

Mid and East Antrim CleanTech Initiatives

APSE Annual Conference

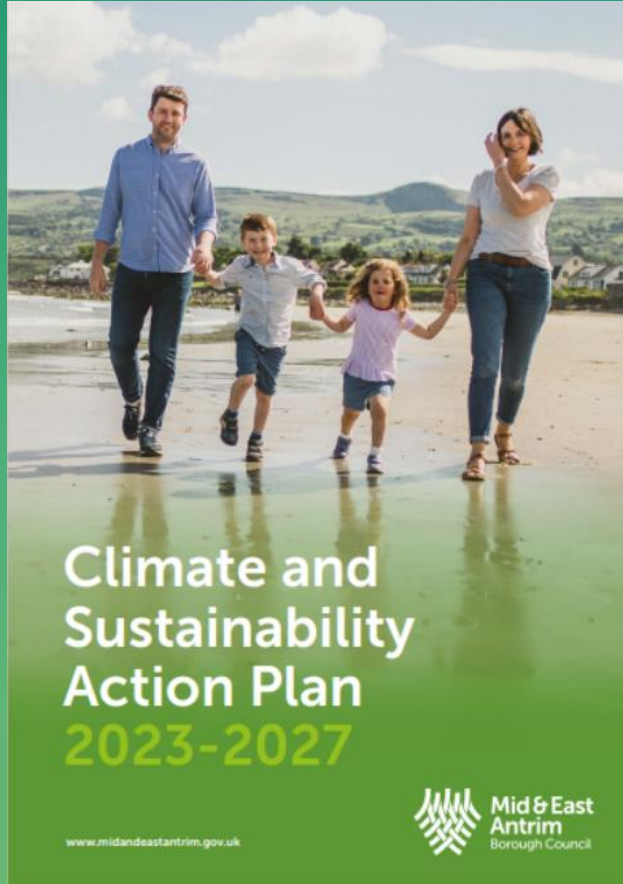
Tuesday 10th June 2025

Connor O'Dornan
Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Manager

**Invest
MEA**

 **Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Climate & Sustainability Action Plan



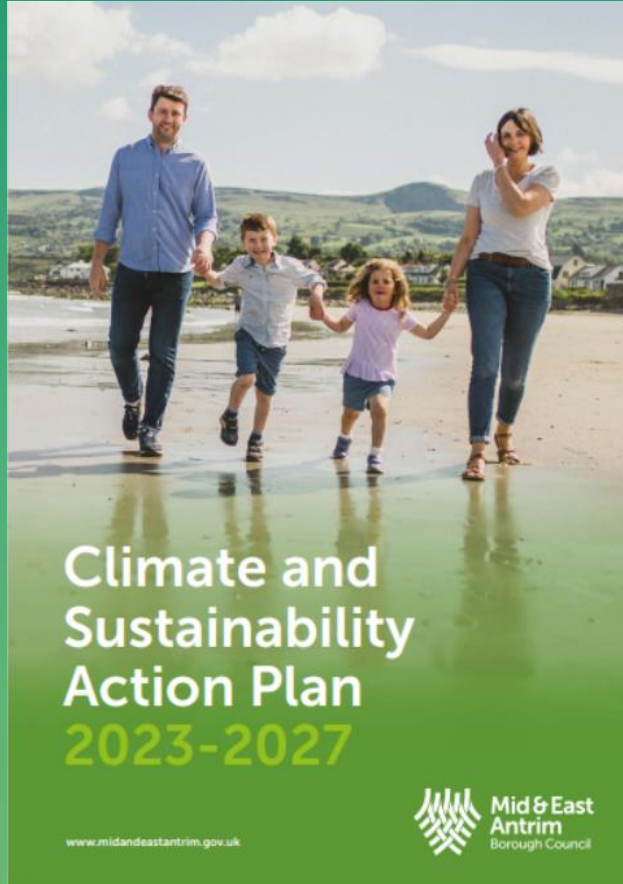
Council's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan:

- 4-year plan, 5 main goals
- 6 key themes:
 - Good Governance and Community Leadership
 - Our Environment
 - Economy
 - Transport
 - Resource Management
 - Buildings and Energy

