

[News story: Making energy clean, affordable and secure: apply for funding](#)

Businesses can apply for a share of £13 million for innovative projects that address the issues of cost, emissions and security of supply.

The Energy Catalyst has up to £13 million to support innovative market-focused projects in the energy sector both in the UK and in developing countries.

This competition is cofunded by the [Department for International Development](#), the [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#) and the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#). It is being run by Innovate UK.

Rapid change in energy systems

Energy systems around the world are facing rapid change. There is a clear need to address the challenge of providing energy that is clean, affordable and secure at the same time.

The competition aims to help UK businesses to grasp the opportunities on offer through meeting the challenges facing the energy sector. There are 3 types of award for projects that are at an early, mid or late stage of development.

This is the fifth round of the Energy Catalyst. More than 200 projects with a total value of £200 million have already been funded in the previous 4 rounds.

Competition information

- this competition opens on 24 April 2017, and the deadline for registration is midday on 21 June 2017
- the competition is open to any UK organisation and may involve international partners
- research organisations may lead early stage projects but all projects must include a business. Mid-stage and late-stage projects must be led by a business working with at least one partner
- project costs can vary between £50,000 and £10 million depending on the stage and can last between 1 and 3 years
- businesses can attract up to 70% of their project costs
- briefing events will be held in London, Birmingham and Glasgow in April and May 2017

[News story: Autonomous supply to military front line: apply for contracts](#)

Businesses can apply for a share of up to a possible £3 million for supplying the military front line through autonomous systems

The [Ministry of Defence](#) is to invest in projects that look at ways of using autonomous systems in the 'last mile' of the supply chain to front-line military operations.

Up to £1.5 million is available in the first phase of the competition. There is up to an additional £1.5 million in phase 2 that includes proposed system designs. This will only be available to projects funded through phase 1.

A third phase could include a longer period of trials and evaluation of promising proposals.

Last mile supply

Last-mile resupply involves delivery of combat materials from a physical base or logistics vehicle and is often challenging because of the hostile and contested environment. Although described as last-mile, real-life distances could be up to 30km in some instances.

Current ways of supplying the front line involve transport aircraft, helicopters, large trucks, trailers with quad bikes and soldiers on foot.

The challenge areas

This funding competition is particularly looking for solutions in 3 challenge areas:

- unmanned air and ground load-carrying platforms
- technologies and systems that allow load-carrying platforms to operate autonomously
- technologies to autonomously predict, plan, track and optimise re-supply demands from military users

The competition is for fully funded contracts under SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative).

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is midday on 21 June 2017
 - the competition is for fully funded development contracts
 - phase 1 contracts are likely to be worth between £40,000 and £80,000 and last up to 6 months
 - a networking event for potential applicants will take place on 23 May 2017
 - there will be a webinar for potential applicants on 30 May 2017
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[News story: Encouraging cycling and walking: apply for business funding](#)

Organisations can apply for a share of up to £470,000 for innovative proposals to encourage people to make more journeys by bike or on foot.

Up to £470,000 is available for organisations with innovative projects that lead to people walking and cycling more. Innovations may include technology, infrastructure, manufacturing or behavioural change.

This is a [Small Business Research Initiative](#) (SBRI) competition. It has 2 phases. Up to £170,000 is available for phase 1, and up to £300,000 for phase 2.

Natural choice for shorter journeys

The government's vision is for cycling and walking to become the natural choice for shorter journeys. The [Department for Transport](#) (DfT) is funding this competition and is inviting proposals which:

- remove current barriers to walking and cycling
- encourage people to make more journey stages to by bicycle or on foot

Removing the barriers

The government's [draft cycling and walking investment strategy](#) sets out ambitions to:

- double the total number of cycling stages made per year by 2025
- increase walking activity to 300 stages per person per year by 2025

To meet these aims, DfT intends to focus on:

- better safety – safety and safety perceptions are among the biggest barriers for people wanting to take up cycling and walking
- better mobility – to make cycling and walking normal, easy and enjoyable, we need better links and networks to key destinations
- better streets – well-designed and accessible streets can encourage people to walk or cycle more as part of their daily routine

