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Switched on Towns and Cities Challenge Fund

Guidance for Assessors
Round 1

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CONTENTS

1	Purpose of this document	3
2	The need for an assessment process	4
3	Background to round 1	5
3.1	Introduction.....	5
3.2	General features of the Challenge Fund.....	5
3.3	Eligible capital activities	6
3.4	Wider considerations	7
4	Application assessment	9
4.1	Role of the assessment panel	9
4.2	Assessment criteria and scoring framework	10
4.3	Assessment process	10
5	Timetable	13
	Annex A - scoring framework	14
	Annex B - application scoring sheet	16

1 Purpose of this document

This document sets out the approach for taking applications to round 1 of the Switched on Towns and Cities (SoT&C) Challenge Fund through a process of fair and transparent assessment, in order to support projects that best meet the criteria of this initiative within the funding envelope available.

It first provides background information relevant to the SoT&C Challenge Fund and then guidance on the assessment process and relevant timelines.

Full details on this Challenge Fund, including Guidance for Applicants and Notes for Applicants have been published on [Transport Scotland's website](#).

2 The need for an assessment process

A robust, open and transparent assessment process ensures that:

- if the SoT&C Challenge Fund is oversubscribed, allocation of capital funding is fair and supports the best package of projects
- if the SoT&C Challenge Fund is undersubscribed, capital funding is not awarded to projects that do not meet the criteria of the fund
- accurate information on the decision making process can be collated and provided to applicants on the outcome of their applications

3 Background to round 1

3.1 Introduction

The SoT&C Challenge Fund aims to support a step change in the uptake of **plug-in** electric vehicles (EVs) in Scotland's towns and cities. Its objective is to support intensive, high impact capital activity within a town or city in order to incentivise, encourage and promote the use of EVs.

This fund is intended to be 'additional', supporting ambitious projects within 'exemplar' towns and cities in Scotland. It complements the funding available to all 32 local authorities through the Switched on Fleets and ChargePlace Scotland programmes as well as other initiatives.

Round 1 of the SoT&C Challenge Fund was launched on 20 June 2018 with a ten week application window, which closed on 31 August 2018.

3.2 General features of the Challenge Fund

General features of the SoT&C Challenge Fund include:

- it being a **competitive capital fund** targeted at local authorities, although Community Planning Partners and wider public sector bodies, with local bases, are eligible project partners
- it requires applicants to demonstrate an **existing commitment** to the EV agenda
- the expectation of making up to **five awards** (circa. £10 million commitment) through the first round of funding
- the requirement for projects to have eligible costs between **£1.5 million to £2.5 million**¹
- the need for projects to be focussed upon a **single city or town**, although it is acceptable for limited activity to be targeted at nearby communities, if this adds to, rather than dilutes overall impact of a project
- the need for projects to be completed within a **maximum of 24 months**
- it providing funding for dedicated **project management/outreach** resource
- the potential for supporting **up to 100% of eligible costs**, although extra credit will be given to applications that are able to bring match funding, however it must be from other public sector sources

¹ Costs below the minimum level may be considered exceptionally.

- the need for projects to not attract **state aid**

3.3 Eligible capital activities

The SoT&C Challenge Fund aims to support projects focussed upon delivering **intensive, balanced** and **inclusive** packages of capital activity. In support of this, the published [Guidance for Applicants](#) encouraged applicants to put forward proposals that would deliver the greatest impact and, whilst not intended to be exhaustive, it set out a list of activities where, **in combination**, projects might seek to:

- deepen and significantly expand the provision of publicly available EV charging infrastructure² into new as well as existing areas of a town or city
- address EV charging issues associated with tenement buildings or residential properties that lack off-street parking
- focus upon the development of EV-friendly 'districts' within a town or city
- locate infrastructure for destination charging (e.g. close to public amenities, sport centres, public transport hubs)
- replace a significant proportion of public sector fleet cars or light vans with plug-in alternatives³
- provide other volume ready plug in vehicle types
- provide infrastructure to enable incentivised car parking/use of restricted road lanes etc.
- adopt intelligent management systems to support local EV incentives (e.g. management systems for free parking etc.)
- provide infrastructure and solutions for EV taxi ranks and/or facilities for EV car clubs
- Integrate EV infrastructure into wider energy systems including renewable generation and storage

² Proposals should consider opportunities for deployment of slow charging (e.g. 7kW) as well as fast (22kW) and rapid (50kW) charging and possible deployment of higher powered charge points in the future.

³ It is acceptable for bids to include EV charging infrastructure to support public sector fleet use as long as this is part of a broader package of capital measures aimed at stimulating EV uptake.

