

Freight Innovation Accelerator Cohort 5 (2026-27)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Purpose

This document contains the answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Freight Innovation Fund Accelerator programme.

Please refer to the Application Guidance document for more detailed information about the application questions, scoring criteria and selection process.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Can Innovators apply with their own partner?**

Yes. Innovators that already have an existing relationship with a freight organisation are welcome to apply together. In this case, the external partner must attend the interview stage and applicants must provide evidence of the partnership in the application form.

2. **Can I select multiple programme partners in my application?**

Yes, you can select up to 7 partners in the application form. However, you will be matched with one partner based on alignment with the programme partners. If there is a strong synergy between two partners, it may be possible for both to support your trial.

3. **Can Connected Places Catapult review my application before submission?**

To ensure a fair and unbiased assessment process, we cannot review full applications before they are submitted. However, we are happy to answer any questions about the application form or the process.

4. **My solution is TRL 8/9 in a different industry, can I still apply to the programme?**

Yes. We encourage cross-sector innovation. If your solution has not yet been tested in the freight sector, it will be considered a lower TRL (typically TRL 5) for the purposes of this programme.

5. **Is it possible to partner with more than one partner?**

If there is a clear synergy and the proposed trial can be delivered collaboratively, joint support from two partners may be considered.

6. Can a consortium of Innovators apply?

Yes. A consortium is eligible, but one Innovator must act as the lead partner, responsible for administrative processes. The total available funding remains capped at £110,000 (across Phases 1 and 2), regardless of the number of Innovators in the consortium.

7. Is match funding required?

Yes, to foster a collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership, Innovators are expected to contribute **30% of the total project cost as matching funds**. For instance, if the overall project expenses amount to £100,000, you should provide £30,000 in in-kind match funding to support your trial.

Designed to be in-kind, the matching fund could include but is not limited to:

- Labour costs.
- Overheads.
- Materials costs.
- Capital usage (property, equipment, facilities, others).
- Subcontractor costs.
- Travel and subsistence costs.
- Other costs - Workshop/lab usage charge outs, training costs, preparation of technical reports, market assessment, licensing in new technologies and patent filing costs of new IP.

8. Can a company with more than 250 employees apply?

Any company with more than 250 employees would be classified as a large enterprise and would need to apply in partnership with an Innovator to be eligible for this programme.

9. If we've participated in previous cohorts, can we apply with a new solution?

Yes. Previous participants are welcome to apply with a distinct new solution that aligns with the current programme challenges.

10. Is the business support programme delivered in-person, online or hybrid?

We try to be flexible in our approach so most of the business support programme is delivered online (e.g. workshops, group sessions). Your 1-2-1 support might be delivered in-person upon mutual agreement with our coaches.

11. What Is the funding mechanism for the programme?

- For Phase 1 (Trial Design), Connected Places Catapult will be procuring the services for the programme **under a Grant Funding Agreement.**
 - This funding will be given as grant funding, therefore will be subject to Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA). MFA requires you not to have received more than £315,000 in public funding within the last 2-3 financial years, including the current one
 - You will receive a Statement of Grant Usage document to complete before payment can be released
- **For Phase 2 (Pilot and Trial Delivery), Connected Places Catapult will be procuring the services as a Pre-Commercial Contract.**
 - Once the contract has been signed, Connected Places Catapult will provide you with a Purchase Order number which must be clearly noted on all invoices.
 - You must be VAT registered to receive Phase 2 funding. The total funding offered is inclusive of VAT (ie, up to £100,000 INCLUDING VAT). Please include the appropriate VAT number on the face of the invoice.
 - An invoice and a statement of expenditure will have to be provided for each payment to be released.
- **Payment schedule:**
 - **Trial Design Phase:** £10,000 at the end of the Trial Design Phase.
 - Release of payment is contingent on submission of the Statement of Grant Usage and associated receipts
 - **Trial Delivery Phase:** Up to £100,000 (including VAT)
 - 60% of their funding will be paid at the start of the trial delivery phase.
 - 40% of their funding at the end of the programme.
 - Release of the final payment is contingent upon receipt of an End of Programme Report, Survey, and attendance at Exit Interview.

All payments will be processed within 30 days of receiving complete and accurate documentation as well as corresponding evidence.

3. Contact Details

If you have any questions about the programme, please get in touch with our team via email – FreightInnovationFund@cp.catapult.org.uk

We wish you luck with your application!