- Show innovation and have very compelling unique selling points (USPs).
- If you're a smaller company, your solution should be a completely new product or service. If you're a larger company, it should introduce innovative processes or improve efficiency in a way that sets a new industry standard.
- Show a clear and strong commitment to environmental impact. Provide detailed, measurable information about your solution's sustainability and your organisation's environmental efforts. This includes a comprehensive understanding and analysis of all types of emissions (scopes 1-3).

Business Model, Traction & Investment Readiness - 20%

To get a good score here, your business model should:

- Be strong, realistic, and already proven in practice. There should be clear evidence that it works, is likely to be profitable and sustainable, and that customers are happy to pay.
- Show significant commercial "traction" – meaning you're making progress with customers, like generating revenue from key clients or having signed important contracts.
- Indicate that you're ready for investment right now, or that you've recently received a good amount of funding. Also, show a very high chance of getting more investment or contracts directly because of this programme and within its timeframe.
- There should be compelling evidence of excellent market potential and growth.

Team - 10%

To get a good score here, your team should:

- Have a wide range of skills and experience (technical, business, sales, etc.) that go above and beyond what's needed for this project.
- Include more than one key member with extensive knowledge of your industry and a proven track record of starting and growing successful businesses (for example, founders with over 10 years of industry experience, who have successfully sold previous companies, and have unique skills).
- Communicate with clarity.