

Clean Futures Accelerator 2024

Application Guidance

1. Introduction

The Clean Futures Accelerator is a 6-month, challenge-led programme whereby businesses in the West Midlands clean transport sector will be paid £50k for pre-procurement services, with a requirement to provide up to £50k of in-kind match funding to develop and test their solutions. The programme aims to accelerate the transition from fossil fuelled transport to clean and sustainable transport systems, while bolstering innovation and investment in the West Midlands region.

To learn more about the Clean Futures Accelerator, please visit our [website](#) and read the challenge specification PDF.

This programme is run as a Pilot and is subject to the [terms and conditions](#) set out on the website under the 'How to Apply' section.

About this Document

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

2. Eligibility

The Clean Futures Accelerator is open to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in existing supply chains as well as those looking to move into new sectors. The programme also welcomes bids from consortiums of partners, with a lead applicant who will be the funding recipient.

Applicants **must have** the following.

- A UK company address
- An innovative technology or solution at TRL 5 or above.
- Demonstrable alignment to one of the challenges being addressed by this programme.
- A willingness to travel to face-to-face meetings and events in the West Midlands.
- A willingness to complete a development, testing or a demonstration of your solution in a real or relevant environment, using the BCIMO or Coventry University test sites. You can find more information on the partner test sites here: [BCIMO Facilities](#), [Coventry University Facilities](#).
- A willingness to match-fund your project (up to £50k) with in-kind support (e.g., labour, materials)

Applicants **will ideally** be also:

- Based or operate within the WMCA catchment area

West Midlands Presence

Ideally, applicants will already have an operational presence in the West Midlands, and we emphasise that most successful applicants will have a registered office there (although this need not be the HQ). Applicants not currently operating in the region must;

- a) aspire to deploy their resulting technology or solution in the region
and
- b) expect regional impact from this deployment, in the way of future jobs or investment opportunities.

Applicants based and/or operating outside of the West Midlands with aspirations to conduct technology development testing in the region as part of the accelerator, but no intention of creating an on-going presence, would not meet the eligibility criteria.

Please note that by applying, you accept that any resulting offer of a place on the programme shall be subject to the provisions of this guidance document and the terms outlined in the [Terms and Conditions](#).

3. Application Guidance

General Guidance

- Carefully read this guidance document whilst preparing your application.
- You can access the application form on the [Programme Page](#).
- Your responses to questions in the Solution, Innovation, Market Understanding, Team, Traction and Sustainability 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.
- Only the information in your application form will be assessed as well as additional attachments where requested.
- Your application will automatically save so you can return to edit later. You can access this on your [Profile Page](#).
- Applications must be submitted before midnight on **Sunday 9th June 2024**. Due to implications on timescales, late submissions cannot be accepted.

- Applications will be assessed from 10 June –14 June 2024. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by 21 June 2024 and provided with a 2hr interview invitation slot between 24 June - 4 July 2024. Please keep this week free if you are planning to apply for the programme.
- 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.
- 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. This will be available to view within the document from Monday 13 May.
- Please ensure you have read and understood the [Terms & Conditions](#) set out on the website before submitting.

Application Questions

As part of the Clean Futures Accelerator, successful applicants will be paid up to £50k (with a £50k in-kind match) to deliver projects that will develop and/or test their innovative solutions. Section 2 of the application form should detail your plan for delivering this 4-month project (which will run from October 2024 – February 2025). At the start of the programme (Mid-August – Mid-October 2024), you will be required to work with technical experts from our consortium partners to create an operationally sound development/testing project proposal.

For the programme's assessment panel to accurately evaluate your application, we require the following information.

- An understanding of how you will create impact within the West Midlands region – any presence, plans, or strategic objectives you have to rollout operations within the region (question 30)
- A description of your solution – what it is, how it works and why it is needed (question 33).
- How the solution is innovative and how it is different to competitive technology (question 34).
- The sustainability credentials of your solution across all three scopes of emissions as classified by [GHG Protocol](#). (question 38)
- The traction you have already achieved in the way of sales, contracts, and collaborations (question 36).
- Information about the team that would work on the project (question 37).
- A high-level outline of what a future development or testing project could look like within either BCIMO or Coventry University's facilities (question 39 & 40). If successful, a detailed project proposal will need to be agreed between your company and related partner by mid-October 2024.

- The impact the solution has already generated or is likely to generate in the future (question 41).
- A project budget that details the direct costs associated with this work (question 42).

Question 29. Reasons behind the challenge(s) selected - This question seeks to understand the main motivation for your project, i.e., you should clearly describe the problem or challenge you are seeking to address. You must clearly articulate why you consider this to be a high priority challenge for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and why it is a major barrier within the industry. You should not give full details of your innovation here; however, you should focus on why it is needed. Discuss what the possible unmet need or shortcoming is in the current practice. Any evidence you can give us will strengthen your applications.

