STATION INNOVATION ZONE COMPETITION

Abstract - Please read this document before completing the application form

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Station Innovation Zone Competition is a 2-Phase programme that aims to support innovative concepts that facilitate a better rail station environment. The competition is addressing 3 challenge areas.

In the first phase, up to 10 innovators will be selected and awarded **£2k** to conduct a feasibility study which examines the suitability of their technology for rail station application. During phase 1 we will provide support and coaching to enable these innovators to write a proposal for testing their solution in a live environment.

In the second phase, 3 of these innovators will then be granted further funding to deploy their solution in the testbed in order to measure their effect on the challenge, demonstrate impact and build the case needed for scaling.

1.2 The Station Innovation Zone Competition provides 100% funding and is open to all businesses including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to support demonstrator projects which will increase accessibility.

1.3 The Station Innovation Zone Competition will be delivered by the Connected Places Catapult. The Catapult will play an active role in various aspects of the call and will offer successful projects additional market exploitation support throughout the funding period.

1.4 This Station Innovation Zone Competition seeks to drive accessible and inclusive opportunities in the urban, transportation and mobility sectors. The competition will ask applicants to consider their own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) practices in an effort to help foster a future diverse innovation system that enables and inspires improvements in EDI across the United Kingdom.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 In order to apply to the Station Innovation Zone Competition scheme, you must be:

- Based in the UK; and

- a business of any size

2.2 Product or technologies must be at least at TRL / MRL 4 at the point of application. This means that you have at least an initial offering or prototype and must have a good understanding of the challenge their product or technology addresses.

2.2 The Connected Places Catapult will consider proposals from consortia. However, a lead applicant, who will be the recipient should be identified.

2.2 Applicants making more than one application will need to demonstrate an ability to deliver the projects concurrently.

HOW TO APPLY

2.5 Carefully read this guidance document and the programme specification document before preparing your application.

2.6 Complete your application form on our online application page.

2.7 Only information in your application form will be assessed. No other documentation should be attached to your submission unless this is requested.

2.8 Applications must be submitted by **13th November**. Late submissions will not be considered.

2.9 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.

2.10 Please note that by submitting an application, you accept that any resulting funding offer shall be subject to the provisions of this guidance document, the terms outlined in the contract.

2.11 Applicants requiring assistance in completing the application or alternative forms of accessing the application should contact the project team as early as possible during the open application process to allow for appropriate support and sufficient time for the completion of the application.

HOW TO APPLY

2.12 In addition to the information included in the application form, further guidance on what should be included in your response to the application form question is given below. You should also refer to the assessment scoring criteria section as that will help to maximise your score.

QUESTION 24 | SOLUTION: HOW YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE

2.13 For this question you need to provide a strong case as to how your innovation meets the challenge set out in the previous question, along with solid supporting evidence. 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? Innovative proposals could include:

- Technology, processes and/or services.

- Concepts or solutions from other sectors that could be applied to improve the rail industry.

You should note what solutions currently exist and how your proposed innovation is different. Your application must provide details of its competitive advantage over any existing solutions. Explain how your solution will advance and improve the current state of play within the industry. Provide evidence of how or why your innovation or solution is likely to work. Supporting evidence should be included where appropriate.

QUESTION 25 | TRL / MRL

To establish a project's suitability for the Station Innovation Zone Competition, we ask you to indicate its TRL / MRL at the point of application.

Technologies or solutions should start at TRL / MRL 4 and should aim to progress to TRL / MRL 7 by the end of the project.

QUESTION 26 |TRIAL

2.14 In order to assess the suitability of your technology, we need to see an overview of what a future trial could look like. Please provide details on what data, input or infrastructure will be needed for you to complete your project in a live environment.

2.15 In your answer, please:

o Indicate the proposed timeline for development and deployment.

o Specify the number and type of participants, and/or the character of the testing environment which you might require.

o Tell us how you plan to engage and work with the partners and local users? What activities will take place?

o Detail any support or partners you will work with, should deployment support be required from third parties.

o Detail how you intend to monitor and evaluate the experiment.

o Please feel free to upload any supporting documents.

QUESTION 28 |TEAM

2.16 Who is in the company and how many full-time employees are there? What are the roles, skills and experience of the team carrying out this work?

