

May 2026

Transport Research and Innovation Grants Programme

2026 COMPETITION GUIDANCE



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1. Programme Overview and Eligibility

The Department for Transport and its delivery partner Connected Places Catapult support innovators through Transport Research and Innovation Grants (TRIG) developing innovative ideas to shape a safer, greener, accessible, and more resilient transport network.

Up to £2,385,000 in funding is available for 53 projects to develop feasibility studies, proofs of concept, or prototypes tested in laboratory or relevant real-world environments.

1.1. Programme value

After analysing the market, we've found that TRIG is a one-of-a-kind programme!

Previous participants stated how the programme has been a successful launchpad over the years, having gained validation for their ideas from experts in DfT and Connected Places Catapult.

Participating in TRIG means you'll join a dynamic community of innovators and benefit from:

- Up to £45,000 grant funding (per project); matched funding is welcome but not required
- A simple and accessible programme experience
- Monthly virtual meetings with DfT's challenge owners
- One-to-one mentoring for a selection of cohort members
- In-person networking events across the UK
- Virtual pitching and learning sessions
- Access to our community platform with fresh content published every month
- Support from our Advisory Board Members [New board to shape future of transport innovation - Connected Places Catapult](#)
- Visibility on our Innovation Directory [Innovation Directory - Connected Places Catapult](#)
- Selected innovators to feature in "Meet the Innovator" articles on the Connected Places Catapult website

1.2. Eligibility

TRIG funds **Innovative ideas**¹ to solve real-world transport challenges.

THE PROJECT MUST BE:

- At **Technical Readiness Level (TRL) 2 – 4** (Concept or application formulated; Proof of concept/small scale prototype) and **can develop up to TRL 5** (tested in the relevant environment) at the end of the programme. Note: If your solution has already been tested in a relevant environment, TRIG is not the appropriate funding mechanism.
- Fully delivered and deployed in the UK.

Consortia are welcome but not required and a lead applicant must be clearly identified.

THE ORGANISATION MUST BE:

- UK registered
- Public, private or third sector of any size including but not limited to academics, start-ups, scale-ups, charities, local or combined authorities.
- Please note that it is not required to be VAT registered.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- The organisations should not exceed the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) threshold as a result of TRIG funding.
- Previous TRIG applicants and winners can re-apply with a different idea
- MFA allows an organisation to receive up to £315,000 of state support during the current and previous two fiscal years.
- You will be asked to declare any other public aid which your enterprise and any enterprises linked to it may have received during your current and previous two fiscal years so that we can ensure that any grant support given to you under this scheme does not constitute a subsidy.
- Public aid includes not only grants but also assistance such as free or subsidised consultancy services, marketing advice etc which were funded by a public body.
Large organisations must provide justification for the use of public funds to support the project (instead of this being funded by their own R&D or business development funds).
- Applicants making more than one application will need to demonstrate an ability to deliver the projects concurrently. The same project cannot be submitted multiple times for different challenges.

¹ Please refer to section 1.3 for further detail.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Directly incurred costs

These are costs specific to the project. They are charged to the project as the amount actually spent. They must be fully supported by an audit record in justification of a claim. **They include:**

- labour costs for all those contributing to the project broken down by individual
- material costs (including consumables specific to the project)
- capital equipment costs where agreed as part of the original proposal
- sub-contract costs
- travel and subsistence
- other costs specifically attributed to the project.

NB: No more than half of the project value should be spent outside the United Kingdom, excluding materials.

Costs that are considered unreasonable will be rejected.

1.3. Definition of an “innovative ideas”

PROJECTS IDEAS AND FUTURE DELIVERABLES

Projects ideas can take many different and scalable forms. Please read the challenge scope carefully, as some areas exclude specific types of future deliverables.

Examples of eligible future deliverables include software or hardware, mobile applications, services or business models, fuel and energy solutions, small infrastructure ideas (such as charging stations, parking, bus station solutions etc.), specific components or materials, datasets, new transport modes, unmanned vehicles, machinery, best-practice guidance, dashboard visualisation tools, modelling or simulation tools, educational resources, and toolkits or frameworks.

