

# **Clean Transport Accelerator: Maritime Application Guidance**

## Introduction

### About this Document

This application guide will provide supporting information to help applicants to complete and submit a high-quality application.

The information contained in this document is also available as a recorded **application support webinar video** on the Connected Places Catapult YouTube channel and can be accessed directly through the channel or via the link on the opportunity webpage.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to support the completion of your application or have any other questions, please email [iwona.wilk@cp.catapult.org.uk](mailto:iwona.wilk@cp.catapult.org.uk).

### Eligibility

Successful applicants to the programme must:

- be a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)
- be UK-registered
- have a solution which is technical readiness level (TRL) 5 – 8. This means that the solution has, at least, been tested or demonstrated in its intended environment and, at most, has been deployed as a first-of-a-kind commercial system
- address at least one of the identified challenges
- already operate in the maritime sector, or are looking to bring your solution into maritime space from another sector
- be willing to travel on occasion for face-to-face meetings such as the Welcome Day on the 22nd of September 2026.
- be available to actively participate in the programme activities between September 2026 and March 2027 inclusive.

### Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

This programme celebrates Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), not just because it is the right thing to do but because it leads to better decisions, better innovation and makes our working life more rewarding and productive.

We hold EDI to include the characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 {Age; Sex (and Gender); Race (and Ethnicity); Disability; Religion or belief; Sexual orientation; Gender reassignment; Marriage or civil partnerships; Pregnancy and maternity}, as well as other historic barriers to opportunity, such as “class”, nationality, dialect, education and other forms of socio-economic exclusion.

The Programme is committed to carrying the following initiatives to uphold EDI principles:

- Provide a level playing field for all innovators seeking to apply to participate in the programme by anonymising application forms and implementing a fair, standardised scoring process.
- Drive a human-centred approach when tackling real world challenges.
- Foster an open and inclusive environment for businesses joining the Programme.
- Offer advocacy and collaboration opportunities to reduce barriers to innovation.
- Encourage a range of perspective in our shortlisting and due diligence process by selecting diverse assessment panels.

## Application Guidance

### General Guidance

1. Please carefully read this guidance document or watch the application guidance webinar video prior to preparing your application.
2. **Applications must be submitted before 12pm on 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2026. Late submissions will not be accepted or considered.**
3. Please review the assessment scoring criteria section in this guidance document as this will provide clarity of what evidence to provide in your responses to maximise your score.
4. Assessors with a broad technical knowledge across different areas of transport and technology will mark your application. **You should therefore write clearly in plain language, avoiding acronyms and obscure jargon.**
5. **Your responses** to questions in the Programme-specific and Trial-specific sections **should not disclose your name, your company name, or name of any person(s) working at your company.** Complete anonymity reduces the potential for bias and discrimination during the application assessment process and ensures that evaluations are based only on the credibility and suitability of your responses for this programme.
6. Only the information included within your application form is subject to assessment.
7. Your application will automatically save so you can return to edit later.
8. Please 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 excluded from your submission.
9. Please ensure you have read and understood the Terms & Conditions set out on the website before submitting.

## Application Process

**Stage 1:** After the competition deadline, only applications that meet the eligibility criteria and scope of the competition will be formally assessed. Connected Places Catapult reserves the right to declare applications as out of scope of the programme. You will only be notified at this stage if your application does not meet the eligibility criteria. Otherwise, your application will progress to Stage 2.

**Stage 2:** Applications that progress to stage 2 will be scored in line with the scoring criteria below by at least two expert assessors from the Connected Places Catapult. Up to 13 applicants will be shortlisted for Stage 3 - an interview. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by the **11<sup>th</sup> of August 2026.**

**Stage 3:** On-line interviews will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2026. You will be provided with a virtual Teams meeting link and interview guidance ahead of the interview if you are successfully shortlisted. The interviews will comprise a 10-minute presentation and then a Q&A session for us to clarify any points from your application from a commercial or a technical perspective. Regrettably, we may not be able to accommodate specific requests for interview slots, therefore it is imperative that you keep your diary as open and flexible as possible on these dates.

**Feedback:** Where possible, and depending on application numbers, feedback to unsuccessful applicants from Stage 2 may be provided. However, only applicants that progress to Stage 3 (interview) will be guaranteed a breakdown of the scores achieved for each section of the application form.

## Assessment Scoring Criteria

### Scoring Criteria

This section details the criteria our assessors will use when scoring your application. Under each criterion there is a maximum score of 5 available.