QUESTION 29 |TRACTION

2.17 Use this question to give an overview of your market traction. Please explain how you are planning to scale. Provide examples of companies that you are currently working with in this industry.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MONITORING

2.18 Promoting equality of access to the competitions and supporting a diverse portfolio of companies is integral to Connected Places Catapult. We seek to ensure that the organisations we work with are also committed to demonstrating EDI practices in both current and future projects and operations. We recommend all applicants demonstrate their commitment to EDI as best as possible through their own initiatives.

2.19 Answers to questions 17 and 18 will demonstrate your commitment to upholding equality and diversity practice within your organisation.

HOW YOUR APPLICATION IS ASSESSED

2.20 After the 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.

2.21 Applications that progress to the assessment stage will be reviewed by at least three expert assessors the Connected Places Catapult.

2.32 Assessors with a broad technical knowledge across different areas of the industry and technology will mark your application. You should therefore write clearly in layman's terms, avoiding acronyms and obscure jargon.

2.24 This programme operates on an open and transparent basis; applications will be assessed against the scoring criteria, detailed in this document.

2.25 Following the initial assessment, a number of applicants will be shortlisted for interview. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss your application and how you will deliver the project effectively. You must be able to satisfy Connected Places Catapult that your methodology is likely to deliver the results sought.

2.26 The final decisions will be made upon completion of all Interviews.

NOTIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

2.27 If you are the lead applicant, you need to inform the other collaborators and partners about any funding decisions.

2.28 Only applicants that progress to the assessment stage will be given a breakdown of the scores achieved for each section of the application form.

2.29 Connected Places Catapult reserves the right to declare applications unsuccessful and out of scope.

2.30 Once the final decisions have been made, we regret that we are unable to offer follow up meetings with unsuccessful applicants.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

2.31 You will be sent a conditional contract and No Subsidy Declaration that you must sign and return.

2.32 Any additional finance documentation that are requested will need to be completed and returned within stated timelines.

2.33 There will be a project kick-off meeting within two weeks of awarding the funding to discuss the details of the project and how the Catapult can support you during the project delivery period.

3. MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL

3.1 The Station Innovation Zone Competition is designed to support the development of initial prototypes, proof of concept or a feasibility study that demonstrates an innovative solution to industry challenges.

3.2 The Station Innovation Zone Competition funding route is intended to support projects that are at or above TRL / MRL 4 on the Market or Technology Readiness Level (MRL or TRL) scale (see Figure 1). The aim of the funding is to enable innovators to progress towards TRL / MRL 7 by developing a functioning real-world demonstrator (or pilot system) in an operational transport environment. We would therefore welcome projects that aim to develop technologies from TRL / MRL 4, 5 or 6 to TRL/ MRL 7.

CATAPULT
Connected Places

MRL 0 — IDEA
You perceive a need within a market and something ignites.

MRL 1 — BASIC RESEARCH
You can now describe the need(s) but have no evidence.

MRL 2 — NEEDS FORMULATION
You articulates the need(s) using a customer/user story.

MRL 3 — NEEDS VALIDATION
You have an initial "offering".

MRL 4 — SMALL SCALE STAKEHOLDER CAMPAIGN
Run a campaign with stakeholders ("closed beta" – 50 friendly stakeholders).

MRL 5 — LARGE SCALE EARLY ADOPTER CAMPAIGN
Run a campaign with early adopters ("open" beta – 100 intended customers).

MRL 6 — PROOF OF TRACTION
Sales match 100 paying customers.

MRL 7 — PROOF OF SATISFACTION
A happy team and happy customers give evidence of progress.

MRL 8 — PROOF OF SCALABILITY
A stable pipeline and strong understanding of the market allow revenue projections.

MRL 9 — PROOF OF STABILITY
KPIs surpassed and predictable growth.

TRL 0 — IDEA
Unproven concept; no testing has been performed.

TRL 1 — BASIC RESEARCH
You can now describe the need(s) but have no evidence.

TRL 2 — TECHNOLOGY FORMULATION
Concept and application have been formulated.

TRL 3 — NEEDS VALIDATION
You have an initial "offering", stakeholders like your technology.

TRL 4 — SMALL SCALE PROTOTYPE
Built in a laboratory environment.

TRL 5 — LARGE SCALE PROTOTYPE
Tested in intended environment.

TRL 6 — PROTOTYPE SYSTEM
Tested in intending environment close to expected performance.

TRL 7 — DEMONSTRATION SYSTEM
Operating in an operational environment at pre-commercial scale.

TRL 8 — FIRST OF A KIND COMMERCIAL SYSTEM
All technical processes and systems to support commercial activity in ready state.

