



Application Webinar – Questions & Answers

This document brings together questions and answers raised during the TRIG 2026 Application Webinar. It is intended to provide additional clarity and support to prospective applicants as they develop their proposals. Responses should be read alongside the official competition guidance.

Sections in this document:

- Funding, Costs & Subsidy Control
- Scope, TRL & Challenge Fit
- Eligibility & Due Diligence
- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Application Process & Support
- Other

Application Process & Support

Q: Is professional assistance in completing the application advisable?

A: The process is deliberately designed to try and get ideas from those who may be new to transport or early in their innovation process. For this reason it is designed so that professional assistance would not be needed/expected.

Q: Can we edit the innovation section during stage 2 of the application, or does it stay as it is?

A: This should remain the same. Please email us, if successful to stage 2, to let us know of any changes. TRIG@cp.catapult.org.uk

Eligibility & Due Diligence

Q: Do you need to be a business to apply, or can individuals apply as well?

A: Only UK organisations can apply, an individual cannot apply for TRIG but micro-businesses and sole traders are eligible.

Q: How do I complete an organisation profile for a Sole Trader operation?

A: You can now apply as a Sole Trader, the category will be added to our platform shortly but you will need to upload the proof that you have registered with HMRC.

Q: My team has a scaled working prototype, and a trial partner ready to trial in relevant environment. It will be the first trial and will need optimisation along the way. Are we a better fit for TRIG or FIF?

A: Your solution should be at TRL 2-4 at application stage and at the start of the programme (February 2027). If you think your solution will be ready to test in a relevant environment in February we welcome your application for TRIG. FIF accept applications from projects at TRL5 +

Q: If someone has already applied to The Ideas Elevator – Maritime Decarbonisation, do they need to submit a separate application for TRIG 2026, or will their application to that competition automatically be considered for TRIG 2026?

A: The Ideas Elevator is designed for early-stage ideas at TRL 1, with the aim of supporting their progression to TRL 2 and potentially fast-tracking them to the TRIG interview stage. If your project is eligible for the Ideas Elevator, it would not be eligible for TRIG, as TRIG supports projects starting from TRL 2. However, if you are developing different ideas, you are welcome to apply to both programmes simultaneously with separate projects.

Q: The guidance states that the academic member must have a contract extending at least 12 months beyond the start of the TRIG programme. Could you please clarify which date this refers to the programme start date in February 2027, or the start of the TRIG submission/application process?

A: Academics are allowed to apply but the applying member should have a contract running at least 12 months after the start of the programme which mean from February 2027, the applying member must be in the book, if not they need to ask the department to lead on it.

Q: Is a company not having currently paid employees, not trading and pre revenue without a Liability Insurance still be eligible for the call?

A: Yes, you can apply even if you are a single founder and you won't need a liability insurance. However you need to make sure you have the capacity to deliver the work within the timeline potentially by working with partners or subcontractors.

Q: There are insurance requirements as part of the pre-qual due diligence. What specific insurance is required?

A: If you have 1 or more full time employees, we require adequate employers liability insurance and public liability insurance.

Funding, Costs & Subsidy Control

Q: Are we allowed to apply to other programmes with the same project?

A: We recognise that to increase their chances of securing funding, innovators often apply to multiple grants at the same time. While match-funding is permitted, the same project cannot be funded twice. We therefore ask applicants to inform us as soon as possible if there are any changes to their project scope or funding sources.

Q: How can funding be shared between teams from different organisations?

A: A lead applicant who will receive the entire grant must be identified, and they need to organise the grant share between themselves. We encourage them to sign an agreement before the programme starts, but we won't require to share it with the team

Q: What NDA / Confidentiality measures protect the applications? I can see the NDA after award of grant, but what about before that?

A: Applications are only scored by Connected Places Catapult and DfT colleagues. They won't be communicated to anyone externally.

Q: Could you please clarify the statement “The organisation should not exceed the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) threshold as a result of TRIG funding”

A: TRIG funded should not take you over the MFA as set out within the subsidy control act. This is £315,000 over a 3 year rolling period

Q: If one of the team members is on a fixed contract ending end October, can we still cover him in case his other funding applications are successful? We can still consider skills replacement as risk management plan

A: Only costs incurred between February and June 2027 can be covered. In this case, please mention the role instead of the name in the budget at stage 2 and outline the recruitment process as a risk.

Q: Can we access projects funded in previous round of TRIG ?

A: You can find all the funded projects on our Innovation directory
<https://cp.catapult.org.uk/innovation-directory/>

Q: Is the initial 60% funding award mainly determined based on the proposal submitted at the first stage?

A: In phase 2 of the application process you will be asked to submit a proposed budget for the funding, if successful, the initial 60% will be based on this figure.

Q: Can eligible expenditure incorporate business costs such as office space in addition to labour costs?

A: Yes, if it can be specifically attributed to the project

Q: For project larger than £45K, do you match additional funding?

A: We don't require match funding, and often have applicants who have larger projects, however the maximum amount of funding available from us is £45,000.00.

Q: Our idea is an innovative service design, not tech, Am I eligible to TRIG?

A: TRIG can fund projects aiming at developing any type of solution including new service or framework as long as it doesn't exist in the transport mode you are targeting.

Q: Does the score from stage 1 (on innovation) get carried through to the score for stage 2?