Competition information

- this competition opens on Wednesday 19 April 2017, and the deadline for registration is midday on 7 June 2017
- this competition is open to individuals, groups and organisations, but is particularly suitable for early-stage, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- industry partners such as local government, independent and third sectors can carry out the project on their own or with others
- total project costs can vary between £25,000 and £100,000 and up to 15 weeks to up to 9 months, depending on the phase
- there will be a briefing event for potential applicants on Tuesday 24 April 2017

[Press release: Welsh Secretary gets set for the London Marathon](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will be lacing up his London Marathon running shoes for the sixth time this Sunday (23 April) as he prepares to take on the 26.2mile course around the capital city.

Mr Cairns was the first MP to cross the finish line in 2014 (3:34:16), 2015 (3:38:25) and again in 2016, clocking a personal best time of 3:28:02 and placing him in seventh position on the all time list of MP runners.

Alun Cairns said:

Every person who takes to the streets to run the London Marathon will be doing so for a very individual reason. Whether it's to set a personal best, to raise money for a cause, to remember a loved one, or to simply realise a dream, it will be a reason that provides a constant source of motivation during those cold, hard months of training!

One month on from the Westminster attacks, we will see thousands of people lining the streets of London, all in support of those taking part and galvanising this nation's mindset that we will never give into terror or change our way of life.

I am looking forward to joining the thousands of runners taking part – to celebrate the city of London, to raise money for two good causes – and to perhaps pick up a PB along the way!

Notes to editors:

- Mr Cairns will be raising money for two charities in 2017. Heads Together is a group of mental health charities working to remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues. He will also raise money for Age Connects in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- To donate, visit the [Virgin Money Giving page](#)

[News story: HMS Enterprise returns home after three years on Navy operations](#)

During her time away she helped to stop people smuggling across the globe, saved thousands of lives at sea, and protected Britain's interests.

Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mike Penning said:

During her three years deployed away from the UK, HMS Enterprise and her ship's company have helped make the world a safer place.

From disrupting people smuggling in the Mediterranean to assisting in the free flow of trade in the Gulf, and from providing reassurance to our overseas territories to surveying the world's oceans, she has epitomised how the Royal Navy is protecting the UK's global interests.

In almost three years she has steamed 150,000 nautical miles, visited 20 countries, and navigated four of the seven seas.

LH Payne with his twins girls Summer and Amelia

HMS Enterprise's epic deployment began in June 2014, when she headed to the Mediterranean on a routine deployment. At the time, growing unrest in Libya led to the UK government encouraging British citizens to evacuate, and Enterprise was tasked with rescuing more than 200 people from Libya.

She was then tasked with conducting survey operations in the Gulf and southern Red Sea, joining the continuous Royal Navy presence in the region which works to secure some of the most vital shipping lanes in the world and protect Britain's economy.

It was during this time that teams from the ship volunteered to visit an orphanage in India, helping to refurbish several classrooms, build some swings and even fix a trampoline.

Enterprise later moved to the Mediterranean where she joined the naval force set up to deal with people smuggling. Over the course of the following year, the sailors on board destroyed over 100 unseaworthy craft rescued over 9000 people. As a result she was awarded the Firmin Sword of Peace, the Naval Capability Prize and the HM Efficiency Award, as well as receiving a personal commendation from the Chief of the Defence Staff.

P0 Everson accepts the Firmin Sword from Minister for the Armed Forces Mike Penning

Following the heat of the Mediterranean Enterprise was re-tasked to the South Atlantic to stand in for Falkland Islands patrol vessel HMS Clyde during her refit in South Africa.

The ship, and her crew of 78 sailors, returned to Devonport today for the warmest of welcomes from friends and families. Commander Philip Harper, Commanding Officer of HMS Enterprise said;

The crew of HMS Enterprise are justly proud of the work they have done since deploying, and the wide variety of operations will be hard to match in the rest of our careers.

At the same time, we are all really looking forward to coming home. The results of our deployment speak for themselves and we are all eager to spend some time with our families before the ship deploys again later this year.