TRL 9 — FULL COMMERCIAL APPLICATION
Technology on 'general availability' for all consumers.

4. FUNDING RULES

4.1 Subsidies

Subsidy rules apply to schemes like the Station Innovation Zone Competition. In principle, subsidies are not allowed under the UK's various trade arrangements with other countries. However, some subsidies are beneficial to the economy and support growth and other policy objectives. Subsidies can be given to support a wide variety of activities including research and development, environmental protection and aid for small to medium-sized businesses. The subsidy rules allow for aid to be granted which is necessary to deliver growth and other important objectives.

4.2 No Subsidy

In order to minimise distortion of competition the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement sets limits on how much assistance can be given to organisations operating in a competitive market. This allows an organisation to receive up to 325,000 Special Drawing Rights (approximately £344,600) of state support over a rolling 3 fiscal year period without a subsidy being deemed to have been granted. 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 funding support given to you under this scheme does not constitute a subsidy.

Public aid also includes assistance such as free or subsidised consultancy services, marketing advice etc.

4.3 Independent Audit Reports

Please be aware that should you be selected for the second phase of the competition, you will be awarded up to £40k to conduct an operational trial on a station testbed. The funding will be split into two tranches: one up-front payment and one final payment at the end of the trial period. Before we can release the final payment, we will require an Independent Audit Report (IAR) that will adequately reconcile your project expenditure against receipts and timesheets. This needs to be completed by an independent auditor of your choosing and will come at an additional cost.

5. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

5.1 The ownership of any intellectual property to emerge from the project will reside with you. However, you will be expected to agree that Connected Places Catapult may disseminate any information or know-how learned from or created as part of the project among persons or bodies who have responsibility for similar projects.

5.2 You will be expected to agree that such persons may share and use freely all such information, know-how, systems or processes for their own purposes.

5.3 We hope that successful Station Innovation Zone Competition projects reach the market as new solutions and steps will be taken to prevent any disclosure of intellectual property which might damage its value.

6. FINANCE SUMMARY

6.1 Payments are staged. An up-front payment of £2k will be awarded to cover costs during phase 1. Should you be selected for the second phase of the competition, you will be awarded further fundings to conduct an operational trial on a station testbed.

7. DATES AND DEADLINES

7.1 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 **13th November.**

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

Competition opens	17th October 2022
Application support webinar	21st October 2022
Availability of webinar recording	24th October 2022
Competition closes (application deadline)	13th November 2022
Notification to shortlisted applicants	30th November 2022
Interviews	5th – 15th December 2022
Notification and feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants	20th December 2022
Contracts issued	20th December 2022
Acceptance of funding (returned signed contract)	6th January
Projects start	January 2023

8. ASSESSMENT SCORING CRITERIA

8.1 This section contains the assessment scoring criteria for applications. You should refer to this section to help them write good quality applications and to maximise your score.

8.2 Applications will be assessed to ensure you have all the appropriate skills and expertise to successfully carry out the project.

8.3 The scoring guide below and the assessment criteria give indicative marks. Assessors are free to use the full range up to the maximum score per question.

8.4 Should there be several projects with the same scores, preference will be given to those projects receiving the higher scores for question 2, demonstrating a high level of innovation.

8.5 The applications will be marked on their responses to the following five questions;

o   Solution

o   Trial proposal

o   Impact

o   Team

o   Traction

For each of the five categories, there is a maximum score of 5 points available. Scores will be calculated using the assessment factors listed under each question.

In cases where two applications are level pegging in terms of the scores, higher consideration will be given to the more diverse project team.

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Solution	30%
Trial proposal	30%
Impact	20%
Team	15%
Traction	5%

8. FAQ's

1 How much funding is available?

The Station Innovation Zone Competition will fund £2k per company for up to 10 innovators in phase 1.

In phase 2, we will provide further funding to support for up to 3 projects to trial.

2 When will payment be made?

Payments are staged. An up-front payment of £2k will be awarded to cover costs during phase 1. At the end of the phase 1, a payment will be made to the organisations progressing to stage 2.

3 Can we add a profit margin?

No. Funding is paid to research a concept or technology, not provide profit. This is early-stage funding to help to provide proof of concept. Therefore, the only claim that can be made is for costs incurred during the research process.

4 What is state aid?

Please refer to Section 4 of this guidance regarding state aid, which is now referred to as 'Subsidy'.