The guidance highlighted that extra credit would be given to projects containing a significant focus on the implementation of practical and convenient solutions to address EV charging for residents living in tenement properties or with no off-street parking⁴. In addition, where projects intended to include the purchase and/or lease of plug-in EVs as part of the package of measures to be implemented, the guidance set out minimum numbers as follows (with the expectation that telematics will be incorporated to facilitate data capture and analysis through the Switched on Fleets programme):

- 30 plug-in electric cars or
- 20 plug-in electric vans or
- 20 plug-in electric cars and 10 plug-in electric vans

Whilst the SoT&C Challenge Fund is intended to focus upon the plug-in EV segment (cars and vans), the guidance also allowed for other low-emission fuel types (e.g. hydrogen) to be considered if suitably justified. It is important to highlight that the SoT&C Challenge Fund is looking for projects to deliver intensive packages of capital activity; thus projects with a sole or predominant focus on fleet replacement are unlikely to be supported.

3.4 Wider considerations

As well as setting out the plan to deliver intensive packages of capital activity, applications to the SoT&C Challenge Fund are also required to meet a number of other criteria, that will form the core of the assessment process reflected in section four of this document.

These criteria include:

- the provision of evidence of **EV leadership** and **commitment**. This will be measured through an understanding of an applicant's existing and/or planned capital and non-capital activities to incentivise EV uptake locally, undertaken outwith the SoT&C Challenge Fund.
- ensuring **deliverability** of projects within a maximum of 24 months. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have rigorous project management and planning systems in place to enable this. A comprehensive assessment of project risk (e.g. grid connection/capacity, procurement, planning permission, Traffic Regulation Orders, project resourcing) and strategies to mitigate these also need to be articulated, as part of the deliverability considerations.

⁴ This might involve, for example, creative use of car parking space on publicly-owned land to enable residents access to EV charging at certain times of the day (e.g. evenings and weekends).

- ensuring that the capital measures to be implemented are **sustainable** beyond the funding period. Applicants will be expected to address this, including any plans for outreach activity.
- **financial considerations** where projects will need to have **robust costing**. In addition, whilst the SoT&C Challenge Fund can potentially offer up to 100% funding, consideration should also be given to the ability of the applicant (and partner organisations) to bring **match funding** to the project, both in terms of amount and the credibility of evidence provided.
- ensuring that capital measures to be implemented don't attract **state aid**. Applicants will be required to fully justify this in their applications.

4 Application assessment

4.1 Role of the assessment panel

The Assessment Panel will be made up of Transport Scotland officials and/or external representatives, including a Chair, each of whom will have a demonstrable ability to evaluate applications.

The Assessment Panel will be responsible for making recommendations on applications with the intention of supporting up to five projects within a maximum round 1 budget of £10 million. The Assessment Panel will also be responsible for identifying any conditions⁵ that will apply to projects recommended for support.

Each Assessment Panel member will be expected to:

- confirm any conflict of interest
- independently assess and score applications using the scoring framework that has been developed for this purpose
- independently assess each application at face value on the basis of information provided
- ensure justification for scoring each element is provided to help with debriefing applicants
- participate in a moderation meeting to ratify the final scoring and recommendations on applications

The Chair will be responsible for coordinating the moderation meeting involving all assessors, that will enable individual scores to be scrutinised and ratified in order to arrive at final recommendations.

⁵ It is expected that for all projects supported, applicants will be required to submit updated expenditure profiles and project plans in line with agreed project commencement dates.

4.2 Assessment criteria and scoring framework

Applications to the SoT&C Challenge Fund will be assessed on five main criteria:

- Project impact/benefit
- EV leadership/commitment
- Project deliverability
- Sustaining project outputs/impacts
- Financial aspects

A scoring framework (annex A) has been developed to assess each of the above criteria, including a number of weighted sub-categories. Applications will be marked out of a total of 170 points. Project impact/benefit and deliverability have the highest overall weightings; to reflect the importance not only of supporting projects that will implement intensive packages of capital activity within a town or city but also the critical need for them to be delivered over a maximum period of 24 months. The scoring framework provides details on where relevant evidence is expected to be found in both the application and supporting documentation to enable each sub-category to be scored.

4.3 Assessment process

Stage one

Following the 31 August submission deadline, applications to round 1 will undergo a basic sift by Transport Scotland officials to check eligibility. Checks will include the following:

- that applicants are local authorities and that any project partners are eligible
- that project costs are within the appropriate range
- that project will be completed in 24 months

Applications will also be reviewed for completeness, and where necessary, there will be a short designated window (estimated to be one week) where Transport Scotland will seek clarification on any omission from applicants.

Stage two

After the initial sift, the Assessment Panel members and Chair will each receive a copy of all applications, supporting documentation and electronic scoring sheets. The scoring sheet will be based upon the scoring framework and an example is provide at annex B. In addition, a covering note summarising the outcome of any clarifications sought from applicants during stage one will be provided.