Please note that TRIG is not intended to fund projects that result solely in academic publications. We expect funded projects to demonstrate a clear pathway to future implementation within the transport system.

INNOVATION IN THIS CONTEXT

Our definition of an innovative idea is a concept that addresses an unresolved problem or offers a more sustainable or cost-effective solution than existing

approaches. Your solution may already exist in another sector or transport mode, but it must be adapted for application in a specific mode for the first time.

2. Challenges

The 2026 TRIG competition comprises of five targeted calls aligned to specific DfT priorities, as outlined below, and an open call. The Open Call encourages applications with innovative ideas across all areas of transport where there is the potential for benefit.

Challenge	Number of Projects	Total Funding
Maritime Decarbonisation	25	£1,125,000
Freight Innovation	5	£225,000
Digital Twins	10	£450,000
Critical Technologies	7	£315,000
Open Call	6	£270,000
Total	53	£2,385,000

2.1. Maritime Decarbonisation

BACKGROUND

The UK maritime sector requires significant decarbonisation to meet national net zero targets and contribute to the Government's clean energy ambitions as set out in the Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy. That is why the UK SHORE programme is funding R&D to support the acceleration of key technologies necessary to achieve this decarbonisation. As well as funding research, UK SHORE supports growth and development of UK businesses.

Through TRIG, the UK SHORE programme aims to support low TRL clean maritime solutions, to feed the pipeline of innovation towards commercialisation. This is particularly important during the new £448m funding period between 2026-2030 to ensure there is a complete spectrum of projects funded. This will directly support the Government's missions to kickstart economic growth by fostering a leading clean maritime industry and solidify the UK's position as a clean energy superpower. Furthermore, it will directly advance the Department for Transport's priority to support the transition to green transport, ensuring a sustainable and environmentally responsible maritime sector.

The projects funded through TRIG within this challenge should be at proof-of-concept stage (TRL 2-4) and early studies on what might later be further developed through later competitions in the 2026 – 2030 UK SHORE programme. This will support the delivery of the Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy (MDS), helping to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability and alignment with the national Net Zero 2050 objectives.

PRIORITY SCOPE

1. Enabling Safe and Scalable Adoption of Future Maritime Fuels

How might we develop early-stage methods, tools or concepts that enable the safe handling, storage, distribution and use of zero and near zero (ZNZ) green gases emission fuels and support the skills, materials and logistics needed for the transition to multiple ZNZ fuels?

Why this challenge matters

The maritime industry sits at the heart of global trade, responsible for transporting over 80% of the world's goods. Yet, it is also a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, making its decarbonisation both urgent and unavoidable. Transitioning to *zero and near zero (ZNZ) GHG emission fuels* such as hydrogen, ammonia and methanol, is widely seen as one of the most promising pathways to reduce the sector's environmental impact.

2. Reducing Emissions Through Smarter, More Efficient Vessel Operations

How might early-stage concepts, data-led approaches or enabling technologies improve vessel energy efficiency through smarter and more efficient operations for zero and near zero GHG emission and automation to reduce maritime greenhouse gas emissions?

Why this challenge matters

Improving the efficiency of vessel operations is one of the most immediate and impactful ways the maritime industry can reduce its environmental footprint. Shipping is a highly energy-dependent sector, and even small inefficiencies in

routing, speed, coordination and vessel performance scale into significant global emissions when multiplied across the worldwide fleet.

3. Preparing Ports and Infrastructure for a Low Carbon, Multi-modal Future

How might early-stage tools, models or system concepts help ports and maritime infrastructure manage automation, multifuel energy demand and coordination with road and rail, to support maritime decarbonisation?

Why this challenge matters

Ports and associated infrastructure are the critical enablers of trade and maritime decarbonisation. As the industry transitions toward zero and near zero GHG emission fuels and more efficient logistics systems, ports will need to evolve from traditional fuel and cargo handling hubs into complex energy, logistics, and data ecosystems.

4. Whole Port Baselines Including Vessels & Zero Emission Infrastructure

How might we create a simple, secure and repeatable approach to mapping whole port energy demand and emissions including shore power infrastructure, vessel charging facilities and land based machinery with a direct link to reducing maritime emissions so ports can target the first clean energy actions with confidence?

