

Q&As

- **Can a company submit more than one project idea?**

Yes, you can submit more than one project idea. Each idea should align to a single challenge and clearly articulate how it supports the desired outcomes and benefits

- **Where can I access the list of key challenges and desired outcomes?**

The list of challenges will be shared in our next webinar on the 21st Oct. After the webinar they will be published on our National Highways Open Call webpage as a PDF and in accessible HTML page. Please feel free to register or if you cannot join follow updates to get to the recording and ask any questions.

- **Are you engaging with the NH sponsored Cambridge Uni Future Roads R&D programme?**

We have not directly engaged with Cambridge Uni Future Roads R&D programme.

- **Is this an appropriate channel for submitting projects that are in the very early stages of development?**

We will consider all project ideas at any stage of the innovation pathway, from identify opportunities to deploy solution (our pathway can be found on our [guidance page](#) and it is based on the pathway of the ISO 56000 standard). The aim of the challenge-led approach is to solve prioritised business challenges and build a programme that supports it. We assess ideas based on alignment and building a balanced programme that includes big bet (high effort, high impact) and short/medium/long time to value horizons (i.e. benefits realised in 5 years, 10 year, 10+ years).

- **How is the procurement approach structured for the Open Call?**

This information can be found on our [guidance page](#)

Our open call is a multi-phase process designed to support both opportunity identification and opportunity delivery. In the initial phase, we invite ideas to solve prioritised business challenges and help shape our future programme. These ideas will be assessed against our assessment criteria and may inform future delivery opportunities.

Following assessment, a Pre-Market Engagement (PME) Notice will be published via the Find a Tender service. All interested parties should register via our [Jaegger portal](#) for immediate notifications of those notices, to test market interest and capability. The procurement route will then be determined based on the responses received:

- If only one viable response is identified, the opportunity may proceed via direct award.
- If multiple viable responses are received, the opportunity will be taken forward through a competitive tender process.

Please note: Submission of an idea does not imply or guarantee that the submitter will be contracted to deliver it. This approach enables early identification of high-potential ideas while ensuring a fair, transparent, and compliant route to delivery, in line with public procurement regulations.

- **How is intellectual property managed throughout the process?**

We do not ask you to share any intellectual property information for the Open Call initial submission. The project description is limited to 300 words, and we ask to give a high-level explanation of how your idea would support solving the problem. For example, in the case of *Reducing whole life carbon cost of a material or asset*, we want to know how your solution support solving the challenge for instance by using a low carbon material or a construction method and an estimation of the potential carbon reduction. This without disclosing commercially sensitive information.

If an idea is prioritised and a procurement exercise is initiated, Intellectual Property will be managed according to a combination of contractual terms, legal frameworks, and our Information Management System. In addition, there will be the opportunity to engage with suppliers in pre-procurement engagement discussion concerning intellectual property. In contracts Intellectual Property can be managed with specific IP-related clauses. Please note that National Highways follows government-wide guidance on IP, which emphasises licensing over ownership.

- **Can individuals seconded to National Highways be project sponsors?**

Yes, it is possible for individuals seconded into National Highways to be project sponsors. These individuals' experience and expertise will need to meet expectations for successful management of the project from National Highways perspective and they will need to have access to relevant IT systems.

- **To support proposals of solutions are you able to provide any data on the chemical emissions associated with the laying of asphalt? (Ones that would affect respiratory health/illness)**

National Highways does not hold specific data on chemical emissions associated with asphalt laying. While research exists on potential health impacts, this is not an area where National Highways maintains its own dataset. This highlights the importance of research and innovation projects that build the evidence base to inform effective risk management across the sector.

- **What is the frequency of the calls - if these challenges do not cover the innovation proposed?**

The challenge led approach sets a clear direction for programme development and investment of our Innovation and Research Designated Fund. The challenges are identified and prioritised with the business to support business priorities and long-term ambitions.

Open calls will be at minimum annually but may be more frequent as we move to a rolling programme. These five challenges will shape our next programme but do not reflect all priorities across National Highways. The challenge pipeline will remain agile, evolving to support different priorities and long-term ambitions through future open calls.

Projects will only be funded through our Innovation and Research Designated Fund that meet the acceptance criteria, which considers alignment and creating a balanced portfolio. Please see our guidance for further details.

- **If our innovation spans multiple business challenges, would we need to repeat it for each or just submit once?**

Please do not send the same project idea submission multiple times. If a project idea can address multiple challenges, please prioritise the one that has stronger alignment. Each idea should align to a single challenge and clearly articulate how it supports the desired outcomes and benefits.