

Developing low carbon automotive capability: apply for funding

This Advanced Propulsion Centre and Innovate UK competition is looking for projects that demonstrate the development of on-vehicle technologies for on or off-road vehicles.

Cutting emissions

Projects must either accelerate the development of low and zero tailpipe emission capable technologies, or demonstrate a significant reduction in carbon dioxide emissions leading to air quality improvements.

Proposals should align with the UK's [Industrial Strategy](#) and must demonstrate how high value R&D will take place in the UK as a result of this funding.

The Advanced Propulsion Centre is particularly looking for projects that support the UK's long-term supply chain, associated capabilities and growth aspirations.

This includes, improving productivity and competitiveness in the design, build and manufacture of low and zero tailpipe-emission capable vehicles.

Economic impact

If your application can demonstrate a positive impact on the UK economy it will take priority.

This can include projects that will make a major investment in:

- creating new supply chains supporting the transition to electrification and zero emission vehicles
- adding resilience to existing supply chains
- delivering a UK-centric high value manufacturing and sourcing footprint
- lowering the overall cost of goods sold to customers
- joining together (simplifying) less productive or mature elements of existing UK supply chains
- attracting new companies into the sector
- risk screening and due diligence to identify risks in the proposed supply chain developments
- improving the manufacturing readiness level of your technology

Automotive focus

Your project must concentrate on the automotive market as its primary application.

The project must be directly focused on or relate to one or more of the

following strategic technology themes:

- alternative propulsion systems
- electric machines and power electronics
- energy storage and energy management
- lightweight vehicle and powertrain structures
- thermal propulsion systems that deliver substantial improvements

Competition information

- the project must be led by a UK business
- it must be based in the UK
- it must involve at least one micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)
- it must include a vehicle manufacturer or tier 1 supplier
- total eligible costs must be 50% match funded and between £5-40 million

[Meet Highways England's control room operator and star baker](#)

But by night, Saima Shahzadi swaps the multiple computers and takes on a very different role by cooking up a treat with mouth-watering cakes, many of which have helped to raise hundreds of pounds for charity.

The 41-year old from Bearwood has worked as a control room operator for Highways England in Birmingham for the past 13 years.

I love what I do because it's nice to make a difference and to know that you have helped to keep people safe, says Saima.

We want everyone to get home safe and well and my job is key to that by monitoring CCTV, working with our traffic officer service on patrol and working with partners during incidents to make sure they don't come to any harm. My role is about helping to get traffic moving as quickly and safely as we can.

Saima is a keen baker and says it helps her to unwind when she leaves work.

She recently found her love of baking some five years ago and has been doing it as a hobby ever since.

There are some days when it's been really busy and when I get home

I like to bake because it helps me to unwind and take my mind off work.

Saima added:

Concentration is key to my job and it is the same with baking because you have to keep an eye on various things, often all at the same time. I like to think that I'm able to juggle lots of different things and deal with multiple deadlines all in one go.

Outside of work, I really enjoy the challenge of creating something different and I am always keen to try and support charity events by baking, she adds.

It's nice to know that I have helped to raise money for good causes and in doing so, help those less fortunate than myself. And if people enjoy the taste, that's even better.

Saima is also backing Highways England's recent safety campaign aimed at drivers – in one of the busiest times of the year for breakdowns on England's motorways.

New data from the company shows more than 48,500 motorway breakdowns happened over the summer holiday period, between the final week of June and the first weekend of September last year.

Around a quarter of summer breakdowns are caused by punctures or other tyre issues. Vehicles running out of fuel and engines overheating are also other common reasons for breakdowns on motorways.

In her job, Saima often helps stricken motorists who contact her via the orange SOS telephones at the side of motorways.

She added:

The summer is always a very busy time for the control room staff and we're often speaking to motorists that have either run out of fuel or because a vehicle has broken down. It's really important that people carry out basic vehicle checks before setting off to make sure they can reach their destination safely and help to keep everyone moving on England's motorways.

Highways England is advising drivers that regular car checks help avoid breakdowns.

Check tyres

prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressures are suitable for the load and the condition of your tyres, including the

spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit.

Check engine oil

Use your dipstick to check oil regularly and before any long journey, and top up if needed. Take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual.

Check water

To ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen.

Check lights

If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself and your family at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MoT.

