

Accessibility Technology Research Innovation Grants 2021

Grant Specification

Introduction

DfT's Accessibility Team is seeking to advance promising new products and services that have the potential to significantly improve access to transport services and increase confidence in travelling. This is being delivered through the Accessibility Technology Research Innovation Grants (A-TRIG) Programme 2021 launched on the 3rd November 2020. We are looking to run an open call offering grant funding for at least three projects up to an individual project value of £120k.

Eligibility

A-TRIG provides 100% funding and is open to all businesses (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) to support demonstrator projects which will increase transport accessibility. The Department seeks genuinely innovative solutions and would welcome bids from organisations outside of the transport sector or consortia that can see a role for their technologies, tools and approaches in delivering benefits in this space.

In order to apply to the A-TRIG scheme you must be:

- Based in England; and
- a business of any size

Please also note:

- The Department will consider proposals from consortia. However, a lead applicant, who will be the grant recipient, should be identified.
- Previously unsuccessful applicants are welcome to apply again with improved/ revised bids.
- Applicants making more than one application will need to demonstrate an ability to deliver the projects concurrently.

Scope

This document provides details of the scope of the funding calls within the 2021 A-TRIG competition. Applicants are advised to consider these specifications along with the guidance document to ensure the application questions are addressed appropriately. The A-TRIG funding route is intended to support projects that are at or above TRL 4 on the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale. The aim of the funding is to enable innovators to progress towards TRL 7 by developing a functioning real-world demonstrator (or pilot system) in an operational transport environment. We would therefore welcome projects that aim to develop technologies from TRL 4, 5 or 6 to TRL 7.

Project proposals should clearly highlight the innovative and novel aspects of their proposed transport solution. The solution could well be a completely novel idea or approach. However, approaches or innovations from other areas, applied in a novel way to transport, are also of interest. All applications must be innovative and focussed on science, engineering or technology to solve a transport accessibility challenge. Projects must have an innovative aspect, although this does include products being used in innovative ways outside of their original intended use.

Projects supported through this A-TRIG funding call must deliver a robust assessment of the transport benefits that their proposals can bring. Successful applications will need to clearly demonstrate the following:

- What transport challenge(s) the innovation is aiming to solve.
- Evidence of state-of-the-art innovation being carried out in practice.
- That the team has the skills and expertise to deliver the project plan.
- Potential for delivery of tangible transport and/or commercial opportunities for the UK.

Examples of the type of projects that could be considered under this funding call are detailed below.

- 1) Bus Identification – technologies that allow vision impaired passengers to be able to identify that it is their bus arriving at the bus stop or that alert drivers that at there is a vision impaired passenger wishing to travel.
- 2) Accessible information on-board buses. For example:
 - a. Cost-effective and operationally viable alternatives to the audible and visible information that is currently provided.
 - b. Personalised audible and visible information, such as a means of connecting a mobile phone to an onboard system in order to receive information in a user's chosen format or language. This would be especially helpful for people with dual sensory loss, where it is difficult to provide information in a format which would work for them.
- 3) Incident Reporting – technologies that enable individuals to report inaccessibility issues, and where issues can be tracked through to resolution. For example:

- a. An app or responsive website for the reporting of transport inaccessibility (including, for instance, taxi and PHV refusals, or failed assistance on other modes).
 - b. Integration of a reporting facility within a mainstream app environment.
- 4) Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Accessibility – making it easier for wheelchair users to find appropriate vehicles. For example, an app or website for putting people in touch with drivers or operators of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- 5) Wayfinding – whilst the TfL-sponsored Wayfinder system has been trialled in several rail settings, it is yet to be trialled in on buses and remains unavailable to everyday passengers. Therefore, projects such as the following would be useful:
 - a. An operational implementation of beacon based (or similar) wayfinding in a large bus station with multiple stands and perhaps minimal staff.
 - b. Accessible mapping of transport terminals, again, including large bus stations.
 - c. Wayfinding for people with cognitive impairments or who respond more effectively to visual representations.
- 6) We would also welcome projects that have the potential to assist people with mental health conditions access the transport network.

If you are unsure about whether your project would fall within the scope of this competition and would like to discuss it with us, please contact atrig@cp.catapult.org.uk.