

# Rail Forum Gears Up for Launch of Second SME Challenge

October 8, 2020



The banner for the Rail Forum Midlands 2020 Annual Conference features the following text and logos:

- Rail Forum MIDLANDS** (with a stylized orange swoosh)
- 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October**
- Annual Conference**
- Now Online!**
- Registration open to members [www.midlandsrail.co.uk](http://www.midlandsrail.co.uk)**
- RFM PATRONS** (header for the sponsor logos)
- MTMS** (logo with a train icon)
- resonate** (logo with a colorful cube)
- porterbrook** (logo with a blue square icon)
- ISS Labour** (logo with a blue square icon)
- SNC • LAVALIN** (logo with a blue square icon)
- BOMBARDIER** (logo in a black box)
- ELASTACLOUD** (logo with gears)

A yellow diagonal banner in the top right corner reads **Register today!**

As part of the Rail Supply Group’s programme to deliver the Rail Sector Deal, Rail Forum Midlands (RFM) is gearing up to launch their second SME challenge project under the Rail Sector Deal Midlands Pilots workstream.

Supported by Tarmac, a major end customer for rail freight together with the University of Derby and several freight related clients including DB Cargo, ERMEWA, Freightliner, GBRailfreight and VTG this new ‘challenge’ will focus on ‘Opportunities for Decarbonising Freight’. Network Rail are also actively supporting the challenge.

SMEs will be encouraged to collaborate to identify opportunities that will help the drive towards decarbonisation through for example: data management and telematics, improving existing and new technology on locos and wagons, driver management and path improvements and finally terminal management and associated improvements.

The online launch event will take place on 21st October where details on the challenge together with the process and timeframes for SMEs to respond will be presented.

Chris Swan, Head of Rail at Tarmac said: “The Construction industry has a key role in supporting the economic recovery and our desire is to help ‘build back better’. Our commitment to rail is vital to this as we look to move more tonnage in the future. The great work done by the University of Derby has shown that, as well as increasing the amount we move, it is vital that we look to improve our rail operation and this type of collaboration is an excellent way for us and our partners to collaborate with SMEs in the supply chain to deliver real benefit to the rail freight market, in the short, medium and long term.”

Elaine Clark, CEO of RFM added “The challenge is open to ALL SMEs; you do not need to be a member of RFM to get involved. You must however be prepared to work collaboratively with other SMEs to develop a response to this challenge.

“We are really excited to be working with such a fantastic group of companies on this project, at a time when our SME supply chain is looking for increased opportunities, potential growth, and greater security. RFM will act once again as the facilitator, bringing companies together and creating partnerships to look at all possibilities around decarbonisation in the rail freight market.”

To register to attend the event please visit the [RFM website event page](#)

For more information on this new opportunity and the first challenge, contact RFM on [RSD@midlandsrail.co.uk](mailto:RSD@midlandsrail.co.uk) or visit [www.midlandsrail.co.uk/railsectordeal/](http://www.midlandsrail.co.uk/railsectordeal/).

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