Question 30. Place based innovation – This programme is funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, and as so has a focus on regional improvement and impact. Therefore, this question seeks to understand how you will create impact within the West Midlands Combined Authority region. Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Plans for driving growth within the region
- Operations you already have within the region
- How you would rollout further operations within the region
- Commitments you are making to the region
- Strategic objectives you have within the region

Questions 31 and 32. Technology/Manufacturing Readiness Levels – It is helpful for us to see where your technology currently sits in its development. This will allow us to determine the level of support you may need to bring it to market and measure the rate of growth between the start and end of the programme.

Question 33. Solution - Tell us all about your solution in this section, in layman's terms. **What is it, what does it do and how does it work?** You can also include:

- How your solution could contribute to sustainable transport.
- How your solution will impact your target end users and meet the needs identified in your previous engagement activities.

Question 34. Innovation – For this question you need to provide a strong case for why and how your solution is innovative. For example, does your solution apply existing technologies in new areas, is it about developing new technologies for existing areas or is it a completely novel approach? You should explain what solutions currently exist and how yours is different, i.e., your application must provide details of its competitive advantage over any existing solutions.

Make sure you explain how your solution will advance and improve the current state of play within the industry and provide evidence of how or why your innovation or

solution is likely to work. You should also tell us whether you have protected your IP through patents, copyright, or trademarks.

Question 35. Market understanding – In determining the validity of your solution, our assessment panel would like to understand the market potential for your solution, as well as any risks (these may be regulatory risks, supply chain risks, competitor risks or market dependant risks) involved for your solution and how you plan to mitigate them.

Question 37. Team – You should describe the roles, skills, and relevant experience of the project team, including any sub-contractors.

Question 38. Sustainability Credentials - As the Clean Futures programme centres on clean and sustainable solutions, in this question we would like you to describe to the best of your ability the sustainability credentials of your solution across all three scopes of emissions as classified by GHG Protocol. These are:

- Scope 1 emissions are the direct emissions from owned or controlled sources
- Scope 2 emissions are the indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy
- Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions, not included in Scope 2, that occur in the value chain of the reporting company.

Reference to the pros and cons of the solution in relation to these quantified as much as possible across each scope would be beneficial. You can find further information and guidance on these sustainability standards [here](#).

Question 39. Trial Summary - please provide a one paragraph summary explaining what you will be developing or testing and what the outcomes will be. We have linked further information on both [Coventry University's facilities](#) and [BCIMO's facilities](#). Please include;

- Which testbed partner you will complete your trial with
- How you would utilise that partner's facilities
- Your motivation and objectives for the trial
- Any key requirements for the trial
- Expected outputs from the trial

Question 40. Test Project Design – Following the proposal phase (during which our cohort will design a testing or development project), participants will be given the opportunity to carry out their project using the facilities available at our partner test sites. Therefore, it is critical for us to be able to determine from the outset how your project might look. Please give a high-level project design detailing how you would develop and test your technology or solution. You should include:

- The proposed timeline for development and deployment.

- The characteristics of the testing environment you might require.
- The input that would be needed from our partners (for example, data, infrastructure, equipment etc).
- A list of datasets or data parameters that will be required to develop and test your solution.
- Any deployment support you may require from the Catapult partners and/or third parties.
- Key risks or challenges you foresee.
- Your thoughts on what you hope to learn from this development or testing project.

Please feel free to upload any supporting documentation.

You can find links here to the [BCIMO](#) and [Coventry University](#) testing facilities.

41. Expected Impact and Evaluation – Please tell us how you would go about evaluating the impact of your technology or solution, i.e., how you plan to measure its effectiveness in increasing sustainability. How will you know that your technology has been impactful, and why is this important?

42.b Project Finances – This question asks that you download the attached Project Finance table and upload it with your programme specific costs. Please:

- **Project Finances** - Indicate your project expenditure grouped by Categories in the Project Finance table. Costs listed in this table should be exclusive of VAT.
- **Total Match-Funding table** – Include additional cash or in-kind resources which your project will be contributed to the trial over and above the funding that you received.

Match funding example, if you are requesting £50,000 of funding through the programme, you must demonstrate how you will contribute £50,000 of in-kind match funding (through labour, materials etc...) to the programme.

In-kind match funding can be committed through resources, labour, travel, materials or any additional costs and expenses you foresee in the trialling of your solution.

Projects should demonstrate value for money. All cost information provided should be clearly explained and all rates must reflect fair market value. Sub-contractor and material costs should be justified. A reasonable daily rate for staffing would be approximately £200 per day. Therefore, in instances where this rate is higher, please provide an explanation as to why the staff member is critical to the project.

Additional programme financial guidance:

You can invoice up to £50K excluding VAT (if you are VAT registered) for your work done in this programme. An additional £50k will need to be contributed in-kind by the applicant or applicants as match funding. **This means that the total value of all projects will be at least £100k.**

CPC will be procuring the services for the programme under a pre-commercial Pilot & Trial contract. Once the contract has been signed, the Catapult will provide you with a Purchase Order number which must be clearly noted on all invoices.