Why this challenge matters

Ports need a combined picture of port energy demand and emissions across vessels and land-based machinery. Without this, sequencing charging, shore power, future fuels and safety improvements are based on best estimates. Some equipment logs or operational data may be commercially or security sensitive; a TRIG project can show how to handle this safely.

5. Trusted, Secure and Reusable Maritime Evidence to Enable Early Decarbonisation Decisions and Investment

How might we create trusted, secure and reusable maritime evidence that enables faster, more confident early-stage decarbonisation decisions unlocking investment across the shipping value chain?

Why This Challenge Matters

Across the maritime sector, real-world evidence on vessel operations, energy use and emissions can have limitations. Existing data can be fragmented, inconsistent and difficult to share due to commercial sensitivity and security concerns. This lack of robust, trusted evidence creates uncertainty when modelling future fuel demand, evaluating retrofit options, designing vessels, and planning clean energy infrastructure such as shore power and alternative fuels.

OUT OF SCOPE

We are not funding projects that are:

- Focusing on non-methanol biofuels, except for projects that utilise biofuels as a pilot fuel or secondary fuel on vessels predominantly powered by methanol, ammonia or hydrogen.
- Focusing only on increasing the efficiency of current conventional fossil fuels and fossil fuel powertrains of maritime vessels.
- Focusing on marine conservation and ecology
- Focusing on removing non-GHG and indirect GHGs from the combustion products of conventional fossil fuels and synthetic fossil fuels
- Focusing on Personal Watercraft (PWC)
- Focusing on the use and production of synthetic fuels, note: this exclusion does not apply to low, zero or near zero greenhouse gas emission methanol, ammonia and hydrogen fuels
- Focusing on submarines and submersible vessels
- Focusing on military applications
- Covered by existing commercial agreements to deliver the proposed solutions
- A duplicate of existing innovation
- Focusing on non-methanol biofuels, except for projects that utilise biofuels as a pilot fuel or secondary fuel on vessels predominantly powered by methanol, ammonia or hydrogen
- Dependent on export performance, for example, giving a subsidy to a baker on the condition that it exports a certain quantity of bread to another country
- Dependent on domestic inputs usage, for example, giving a subsidy to a baker on the condition that it uses 50% UK flour in their product

2.2. Freight Innovation

BACKGROUND

The freight and logistics call aims to support innovative ideas that have the potential to address the opportunities and challenges faced by the UK freight and logistics sector and its ancillary/supporting services. The intended outcomes are:

- reduced carbon emissions (aligned with the government's mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower) reduced congestion and subsequent improvement to the transport user's experience (aligned with the government's mission to kickstart the economy)
- increased resilience across supply chains
- improved operational efficiency and workforce productivity

PRIORITY SCOPE

1. Clean & Energy Technology

- How might we provide shared infrastructure hubs for fleet operators to facilitate wider adoption of clean operations across the UK network?
- How might we attract investment for asset owners or local government to support the supply of shared infrastructure hubs and promote the uptake of net zero vehicles?
- How might we identify optimal locations for charging hubs for asset owners / operators / local government to optimise efficiency?

2. Operational efficiency and workforce productivity

- How might we increase accessibility, enhance well-being and enable better services at infrastructure hubs (specifically road-based ones) for operators and asset owners to attract youth / a diverse workforce to mitigate workforce shortages?

3. Automation & Autonomous Vehicles

- How might we make autonomy resilient to connectivity “black spots” (in warehouses, ports, built up areas) for operators to de-risk investment thus increasing uptake, increasing productivity and mitigating workforce shortages?
- How might we understand skills and ways of working for logistics organisations to design systems and support workforce transition to make shared space automation safe, promoting uptake of automation in the freight workplace.
- How might we strengthen cyber-security and operational resilience for increasingly automated, connected freight systems, enabling the sector to protect itself against hacking (including AI), system compromise and wider geopolitical disruption?

The DfT definition of “freight and logistics shared infrastructure hub” is as follows: a shared charging infrastructure hub is a location where one or more charging points can be used by vehicles that are not owned or operated by the owner or operator of the location. This can include fully public infrastructure such as motorway service areas or private infrastructure such as a port or HGV operating centre where charging is made available to vehicles.

