

New Funding Coming Soon For SMEs To Innovate In UK Rail

May 31, 2023



New funding and commercial support are on the way for SMEs in the West Midlands to help them to develop innovative products and services that help meet UK rail's most pressing carbon reduction and sustainable manufacturing challenges.

The Clean Futures (CF) Accelerator is a pioneering new initiative to drive economic growth and innovation by supporting SMEs in the transport sector. The multimillion pound programme aims to stimulate investment in new products for the transition to Net Zero.

It will support SMEs in existing supply chains or those looking to move into new market sectors. Selected SMEs will be provided with technological and development assistance for their products, as well as business support to ensure market readiness and investment opportunities – receiving funding towards developing their rail and related supply chain technology.

The CF Accelerator is ideal for innovative SMEs interested in capitalising on the opportunities created by the grand challenges of clean transport, and contributing to the transformation of the West Midlands region into a hub for clean technology innovation and economic growth.

To ensure sustainability and long-term benefits, the CF Accelerator will establish the Clean Futures Catalyst, bringing together the wider West Midlands innovation community to the region's capacity for clean technology across all sectors. It will support the development of a pipeline of capable innovators for future accelerator programs and engage local businesses, industry partners, service providers, and local government bodies in making the region a leader in the technologies required for cleaner industry and transport.

Be the first to hear about the CF Accelerator

Participants on the new Fast Track 4 Rail Innovation (FT4RI) programme will be the first to hear about the CF Accelerator funding and exciting opportunities available when it is announced soon.

FT4RI is a two-day programme being offered free of charge to the region's SMEs to help them understand the rail industry and take advantage of funding and new business opportunities. Particularly in areas of innovation that can help the railways to meet clean energy and net zero targets. And it is geared at owners and leaders either already involved in rail manufacture, innovation, and new product development, or those looking to diversify into rail.

It is being delivered by the **Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation** (BCIMO) in partnership with the **University of Birmingham's Centre for Rail Research and Education** and **Innovate UK Edge**. The first programme took place in May and was hailed by business owners and leaders in the region as "invaluable", "fascinating" and "a real-world education in doing innovative business in rail".

A second free FT4RI programme takes place at BCIMO from Wednesday 7 to Thursday 8 June 2023. Places are still available and if you are a business owner or manager in the West Midlands looking to take part you can [register your interest here](#). The programme is free to companies based in the Black Country and its borders, have less than 250 employees and a turnover of less than £50 million per year. And you'll be the first to hear about the new funding that's coming soon.

Register your interest for the CF Accelerator

The Accelerator is a collaboration between Coventry University, Connected Places Catapult, the Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation, and CU Services Limited, along with other partners from the wider ecosystem. More information about the Accelerator is coming soon.

[Register your interest for the Clean Futures Accelerator here.](#)