The Assessment Panel members and Chair will each independently assess applications and use the scoring sheet to record scores. Scoring of each sub-category will be on a scale of one to ten:

- Weak: one or two
- Poor: three or four
- Satisfactory: five or six
- Good: seven or eight
- Excellent: nine or ten

The scoring sheet also contains a section for Assessment Panel members to capture additional information relevant to the assessment of bids. This may include, for example, comments relating to the credibility of the account provided by an applicant on there being no state aid associated with their project, suggested conditions etc.

Each Assessor should complete one scoring sheet per application and retain these for the moderation meeting. Completed scores with weightings should be returned to sotc@transport.gov.scot by 4pm on Friday 19 October.

Stage three

Once all scoring sheets have been returned, scores will be collated into a master document that will rank applications based upon the mean overall score of all Assessment Panel members.

The master document will be circulated to the Assessment Panel and Chair in advance of the moderation meeting to be held on 26 October 2018.

The moderation meeting will enable the Assessment Panel and Chair to scrutinise and ratify the scores made during stage two, in order to come up with a final recommendation on supporting up to five projects.

The final recommendations should not be based purely upon final scores. Where significant deficiencies are identified in one or more key areas of an application, the

Assessment Panel will take this into account in making its final recommendation. Similarly, the Assessment Panel will also consider the need to for a balanced distribution of towns and cities, across different local authorities.

A thorough record of the recommendation/decision making process will be kept.

Stage four

Following the moderation meeting, recommendations will be made to Scottish Ministers on the outcome of round 1 of the SoT&C Challenge Fund. Following this, applicants will be informed on the outcome of their application prior to grant offer stage.

5 Timetable

Date	Activity
Friday 31 August 2018	Applications received by 4pm
Friday 14 September 2018	Initial checks complete
Monday 17 September 2018	Application documents and supporting materials circulated to Assessment Panel
Friday 19 October 2018	Assessment Panel scores returned by 4pm
Monday 22 October 2018	Master score sheet issued for Assessment Panel
Friday 26 October 2018	Moderation meeting
Thursday 1 November 2018	Recommendations to Minister

Annex A - scoring framework

Criteria	Area(s) to be scored	Evidence source	Weighting factor	Score
1. Project impact/benefit (Maximum score 60)	a) Intensity and balance of measures to be deployed.	Application: 4.1	X 3	/30
	b) Extent of solutions to EV charging bottlenecks (e.g. tenement properties/off-street parking challenges).	Application: 4.2 Map	X 3	/30
2. EV leadership/commitment (Maximum score 20)	c) Fit with other existing and planned EV capital and non-capital incentives	Application: 4.3	X 2	/20
3. Project deliverability (maximum score 50)	d) Evidence of feasibility/scoping activity.	Application: 5.1 Application: 5.2	X 1	/10
	e) Credibility of project plan, identification of risks and mitigation strategies.	Project plan Risk register Application: 5.3	X 2	/20
	f) Project management/governance arrangements.	Project organisational chart/governance structure	X 2	/20
4. Sustaining project outputs/impacts	g) Ability to sustain the outputs and impact of the project beyond the funding period.	6.1	X 1	/10

Criteria	Area(s) to be scored	Evidence source	Weighting factor	Score
(maximum score 15)	h) Credibility of outreach/promotion activity during the course of the project.		X 0.5	/5
5. Financial aspects	i) Extent of match funding against eligible project costs and evidence of this being secured at time of application.	Application: 7 Financial info. spreadsheet	X 2	/20
(maximum score 25)	j) Credibility of project costing	Letters confirming match funding	X 0.5	/5
Total Score				/170

Annex B - application scoring sheet

Assessor:	
Reference number:	
Lead organisation:	
Project title:	

Criteria	Areas to be Scored	Category*	Score**	Weighted Score	Comments
1. Project impact/benefit	a) Intensity and balance of measures to be deployed.				
	b) Extent of solutions to EV charging bottlenecks (e.g. tenement properties/off-street parking challenges).				
2. EV leadership/commitment	c) Fit with other existing and planned EV capital and non-capital incentives				
3. Project deliverability	d) Evidence of feasibility/scoping activity				
	e) Credibility of project plan, identification of risks and mitigation strategies				
	f) Project management/governance arrangements				
4. Sustaining project outputs/impacts	g) Ability to sustain the outputs and impact of the project beyond the funding period				
	h) Credibility of outreach/promotion activity during the course of the project				
5. Financial aspects	i) Extent of match funding against eligible project costs and evidence of this being secured at time of application				
	j) Credibility of project costing				

Category*	Score**
Weak:	one or two
Poor:	three or four
Satisfactory:	five or six
Good:	seven or eight
Excellent:	nine or ten

General thoughts/comments:



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