OUT OF SCOPE

- Anything to do with transport passengers
- Retrofitting solutions
- Solutions involving hydrogen and any derivative fuels like ammonia

2.3. Digital Twins

BACKGROUND

The Department for Transport (DfT) is committed to accelerating the adoption of [digital twin](#) technologies as a cornerstone of a more efficient, resilient and future-ready transport system. As transport networks become increasingly complex and data-rich, digital twins offer a powerful way to integrate information, simulate scenarios, enable collaboration and faster decision-making across the sector.

The aim of this challenge is to support the Integrated Digital Twin Programme towards:

- Enabling better outcomes in terms of more connected, resilient and future-proofed network through digital twins
- Developing the digital twin state of art and stimulate growth in the UK industry
- Utilising data sources to develop transport digital twin solutions.

PRIORITY SCOPE

1. Multimodal & Federated Transport

One of the most significant challenges in transport is the fragmentation between modes such as rail, road, bus, active travel, maritime and aviation often operating within their own data and operational silos.

- How might Digital Twins enable better integration of transport modes for people and freight?
- How might Digital Twins improve the holistic user experience across the transport modes?

2. Asset Resilience

Transport infrastructure is facing increasing strain from ageing assets and the growing need to withstand external risks such as extreme weather. It is thus critical to ensure systems remain safe, reliable, and operational.

- How might we enable infrastructure asset owners or operators to use digital twins for whole lifecycle management, preventative maintenance and targeted interventions, to minimise disruption and costs?
- How might we automate workflows for monitoring and maintaining Digital Twins, to validate and verify outputs across the whole lifecycle management of assets?

3. Incident and Crisis Management

Effective incident and crisis management requires situational awareness, coordinated decision-making, consideration of options, and the ability to adapt in a timely manner.

- How might Digital Twins enable better preparation, detection, prediction, response and recovery to significant and unfolding events, to reduce disruptions and increase network resilience?
- How might Digital Twins enable better coordination during major incidents, so that response is faster, more aligned, and more effective?

4. **Supporting New Mobility**

The transport sector is undergoing a profound transformation driven by the emergence of new mobility services such as connected and autonomous mobility (any mode), robotics, micromobility and on-demand transport.

- How might we enable transport stakeholders to use Digital Twins to beneficially introduce new mobility services in the UK to promote market growth, safety, value for money, sustainability?
- How might we enable transport stakeholders to use Digital Twins to better understand and adapt transport to changing user behaviour?

5. **Enabling Digital Twins**

Digital twins hold transformative potential for the transport sector, offering capabilities that extend across planning, operations, resilience, innovation, and sustainability.

- How might we establish clear mechanisms to enable transport Digital Twins to deliver societal value in the UK?
- How can we enable the use of Digital Twins to enable trusted data sharing between organisations including transport use cases?

OUT OF SCOPE

These areas are excluded because they represent individual components of a wider digital twin solution:

- Hardware (incl sensor) only, dashboards, interfaces or visualisation only.

2.4. Critical Technologies

BACKGROUND

The Department for Transport is seeking to support innovators in critical technologies like AI, advanced connectivity, and quantum into the transport sector helping them apply their solutions to real-world challenges. While the TRIG open call covers a wide range of ideas, targeted Critical Technology funding lets the DfT spotlight high-priority Industrial Strategy technologies and attract the brightest minds to transport innovation.

Critical technologies are principally the technologies listed in the [Modern Industrial Strategy](#), with a few transport specific additions including:

- [Advanced connectivity technologies](#), helping travellers, vehicles and infrastructure stay connected on the transport network
- [Artificial intelligence](#) for efficient operations, lower cost infrastructure and smart construction
- [Cybersecurity](#)
- [Engineering biology](#) solutions to transport challenges
- [Quantum technologies](#), especially novel sensors / applications
- [Semiconductors](#)
- Novel / alternative position and navigation technologies, e.g. signals of opportunity
- Novel applications of drone technology
- Robotics
- Smart infrastructure technologies
- Engineering biology solutions to transport challenges

PRIORITY SCOPE

1. Seamless Connectivity

New connectivity technologies could revolutionise the transport sector by enabling travellers, vehicles and infrastructure to communicate in real time, enhancing safety, optimising traffic flow and supporting more efficient and responsive transport networks.