If you are VAT registered, please include the appropriate VAT on your invoice.

4. Assessment Scoring Criteria

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.

Applications that progress to the assessment stage will be reviewed by at least three expert assessors from the Connected Places Catapult and our partner organisations - BCIMO and Coventry University. Assessors with a broad technical knowledge across different areas of transport and technology will mark your application. You should therefore write clearly in layman's terms, avoiding acronyms and obscure jargon.

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

- Programme Fit (25%)
- Trial Plan (25%)
- Solution (20%)
- Traction & Investment Readiness (15%)
- Team (10%)
- Business Model (5%)

Following the initial assessment, several applicants will be shortlisted for interview. Interviews will take place from the **24th June to 4th July 2024**. With regret, we will be unable to accommodate individual requests for interview slots. You will be provided with Interview guidance.

Notification of Assessment Outcome

Following the initial assessment, up to 30 applicants will be shortlisted for interview. Interviews will take place on 24 June – 12 July 2024. You will be provided with a virtual joining link and interview guidance no later than close of business 21 June 2024 if you are successfully shortlisted. Regretfully we will be unable to accommodate specific requests for interview slots, therefore it is imperative that you try to keep your diary as open and flexible as possible on these dates. Only applicants that progress to the interview stage will be given a breakdown of the scores achieved for each section of the application form. Connected Places Catapult reserves the right to declare applications unsuccessful and out of scope. Once the selection decisions have been made, we regret that we are unable to offer follow up meetings or further feedback for unsuccessful applicants.

If your project is successful, you will be sent a 'Pilot Participation Agreement' (see sample copy available by clicking on [Terms & Conditions](#)) that you must sign and return, along with any additional documentation that is requested within stated timelines. Please note that if you are the lead applicant in a consortium, you will need to inform the other collaborators and partners about any selection decisions.

There will be a project kick-off event to discuss the details of the project and how Connected Places Catapult and our partners can support you on 19th August.

5. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

This programme celebrates Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I), 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 more productive. All partners are committed to fostering ED&I in our workforce, our partners, suppliers, and innovators.

We hold ED&I to include the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 including Age, Sex & Gender Identity, Race & Ethnic Identity, Disability, Religion & Belief, Sexual Identity, Transgender & Non-Cisgender Identity, Marriage & Civil Partnerships, Pregnancy & Maternity, as well as other historic barriers to opportunity, such as nationality, dialect, education, and other forms of socio-economic exclusion.

The Clean Futures Accelerator programme is committed to upholding ED&I principles and does so through the following approaches:

- Provide equal opportunities for all innovators seeking to apply to participate in the programme by requiring anonymity on application forms.
- Implementing a standardised scoring criteria and assessment process.

- Cultivate diversity of thought throughout the programme by assembling diverse assessment panels during selection and selecting diverse mentors & specialists during programme delivery.
- Foster an open and inclusive environment for participants and alumni.
- Offer advocacy and collaboration opportunities to reduce barriers to innovation.

6. Project Reporting

Project Proposal

At the end of the first two months of the programme, you will be expected to produce a project proposal that details your plan for developing and or testing your technology or solution. The proposal should be written and presented to a professional standard and suitable for non-specialists, with all acronyms and unavoidable technical language clearly explained.

Progress and Final Reporting

Throughout the programme you will be required to provide regular progress reports highlighting opportunities, issues, and risks. At the end of your project delivery period, you will be expected to provide a final report detailing your outcomes, impact, and futures exploitation plans. There will also be a survey for you to complete which ask about your experience of participating in the programme.

Financial Reporting

You will be asked to please keep evidence of your project costs, and all invoices will require a breakdown of costs.

Half-way through the programme and at the end of the programme, you will be asked to complete a Statement of Expenditure, this is used to keep a record of your funding costs.

7. Payment Schedule

To enable your fees to be paid, you will need to raise an invoice and send this to us. The Catapult will provide you with a Purchase Order number which must be clearly noted on all invoices.

Payments are staged. An up-front payment of **70%** (~£35k) will be made to enable the start of the project in September 2024. At the end of the project in February 2025, the remaining **30%** (~£15k) will be paid once your end of project report has been approved. Invoices will have to be provided for the payment to be released.

Only fees incurred between project start and end dates will be paid.

8. Dates and Deadlines

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 fixed and will be midnight on **Sunday 9th June 2024**.

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

Competition opens	30 th April
Application Support Webinar	15 th May
Competition closes (application deadline)	9 th June
Notification to shortlisted applicants	21 st June
Interviews	25 th June – 4 th July
Feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants	w/c 15 th July
Contracts issued	w/c 22 nd July
Acceptance of funding (returned signed contract)	12 th August
Welcome Day	7 th November

9. Contact Details

If you have any questions about the programme, please get in touch with our Clean Futures team via email –

hannah.fortune@cp.catapult.org.uk or harriet.muscroft@cp.catapult.org.uk

We wish you luck with your application!