

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

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Marine-i RD&I funding for marine  
robotic and autonomous systems

## Introduction

Marine-i is making up to £1M available for businesses based in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to develop innovative products and services in the emerging marine autonomous systems and robotic vehicle market sectors.

Projects of all sizes are encouraged but it is anticipated that projects will request funding support between £150,000 and £500,000 due to the strategic nature of the Programme.

As the maritime world moves rapidly towards robotics and autonomy, this represents a significant growth opportunity for technology businesses and marine supply chain companies in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

There is an opportunity to deliver research, development and innovation contributing to the commercial advancement of specialist autonomous systems.

Key drivers underpinning this programme will include cost savings, improved reliability of autonomous systems, removal of people from hazardous environments, increased mission capabilities, and improved offshore monitoring.

**Interested parties can contact the Marine-i business engagement team from 29 March 2018. Project proposals must be submitted by midnight on 27 April 2018.**

## Description

At Marine-i's November 2017 event examining AI and robotics in the marine sector, two key technology challenges were identified as major next step market opportunities:

1. Innovations in the launch and recovery of autonomous systems
2. Recharge / communication platforms for autonomous and robotic marine vessels.

From these major opportunities, a series of challenges and themes emerged for individual project developments where significant innovation could follow:

- Autonomy and robotics
- Communication systems and data management
- Remote operations
- Energy management systems
- Recharging / refuelling
- Launch and recovery systems
- Vessel guidance and positioning
- Mobile platform design and positioning systems

Businesses are encouraged to develop projects which address one or more of these themes. For large or more complex projects, it is anticipated that a collaborative approach will be needed to achieve the desired project outcome.

Marine-i delivery partners will be available to support interested project consortia through a range of mechanisms including:

- Providing access to academic researchers
- Funding in-company technology development
- Technology assessments
- Graduate employment

A dedicated business engagement team is in place to discuss business requirements.

Further information about the support that can be provided by Marine-i can be found on the Marine-i website: [www.marine-i.co.uk](http://www.marine-i.co.uk)

## Eligibility

### Who can apply

To be eligible for funding you must fulfil all of the following **three** obligations:

- 1.** All companies must base their funded activity in Cornwall. This could include companies outside of the county who establish a satellite office or an operating base within Cornwall;
- 2.** You must be a business whose funded activities will result in a benefit that resides in the economy of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly;
- 3.** All project applications must include SMEs

As noted above, larger projects are expected to be or are likely to be collaborative in nature.

Further information about eligibility guidance can be found on the

HM Government  
ENGLAND EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND OPERATIONAL  
PROGRAMME 2014 TO 2020

### PDF LINK

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/662344/ERDF\\_Eligibility\\_Guidance\\_v7.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662344/ERDF_Eligibility_Guidance_v7.pdf))

### Funding available

Programme grant funding of up to £1 million is available. It is expected that projects will request funding support of between £150,000 and £500,000.

- EU European Structural and Investment Funds established Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) will be used to define the level of eligible costs:
- Small to medium enterprises are eligible for up to a maximum of 70% funding. The remainder will require match funding.
- Large companies (+250 employees) are eligible for a maximum of 50% funding. The remainder will require match funding.
- Funding reimbursement is made available on completion of the project and interim payments are also available upon evidence of expenditure.

## Key Dates

**29 March 2018:**

Programme opens

**13 April 2018:**

Match making workshop / project scoping  
with business engagement managers

**27 April 2018 at midnight:**

Funding for marine robotic and autonomous  
systems project closes for applications

**11 May 2018:**

Project Innovation Panel Appraisal

**30 May 2018:**

All applicants are notified of Project  
Innovation Panel recommendations and due  
diligence process commences to ensure  
compliance with ERDF regulations.

**30 June 2019:**

Projects end date

## How to apply

This section explains the structure of the application form and offers guidance on the information to include in each section.

The application requirements are as follows:

- Companies wishing to benefit from in-company technology development funds – the business, or a consortium lead can complete the Marine-i [application](#) and can contact the business engagement team for support and clarification.
- Supporting project description document (500 – 1,000 words):

This is the opportunity to summarise your project and how it came about. What work has been carried out to date and identify the current stage of the innovation development.

Please include an explanation of the intended use of the Marine-i investment and demonstrate that the investment in the project will offer value for money and reasonably meet the overall objectives of the Marine-i project and its Marine Challenge Fund.

The project description should aim to describe;

- How does the project qualify as Research, Development and Innovation activity?
- Will the project develop a new product(s) and/or new services for the business?
- How the project advances the product/service/process along the Technology Readiness Scale (TRL) scale
- Do the project outcomes have a clear and identifiable pathway to market and commercialisation?

## How to apply continued

When you submit your application form, the panel shall assess the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the application submitted and score applications against the following criteria:

- Is the proposed activity Research, Development and Innovation?
- Will the proposed activity lead to development of new product(s) and/or new services for the applicant business?
- Will the activity raise the TRL of the product/service/process that is the subject of the application?
- Do the project outcomes have a clear and identifiable pathway to market and commercialisation?

- Will funding the project result in unacceptable risk to the wider Marine-i project and its partners?
- Does the investment in the project offer value for money and reasonably meet the overall objectives of the Marine-i project and its Challenge Fund?

Companies wishing to explore access to academic researchers, technology assessments and graduate employment placements should contact the Marine-i business engagement team at

**email: [info@marine-i.co.uk](mailto:info@marine-i.co.uk)**

**tel: 01872 327767, mob: 07717740386.**

**Marine-i is a collaboration between the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, The Cornwall College Group, Cornwall Marine Network, Cornwall Development Company and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.**

**Marine-i brings together key infrastructure and expertise to enable the generation of pioneering innovation in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's marine sector, which has been identified as an area of high growth potential.**

**Up to £6.8m of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) has been secured to develop marine technology research, development and innovation activities in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.**