Check fuel

Before setting out, check your fuel levels and make sure you have enough to get to your destination.

Highways England has also issued five basic safety tips to follow if your car does break down on a motorway:

- Get away from the traffic. Exit the motorway or get to an emergency area or hard shoulder and use the free phone provided.
- If that's not possible, move left onto the verge.
- Get out of the left side of your car and behind the barrier if you can and it is safe to do so.
- Get help – contact your breakdown provider or Highways England on 0300 123 5000.
- If you break down in moving traffic and cannot leave your car, keep your seatbelt and hazard lights on and call 999.

Read more information about [driving on motorways](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Substantial director bans in 2018/19

In this news story, Gareth Allen, Assistant Director for Investigation and Enforcement Services, explains the process of directorship disqualifications, while also looking at the trends amongst those people who received substantial directorship disqualifications in 2018/19.

Being a responsible director

So you've decided you want to incorporate a limited company. You've picked the company's unique name and you have appointed yourself and maybe a colleague as directors.

Documents have been prepared and you know what records you need to keep but before you register your company, did you know that having the title of director is more than just having something impressive on your business card?

It involves certain duties and responsibilities that continue until the moment you resign from your position.

As a director of a limited company, you must follow the company's rules, shown in the [articles of association](#), [keep company records](#) and [report changes](#), [file your accounts and your Company Tax Return](#), pay [Corporation Tax](#) and tell shareholders if you might personally benefit from a transaction the company makes.

You can hire other people to manage some of these things day-to-day, such as an accountant or operations manager. But at the end of the day you're still legally responsible for your company's records, accounts and performance – the buck stops with you and your fellow directors.

If you fail to meet your responsibilities as a director, you may be fined, disqualified or even prosecuted.

Disqualification proceedings

The Insolvency Service may investigate your company or you personally as a director of your company if it's involved in insolvency proceedings or if there's been a complaint.

If we determine that you haven't followed your legal responsibilities, we will write to you explaining your misconduct and that we are intending to start the disqualification process.

You can either contest the allegations in court, which could lead to a disqualification order or you can provide a voluntary disqualification undertaking, putting an end to court action.

If you're involved in disqualification proceedings, you could be banned from being a director of a limited company or even involved in the running of a company, for anywhere between 2 and 15 years.

In addition to being subject to a range of disqualification restrictions, which you can [read more about here](#), your details will be published online on GOV.UK and if you are found to breach your restrictions, you could be fined or worse still – sent to prison for up to 2 years.

A focus on substantial disqualifications in 2018/19

Since April 2014, the average length of a disqualification is 5.7 years. There are occasions, however, where directors will receive more substantial bans.

During 2018/19, 70 people received Section 6 disqualifications – bans for unfit conduct in relation to an insolvent company – of between 11 and 15 years. For the purposes of this article, we will call them 'substantial disqualifications'.

77% of substantial disqualifications were undertakings and the majority were for 11 (39%) and 12 (33%) year bans. But 6 people did receive the maximum 15-year term.

43% of the substantial disqualifications in 2018/19 involved some form of tax misconduct, such as VAT fraud. Other examples of misconduct included dubious investment schemes and directors breaching a previous ban.

The types of industries the directors and their companies were connected with varied, covering construction, retail, food and drink, real estate and technology (computers, electronics, telecommunications).

Of those individuals with substantial bans in 2018/19, a significant proportion were in their 40s (36%) or 50s (30%) but in 2018/19, we did see 2 people under the age of 30 and another 2 people over the age of 70 receive a lengthy disqualification.

And in terms of location, London was the biggest hotspot seeing 19% of substantial bans, with the West Midlands in second place having a 10% share. 3 disqualified directors were even registered to countries outside of the United Kingdom.

Publicising disqualifications

When we write to directors informing them that we believe they haven't followed their legal responsibilities, we outline that we may take the decision to publicise their disqualification and the reasons for the ban.

All disqualifications are publicised on the [Companies House disqualified directors register](#). Where we believe it's in the public interest for people to know about a director's misconduct and we want to deter other directors from committing the same offences, we will send out a press release before

publishing it on GOV.UK. We also use our social media channels, [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#), to engage with a wider audience.

