

Global Centre of Rail Excellence urges UK firms to enter rail construction competition

The world's first rail testing centre in Wales is urging organisations around the UK to submit proposals to a major new rail innovation competition.

The Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) is working with Innovate UK and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to offer teams up to £7.44 million of grant funding for innovative ideas that can be tested at the GCRE facility in south Wales.

The aim of the competition is to support initial feasibility studies outlining how an organisation would work with the construction teams at GCRE to deliver a demonstration of innovation in railway construction to the site.

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Grant funding will be available for projects that propose, deliver and demonstrate innovation in railway construction. Entries for the first phase of funding close at noon on 14th December.

The current round is the first phase of a potential two phase competition:

- Phase 1 is making available funding for feasibility studies of up to £25,000.
- Phase 2 potential invite only competition for successful phase 1 projects to develop and demonstrate their

innovations.

Proposals must have total project costs of up to £40,000, start by 1 May 2023 and end by 31 July 2023. All project work must also be carried out in the UK.

GCRE Chief Executive Simon Jones said: “I’d encourage everyone interested in taking part in this unique competition to use this last week to finalise their proposals and submit their entries by noon on 14th December.

“Working with the team at Innovate UK we’re excited at the creative ideas and new technologies that can be developed through this competition. The Global Centre of Rail Excellence in South Wales is one of the most unique infrastructure projects anywhere in rail today and we’re proud to be a home for this fund.

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“When it begins operation in 2025, GCRE will be a facility that enables world class research and testing of new infrastructure, rolling stock and rail technology right here in the UK. It will be a ‘one stop shop’ for the industry, providing an innovation space quite unlike any other in Europe, filling a critical gap in rail that can help reduce costs in the industry and support decarbonisation.

“GCRE is a place that will bring people and ideas together and so this Innovate UK fund provides a perfect home, helping develop new ideas that can support the railway of tomorrow.”

Mr Jones added: “This funding opportunity really is unique. It’s not often that you get an opportunity to develop a new idea and embed it in a world class infrastructure project as it’s being constructed. So I’m encouraging everyone to use this last week to finalise their applications and get their proposals in.

“We’re really looking forward to working with the talented people and the interesting ideas that we know will come through this competition.”

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