- How might we enable digital connectivity to improve transport safety?
- How might we utilise digital communications to improve productivity, decarbonisation and network efficiency in the UK?

2. AI & Autonomy

AI and autonomous systems have the potential to transform the transport sector by enabling smarter decision-making, optimising operations, reducing human error, and supporting safer, more efficient, and adaptive transport systems.

- How might we use AI and automated systems to improve (productivity, value for money, decarbonisation, accessibility, safety) in the UK?

3. Robotics

Robotics has the potential to transform the transport sector by enabling automated inspection, maintenance and operational tasks across transport modes boosting efficiency and safety.

- How might we use robotics for maintenance & surveying in order to improve (productivity, value for money, decarbonisation, accessibility, safety) in the UK?
- How might we use robotics for remotely conducting dangerous roadside/railside/overboard/airside tasks?

4. Ubiquitous Connectivity

Ubiquitous connectivity / the Internet of Things (IoT) has the potential to enhance the transport sector by connecting vehicles, infrastructure and devices to provide real-time data enabling smarter traffic management, predictive maintenance and seamless multi-modal coordination.

- How might we use IoT devices and/or data to increase the connectivity of assets across the UK?

5. Quantum Technology

Quantum sensing, communication and computing have the potential to revolutionise the transport sector by enabling ultra-precise navigation, faster and more secure data exchange and advanced optimisation of complex multi-modal transport networks.

- How might we use quantum sensors to increase data reliability and availability across the UK?
- How might we use quantum communications to strengthen the cyber-physical security of assets across the UK?
- How might we use quantum computing to optimise the operation of complex processes and systems and increase reliability and resilience across transport modes?

6. Engineering biology

Engineering biology can help improve the transport sector by creating stronger, more durable and sustainable materials to help enhance asset resilience, reduce maintenance costs and support longer-lasting transport networks as well as offering new production routes to consumables like fuels.

- How might we use engineering biology to develop materials, improve transport infrastructure, and support operations across the UK?

OUT OF SCOPE

- Next generation batteries
- Mobility as a Service (MAAS) platforms
- Vehicle to Grid (V2G) charging

2.5. Open Call

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Open Call is to seek novel innovative ideas that fall outside the targeted challenges but have the potential to make a significant contribution to the UK's transport system. We want the innovations we don't yet know we need.

Our aims are to:

- support high-potential, cross-cutting innovations not captured by themed calls
- broaden the diversity of individuals and perspectives
- keep innovation activity agile and responsive to emerging challenges
- advance the UK's position in transport science, technology, and transport innovation

We particularly welcome applications that:

- Draw on multi-disciplinary or cross-sector collaboration
- Address complex, systemic challenges

Solutions that prioritise physical technologies (hardware) over purely digital approaches (apps/software) will be viewed more favourably. While digital solutions are not excluded, they are less of a focus for Open Call as they are largely addressed within the Critical Technologies and Digital Twins challenges.

PRIORITY SCOPE

1. Accessibility in Transport

A key priority for the DfT is embedding inclusive design across all modes of transport. This means ensuring that accessibility is considered from the earliest stages of infrastructure and service planning and/or retrofitted to existing infrastructure. Step-free access at stations, tactile paving, audible and visual information systems and intuitive wayfinding are all examples of how inclusive design is being normalised. By adopting a “design for all” approach developing products, services, environments and systems that are accessible to the widest possible range of users regardless of age, ability or background, the DfT aims to enhance transport accessibility and enable individuals to travel confidently across all modes.

How might we:

- Make transport more accessible so that all users feel empowered travel across all modes?
- Ensure consistent step-free access across all modes of transport, from first to last mile?
- Ensure rural areas receive the same level of accessible transport as urban centres?

2. Safety in Transport

The Department for Transport places safety at the forefront of its transport agenda recognising that a secure and reliable network is fundamental to public confidence, economic stability and sustainable mobility. Across all modes (road, rail, aviation, and maritime) the DfT's policies and investments are shaped by a

commitment to reducing risk, preventing accidents and protecting passengers, workers and the wider public.