Here are some examples of press releases where we have highlighted substantial disqualifications:

[UK farm's garlic hot sauce pleases palates across Europe](#)

The Isle of Wight Garlic Festival took place over the weekend (17-18 August) celebrating the UK's most treasured pungent vegetable and one of the most popular culinary ingredients in the world.

The garlic at the festival was grown and provided by multi award-winning The Garlic Farm – a third-generation farming business based in Newchurch that is finding success across Europe thanks to its innovative range of over 60 garlic-based food and drink products.

The company has secured over £20,000 worth of sales to Germany, Sweden and Denmark over the last year with this figure estimated to grow by at least 25% over the next two.

The Garlic Farm's most popular export product is 'Vampire Slayer Seriously Hot Sauce' which is flying off the shelves in the German and Swedish markets.

Barnes Edwards, Managing Director at The Garlic Farm said:

In all cases, demand and our local reputation has driven our exports as we have been approached by customers directly resulting in a steady and sustainable compound growth in our export markets.

It is great to be able to represent the UK abroad. We are very proud of what we do, and it is great to get this validated by being selected by international buyers. If we can find success overseas so can other UK food producers.

The business's range of fresh products include white garlic bulbs, garlic grappes, garlic plaits, smoked garlic, black garlic and seasonal garlic products such as elephant garlic, green garlic and scapes, with the farm's ambient collection including everything from garlic sauces, chutneys and butters to garlic beer, vodka and ice cream.

All recipes are developed by the farm to make the most of its garlic's

spectrum of flavours and then made by various specialist producers across the south of England.

Christina Gotzl, Founder of North Parade in Sweden said:

I have been importing from The Garlic Farm since 2014 because of the high-quality ingredients and innovative flavour combinations. Their condiments and relishes find a natural space in the Swedish larder, enhancing Swedish staples, with one of my best sellers being Vampire Slayer which is loved by heat seeking consumers. The Garlic Farm provide continuity, quality and great taste which is why I only ever import from small UK producers.

I would say to producers that are considering exporting – don't be afraid. I mean most of us importers have our own deals regarding transport and logistics so basically there's no difference in selling to Sweden as it would be selling to Manchester. Also, working with DIT has been invaluable as they are supportive and always have time for us, so I presume they've got time for exporters as well!

The Garlic Farm has 55-70 employees in the Isle of Wight which fluctuates depending on the time of year and has delivered double digit revenue growth for the past 5 consecutive years, with exporting accounting for an increasing percentage of this total.

Ben Raby, Head of Region – South East at DIT said:

We're delighted to see The Garlic Farm finding success in the European market and showcasing South East Food and Drink on the global stage.

DIT has a network of expert International Trade Advisers on hand to help more producers respond to this demand and navigate the entire exporting process.

Many businesses have already benefited from the service that we offer, and we aim to inspire many more to explore new markets overseas.

New process for Statement of Case submissions and Statement of Common Ground

For s.78 planning appeals following the inquiries procedure, there is now new guidance and a new process for the submission of the Statement of Case and Statement of Common Ground.

The changes relate to [recommendation 2](#) and [recommendation 7](#) as outlined by Bridget Rosewell in her report on the independent review of planning appeal inquiries.

With these two important aspects of the inquiries process now in effect, we have today made the guidance available.

Recommendation 2:

The Planning Inspectorate should work with representatives of the key sectors involved in drafting statements of case to devise new pro formas for these statements which can then be added to the new portal and include, where appropriate, the introduction of mandatory information fields and word limits.

The new [Statement of Case guidance](#) provides a guide for Appellants to follow. A digital proforma will later be available with the launch of the new portal that is being developed by the Inspectorate.

Recommendation 7:

MHCLG and the Planning Inspectorate should substantially overhaul the approach to the preparation of statements of common ground.

The new [Statement of Common Ground](#) guidance sets out several changes in approach including:

- Appellants must submit a draft main statement of common/ uncommon ground upon appeal submission.
- Within five weeks of the start date, the LPA must submit an agreed main statement of common/uncommon ground. A suggested format is provided in the guidance and will later be available on the new portal.
- A topic-based approach to ensure that disagreement on some matters

between parties does not hold up the submission of agreed positions on others.

- Early identification for areas of disagreement.

We have updated our [appeals procedural guide](#) to reflect the changes to the process.

The diagram shows the key steps and timeframes for appeals following the inquiries process. This includes the changes implemented as a result of the inquiries review.