#### **Solution & Innovation (20%)**

Questions: *Has the applicant clearly explained the solution? Is the solution feasible? Has the solution got high potential to address the challenge? Is the product innovative with clear unique selling points? Is the IP protected through patents, copyright, or trademarks?*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- The clearly described solution is feasible and has the potential to deliver a high level of impact for the identified target customers.
- The application clearly describes a high level of innovation with defined Unique Selling Points.
- The application has provided detail around how their innovation compares with existing solutions to demonstrate the solution's uniqueness.
- The applicant provides clear detail around how the Intellectual Property within their innovation is/ will be protected.

#### **Market & Traction (15%)**

Question: *Does the SME have evidence of the market need for their solution? Has the SME demonstrated their competitive advantage vs. existing solutions in the market? Has the applicant identified any commercial risks, and do they have a robust mitigation plan? What traction has already been made in the market? Has revenue been generated using this solution or have any related contracts been signed?*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- The application includes a highly credible approach to identifying and quantifying the addressable market.

- The application provides detail around existing and future customers (including early adopters)
- Strong evidence is provided around traction in the market (i.e. actual sales, grants, potential collaborations, interested parties, evidence of intent and investment raised)
- A high level of experience and supporting evidence of delivering trials and Proof of Concepts (PoCs) is provide by the applicant.

### **Team (15%)**

Question: *Has the team demonstrated the required skills, experience and capability to scale the business? Has the team got capacity and resources necessary to fully participate in the programme? Is the business committed to upholding equality and diversity practices in its team?*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- An outstanding team with experiences and capabilities which provide a high level of confidence that the solution can be delivered successfully.
- Clarity about the members of the team that will engage in the programme and their capacity to do so.
- More than one key member with extensive sector knowledge and/or previous entrepreneurial success (e.g., founders with 10 + years industry experience, successful exits, and unique skill sets).
- Existence of a credible approach to EDI within the business.

### **Impact (15%)**

Questions: *What is the applicant's key objective for the programme? What does the applicant envisage are the main impacts that their solution will have for the maritime industry? Is their approach to evaluating their potential impact reasonable.*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- A clear understanding of the areas that your business would most benefit from the business support aspects of the programme
- A well-founded approach to calculating and communicating the benefit and impact that your solution could have on the maritime industry
- Clearly articulated benefits and impact of your solution to programme partner(s) and the maritime industry

### **Trial Proposal & Feasibility (15%)**

Questions: *Is the applicant's proposal realistic and feasible within the programme's timeframe and support scope? Has the applicant thought through what's needed to move toward or deliver a trial? What outcomes or impact do they anticipate, how will they measure success? Have they anticipated any risks and ways to mitigate them?*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- Credibility - the project/trial is articulated to a high level with key milestones identified
- Risk and Mitigation - an acknowledgement of possible external trial constraints (operations, infrastructure, certification etc.) has been provided
- Project Feasibility – proposed project is likely to be very successful
- Project Finance - the allocation of budget provides confidence that the project can be delivered successfully

### Programme Fit (20%)

Questions: *Does the SME offer a solution that can help solve one or more of the challenges of the programme? Is the SME at the right stage in their growth to benefit from the programme? What are the applicant's objectives for the programme? Are the applicant's expectations of the programme realistic?*

To achieve the highest score under this criterion, your application should demonstrate the following to our assessment panel:

- Very strong fit to challenge statements and corporate long-term strategies.
- The proposed use-case presents a great opportunity to accelerate and add value.
- Great evidence for how the programme could add value, including skills development, working with client and partners, support with investment and funding etc.

### Dates and Deadlines Overview

Please see below a summary of the dates and deadlines for the competition. These are indicative timings, and we will adhere to this schedule as best we can. **The closing date for applications is fixed and will be 12pm on 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2026.**

Competition opens	16 June 2026
Briefing webinar	30 June 2026
Competition closes	12pm, 28 July 2026
Stage 2 outcome notification to applicants	11 August 2026*
Stage 3: Clarification Interviews	17, 18, 19 August 2026
Stage 3 outcome notification to Applicants	20 August 2028*
Onboarding, Business Needs Assessments & Partner intros	August/September 2026
Welcome Day	22 September 2026

\*Please note, on occasions there may be small delays in notifying of the outcome at each stage of the application process.

### Contact Details

If you have any questions about the programme, please contact:

Primary contact: Iwona Wilk, Programme Manager – Clean Transport Accelerator: Maritime; iwona.wilk@cp.catapult.org.uk.

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**We wish you luck with your application!**