How might we:

- Make journeys / transport safer for all users regardless of transport mode?
- Provide a safer environment for women & girls?
- Reduce collision risks between road users?
- Create safer, more effective travel infrastructure around schools?

3. Harnessing Innovations from other Sectors

The DfT recognises that the complexity of modern transport challenges requires solutions that extend beyond traditional sector boundaries. Issues such as decarbonisation, network resilience, accessibility and customer experience are shaped by technological, social and economic factors that intersect with multiple industries. As a result, the DfT is actively seeking to learn from and collaborate with other sectors to accelerate innovation and deliver more effective outcomes across the UK transport system.

How might we:

- Harness solutions from the health sector and apply to transport?
- Leverage innovative solutions in the construction sector which could be applied in transport?
- Use the capabilities of the creative sector (design, storytelling, immersive media, performance, architecture) to accelerate adoption of new transport innovations, to make transport more accessible and sustainable?
- Utilise proven agritech approaches such as distributed sensing, predictive analytics and system optimisation, sensing and forecasting to help transport operators better monitor assets, anticipate issues, and make smarter, lower cost operational decisions across the network?
- Adapt proven distribution and logistics solutions to help transport networks move people efficiently, reliably and sustainably, especially in rural areas?

OUT OF SCOPE

While the Open Call welcomes a broad range of innovative ideas, the following areas are less likely to be prioritised for funding in this round:

- Batteries
- Drones for freight

3. Competition Structure

Phase 1: Pre-qualification submission – 11th May to 5th June 2026

Applicants will have 4 weeks maximum to complete a short application focused on:

- Your organisation
- Due diligence process
- The challenge you address and the solution you will provide
- EDI data will be collected but this will not be used for scoring

Phase 2: Full submission - 13th July to 7th August 2026

Up to 212 applicants who scored the highest on the innovation criteria will be invited to complete their applications in 3 weeks focused on:

- The impact of the solution on the transport system, the environment, the society and the economy
- The team, budget and project plan - templates will be provided
- The scalability of the solution

Phase 3: Interview with DfT - Mid-October to November 2026

Up to 90 applicants will be invited to a 45-minute interview following the stringent but inclusive selection process. Applicants will be notified at least one week in advance and will be invited to prepare a 10-minute Power Point presentation covering the following:

- **The organisation/Team/Department** and any important facts about the organisation
- **The challenge addressed and the project:** The key outputs of your proposed project
- **Activity and budget:** Activities you plan to undertake and for what outcome, including spendings/costs.
- **Dissemination and stakeholder engagement** Example of a stakeholder group who has expressed interest or support for your product or service (Could be end users, potential buyers, collaborators, industry stakeholders)

The presentation will be followed by four standardised questions and ad hoc questions to better understand your project output, impact and your expectations from the programme.

4. How to Apply


4.1. Process

1. **Please read this competition guide and the T&Cs carefully**
2. **You can use the Word document provided on our opportunity page to help draft / prepare your answers but you need to submit your answers online.**
3. **Start your online application** by selecting “create your application”
4. **Name your application:** “Organisation name & three key words relevant to your project”. *E.g. Transport Ltd- Sustainable Aviation AI*
5. **Search for your organisation or create a new profile**

Search for your organisation

Organisation name

Registration country (required)


 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the) ▾

Registration number

Organisation profile

Organisation details *

Please provide your organisation's details to supplement your application.

 CONNECTED PLACES CATAPULT
London, GB

[Manage profile](#)

About

<https://cp.catapult.org.uk/i3p/>

1 Sekforde Street, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the), London, EC1R 0BE

01908359999

Large >250 Employees


Founded: 2019 | Established 6 - 10 years

Not For-Profit

Company registration number 11837978

VAT number GB320639032

Companies House check

 The company number "11837978" is registered as "CONNECTED PLACES CATAPULT"
[View company profile on Companies House](#)

Primary contact *

No primary contact selected

Choosing a primary contact is a requirement for submission, please select a contact to continue.

Trading address *

No trading address selected

Choosing a trading address is a requirement for submission, please select an address to continue.