A: Yes, applications will be assessed against four criteria, listed below. The "Innovation" criteria will be used for Phase 1 pre qualification. The remaining three criteria ("Impact", "Team, Budget and Project Plan" and "Scalability") will be assessed at Phase 2, and a final combined score across all four criteria will be used to select applications for interview. Innovation – 30%; Impact – 30%; Scalability – 10%

Q: What can the funding be spent on and how do we calculate how much we should apply for?

A: All eligible costs can be found in the Terms and Conditions on the CPC website. You should calculate your funding based on realistic costs to progress your solution within the 5 month programme.

Q: Can the grants be used to fund patenting costs?

A: No, this cannot be covered by TRIG funding.

Q: How did you arrive at the number of successful bids you are seeking in each category?

A: This was based on the funding that each policy team had available to sponsor the programme. It is designed to ensure they have an appropriate pipeline across their innovation programme.

Q: Other competitions are up to £1m. How does that happen with MFA subsidy control?

A: These grants typically won't be 100% funded, or they are being delivered through an R&D streamlined route that allows the MFA to be ignored

Q: Are charities exempt from MFA restrictions as most of their funding comes from grants?

A: We unfortunately cannot waive this rule for any company type

Scope, TRL & Challenge Fit

Q: For the Digital Twins challenge, would the Department consider operational coordination platforms that integrate fragmented real-time transport and stakeholder data across multiple independent organisations — supporting incident response, disruption management, and network resilience — to fall within scope, even where the emphasis is on federated operational coordination and decision support rather than primarily on infrastructure modelling?

A: Yes - operational coordination fits into our challenge criteria.

Q: If we decide one category but you think it is better suited to another, can you move this over without us being ineligible or it affecting our application? Thanks

A: It will depend on the number of applications received. We recommend that you apply under the challenge that most closely aligns with your technology. However, there may be some flexibility for particularly strong, high-scoring submissions.

Q: Having reviewed the available information, I have concluded that proposals related to low-carbon asphalt or smart roads would be eligible for the Open Call. Could you please confirm whether my interpretation is correct?

A: The open call is deliberately kept very broad and the key is those ideas that are clearly responding to a real transport challenge.

Q: Would an innovation that proposes new, or a modification to existing policy, be welcome? Or does each proposal have to fit within existing policies (we're targeting a policy-topic that hasn't shown any measurable benefit over past two decades).

A: Policy change itself is not within the scope of TRIG. However, you are welcome to develop a toolkit or framework that raises awareness or supports change within the transport system

Q: If we have an AI idea that can be both critical technologies and open call, what should we choose?

A: Please read the application guidance carefully and select the challenge that best aligns with your technology and its potential impact. Please note that we are unable to advise on which challenge you should apply to.

Q: If our idea is deployable across multiple challenges, are we restricted to one application or multiple applications across challenges?

A: You must apply only once per project, but you can apply with multiple projects across one or more challenges.

Q: Would emissions reductions in rail stations go in Open Call?

A: It doesn't fit in to any other challenges so open call would be your best bet and does address a DfT priority.

Q: How important is interoperability with existing transport systems when assessing potential long-term impact?

A: That would depend on intervention but generally it would seem very important as UK transport is based around those existing systems

Q: It's quite a long lead in time from first application through to project start. Innovation project scopes may alter or flex slightly over this time frame. Does the application process consider this possibility?

A: Your project should be at TRL 2–4 at the time of application. While your idea may continue to develop during the selection process, you will be required to confirm at the start of the programme that it has not progressed beyond TRL 4.

Q: If the physical test environment already exists but the proposed data, AI or connectivity layer is new and at TRL 2–4, should the TRL assessment focus on the new layer rather than the underlying platform?

A: In that case your project should focus only on the AI and connectivity layer and not on the physical test environment.

Q: What is the link to the application itself?

A: <https://cpc.simplydo.co.uk/challenges/69ca8b8ef3915edd22af57ce>

Partnerships & Collaboration

Q: Are applications which involve non-UK organisations as partners allowed? If yes, are there particular restrictions on their involvement to be aware of?

A: You are permitted to collaborate with overseas partners. However, no more than 50% of the grant can be allocated to organisations based outside the UK, apart from material costs.

Q: Can a partner be above TRL 5 (revenue making company) ?

A: Yes, we only assess the TRL level of the solution you are proposing as part of the programme.

Q: Can you assist in finding or facilitating collaboration partnership?

A: This year, for the first time, we will be piloting an initiative to help connect organisations that are looking for partners but have not yet identified one. There is an option in the application form to indicate your interest. However, as this is a new approach and we anticipate a high volume of applications, we are unable to guarantee that such matches can be facilitated. Please note that this support will only be considered for projects that progress to Phase 2.

Business Support

Q: Is the support to alumni also available to applicants not successful following the first shortlisted 212 ?

A: No, the alumni community consists of those who have completed TRIG

Q: Will we get help with regulatory SandBox required for innovation and introduction to regulators?

A: Early-stage innovation can create opportunities that outpace existing regulatory frameworks. Whilst this should not limit ambition, innovators are encouraged to remain aware of relevant regulations and consider potential future barriers. This can help with planning proactively for later-stage deployment. The TRIG team at Connected Places Catapult will support with this where possible