6. You can **save draft** answers on the digital platform and collaborate with your colleagues.

7. **Proofread and refine:** Review your response for clarity, accuracy, and coherence. Ensure that you effectively communicate how your innovation embraces inclusivity for all individuals.
8. **Applications will close at 12:00 noon on 5th June 2026.** Late submissions will not be considered under any circumstances.
9. If you need any assistance, please contact us as early as possible, so we can support you.
10. Only the information available in your application form will be assessed. No other documentation should be attached to your submission unless this is requested.
11. Keep within the maximum word counts noted in each of the sections of the application form. Any content that exceeds the word count limit will be disregarded.

4.2. Due Diligence Section

In this section of the application, there are 10 pass/fail questions. If you fail any one of them, your application will not proceed to the next stage. We will review your company profile on Companies House and carry out standard due diligence checks to ensure your company information is correct.

4.3. Scored Questions

CORE PRINCIPLES

1. **Be specific:** The responses should be concise and to the point. Stick to the word limit while effectively conveying your proposal's core aspects.
2. **Be clear:** Use clear and straightforward language to convey your ideas. Avoid jargon or overly technical terms.
3. **Align with challenge scope:** Illustrate how your innovation aligns with the government's key challenges.
4. **Use scientific evidence and provide references** where applicable to support your statements.
5. **Be bold but realistic:** Your solution may have the potential to revolutionise the transport industry, but you must demonstrate that you have thoroughly researched the problem you are addressing and that you have the capability to deliver what you commit to by the end of the programme
Demonstrate a clear commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and sustainability throughout your application This should include how you have actively sought out a range of lived experiences and perspectives when designing your solution. This could include building a diverse team, collaborating with charities or organisations that represent different voices, or engaging with a panel of potential stakeholders and end users. The level of EDI consideration required may vary depending on the

nature of the solution and the extent of its interaction with, or impact on, people.

QUESTIONS

Challenge Description

Please elaborate how your concept aligns to the competition challenge you have selected above. (300 Words)

- **Clarify the Connection:** Explain which specific elements of the competition challenge your concept addresses.
- **Demonstrate Relevance:** Show how the objectives and features of your concept have potential to address the challenge. Demonstrate your understanding of the current market practice and why your idea is needed, including supporting evidence (e.g. research findings, user needs analysis).
- **Feasibility potential:** Indicate how your concept could be developed towards practical application (TRL 3 and above) and eventual adoption, while acknowledging its early stage.

Overall solution

Please provide a comprehensive description of the solution you are developing (300 words)

Include scientific evidence, or patent information that supports the uniqueness of your innovation.

- **Scientific basis:** explain the underlying science, logic and evidence that supports the concept. Reference experiments, literature, or analogous technologies where possible.
- **Cross-sector insights:** If applying methods from other industries, explain relevance and potential adaptation to the targeted area
- **Showcase innovation:** Highlight what is novel, e.g. technology, process or user-centred approach. Demonstrate how your idea stands out from existing solutions
- **Competitive landscape:** Explain how the concept differentiates itself from existing ones in the field, if any.

4.4. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Promoting equality of access to the competitions and supporting a diverse portfolio of companies is integral to Connected Places Catapult's EDI values. We seek to ensure that the organisations we work with are also committed to demonstrating EDI practices in both current and future projects and in the way they operate. We recommend all applicants demonstrate their commitment to EDI as best as possible in their application.

Following your application, you will need to demonstrate your commitment to upholding equality and diversity practices within your organisation.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion defined:

- **Equality:** ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities, and no-one is treated differently or discriminated against because of their personal characteristics. These are nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Diversity:** Encompasses the inclusion, engagement, and acknowledgment of the distinct needs of individuals from varied social, economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, as well as different genders, abilities, sexual orientations, religions, and more.
- **Inclusion:** Entails the creation of an environment where individuals or members of groups feel embraced, heard, esteemed, supported, and empowered to achieve their utmost potential, irrespective of their background, identity, or disabilities

4.5. Accessible Technology Readiness Guidance

TRL Level	Description	Explanation
1	Idea	At this stage, someone has a new idea. It's mostly thinking and brainstorming about what could work.
2	Concept	The idea has been a little more thought out. People start to figure out how it might work in theory, but it's still just on paper.
3	Early Testing	The first small tests are completed to see if the idea works in a basic way. It is like testing if the pieces of a puzzle fit together.
4	Basic Prototype	The technology is built into a small, basic version. This is like making a rough model of a new gadget, just to see if it works in a controlled setting, like a lab.
5	Advanced Testing	The technology is getting more advanced. It's still in the lab, but the tests are more realistic and show that it can work outside the lab, too.

6	Real-World Prototype	The technology is tested in a real-world environment, but only in a small way. Think of it as taking that gadget outside the lab to see how it works in a place where it would be used.
7	Final Prototype	The technology is nearly ready. It's being tested in the real world, but on a larger scale. All the major problems have been solved, and it's close to being the final version.
8	Ready for Use	The technology has been fully tested and works well. It's almost ready to be sold or used widely but might still need some fine-tuning.
9	Fully Operational	The technology is now complete and is being used in the real world as intended. It's fully operational and reliable.

5. Application Assessment

After the deadline, only applications passing the due diligence process will be formally assessed for Phase 1. Connected Places Catapult reserves the right to declare applications as unsuccessful or out of scope.

Notification of Assessment Outcome

You will find out whether you've been successful for

- Phase 1 in July 2026
- Phase 2 in October 2026
- Final award in January 2027

Kindly note that we will be unable to provide feedback if you are not successful for Phase 1 and 2 due to the expected large volume of applications.

The final number of projects funded in each challenge will depend on quality of applications, alignment to the DfT's policy needs, and the overall value of the ideas put forward. **The final selection decision will take into consideration a broader portfolio approach across all challenges.**

It is the lead applicant's responsibility to inform their project partners and collaborators (if any) about the outcome, and to distribute the funding accordingly if successful.

SCORING CRITERIA

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%

- The idea and output are new, more sustainable, more accessible or have unique features
- The idea and output will effectively address the selected challenge
- The idea and output have been clearly described

Impact – 30%

- There is clear evidence of a positive impact, particularly on DfT’s priorities, the transport system, on the environment, society and the economy.
- Primary potential negative impacts have been anticipated and are covered by a mitigation plan

Team, Budget and Project Plan – 30%

- The team brings relevant skills and experience to the project
- The team is appropriate given the size and scale of the proposal
- Relevant external partners are contributing valuable expertise to the overall skill set
- The budget provides value for money
- The project plan is achievable within time and budget and clear risks and mitigations have been considered

Scalability – 10%

- The innovation will integrate with existing transport systems and infrastructure
- Applicant understands their market, clients, stakeholders and end-users
- There is a clear route to disseminate and increase market adoption of the solution

6. Programme Participation

If you are successful in winning a TRIG grant, you will be sent a **conditional grant offer letter and additional documentation** that you must sign and return by the deadlines that will be communicated in due course in January 2027 and before the start of the programme.

Failure to do so will result in a possible withdrawal of the participation offer.

- Projects must begin on 1 February 2027 without delay
- Please ensure you can deliver the project and actively engage with the programme from start to finish: February 2027- June 2027. In addition, attending the programme showcase and completing the follow-up impact survey are both mandatory.
- Attendance at the monthly virtual Connect session is expected between February 2027 and June 2027
- Each team must submit a monthly report
- Attendance at the launch event in March 2027 is required
- Attendance at the TRIG Showcase event in September 2027 is required (travel and subsistence cost can be pre-booked and paid for and added to the grant funding statement alongside receipts)
- Project end dates must allow sufficient time to meet final reporting deadlines
- Final project report must be submitted by 13 June 2027
- Grant claim form and financial evidence must be submitted by 27 June 2027
- You must participate in post-programme surveys to contribute towards programme monitoring and evaluation

Dates and Timelines

Please note the dates and deadlines for the competition below. These are indicative timings; we will adhere to this schedule as best as possible. The closing date for applications is **5th June 2026, 12:00 noon**.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Extensions will not be granted under any circumstances.

Competition Opens	11 th May 2026
Competition Closes	5 th June 2026, 12:00 noon
Phase Two Application	July-August 2026
Interviews	October - November 2026
Project (if successful at interview stage)	February 2027 – June 2027

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