**Invest
MEA**



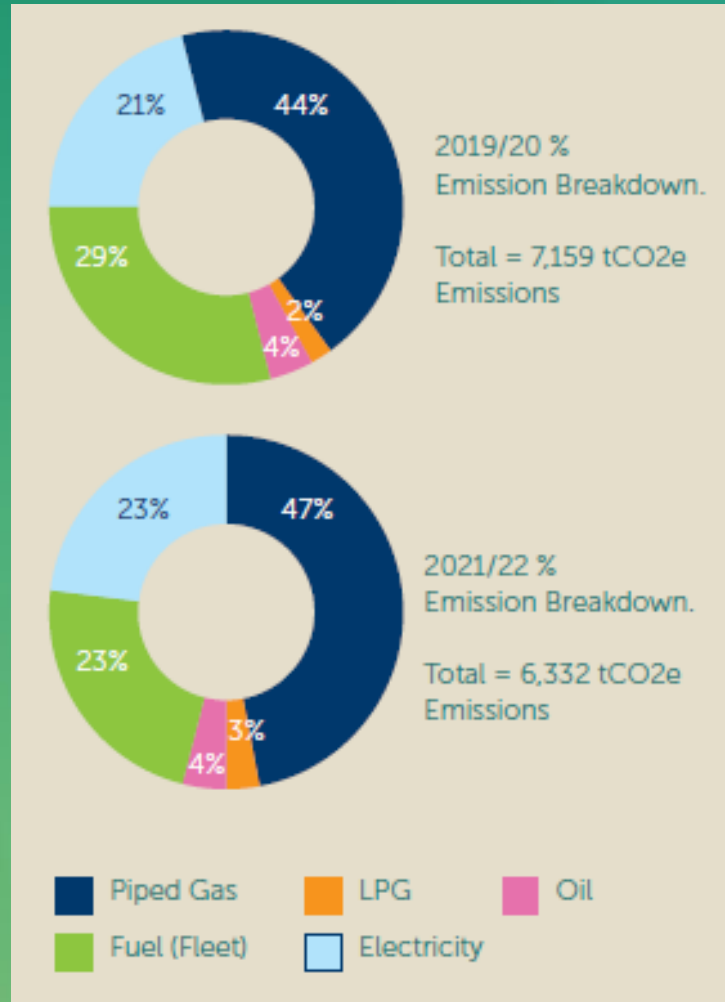
Climate & Sustainability Action Plan



Goals:

1. 30% reduction in council operation emissions by 2030
2. Decarbonise small vehicles in our fleet by 2030
3. Council operation emissions to net zero by 2040
4. Supporting the borough to net zero by 2050
5. Climate resilience in our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure

Climate & Sustainability Action Plan



Importance of Data

Councils carbon footprint (Scope 1 & 2)

2019/20 baseline year:	7,159 tCO2e
2021/22:	6,332 tCO2e
2022/23:	6,308 tCO2e
2023/24:	5,950 tCO2e
2024/25:	being calculated

Why CleanTech, Hydrogen and Net Zero?

Mid and East Antrim ambition:

To be the **cleantech hub** for Northern Ireland,
supporting the **transition to net carbon zero**,
and a more **sustainable circular economy**.

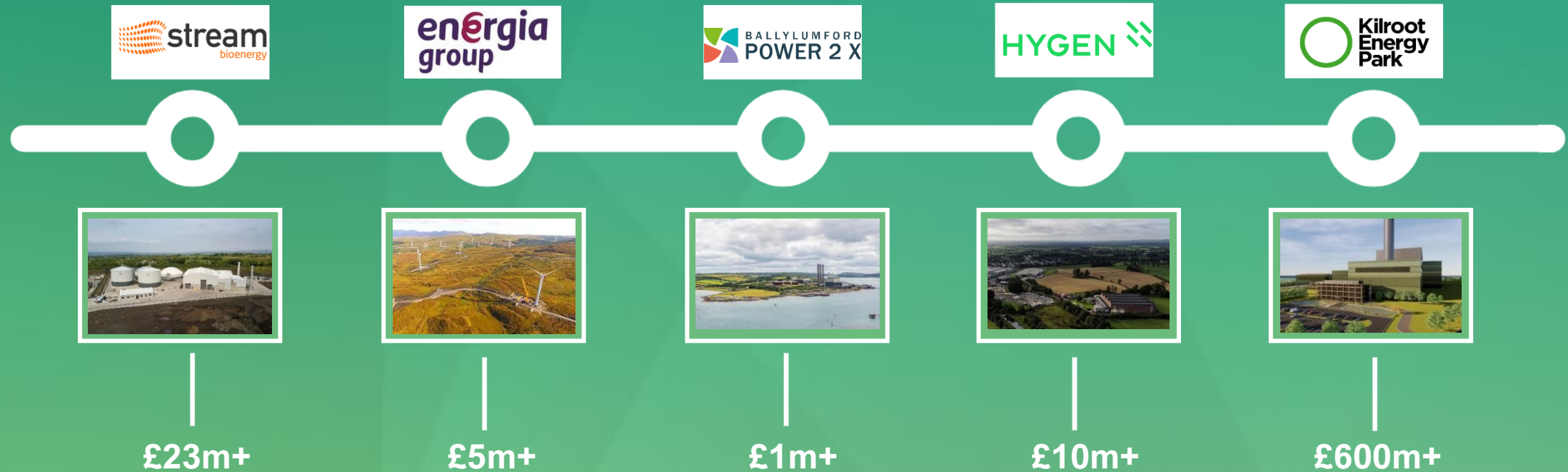
Unique Proposition for Mid and East Antrim



Council's CleanTech Ambition



Why CleanTech, Hydrogen and Net Zero?



Strategic Investment in Green Energy Projects

£24m+



**i4C Innovation &
CleanTech Centre**



**Industry led Manufacturing
Task Force**

£15m+



**HyTech NI
Demo Project**



**CleanTech Collaborative
Growth Network**

£800k



**Hydrogen Training
Academy**



**Council Economic
Development Team**

MTF Network

An industry-led advanced manufacturing network set up in 2018 to:

- **Tackle** challenges common to the manufacturing, construction, engineering industries
- **Drive** innovation, growth and sustainable jobs
- **Collaboratively explore opportunities** to enable future business growth.

Collaboration with

- **Industry** - over 35 member companies
- **Public and private stakeholders** - 25 representatives
- **Educational bodies** - HE/FE bodies
- **Wider regional networks MEGA and GEMx** – enabled by Cluster Acceleration Programme funding awarded by Invest NI in April 2025.

Three priority areas of focus:

1. **Skills** - to address the evolving needs of the workforce and ensure consistent access to a pipeline of talent.
2. **Productivity** - to embrace technological advancements and LEAN techniques to improve competitiveness.
3. **CleanTech** – to support the transition towards sustainable and environmentally conscious manufacturing practices.



CleanTech Collaborative Growth Network

- Established under the **Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme** in early 2022 with **Smiths Precision Engineering** as the lead company;
- Objective: To develop a collaborative **scoping exercise** to **explore CleanTech sector** challenges & opportunities for SME's and industry;
- **£40,000** from Invest NI in early 2022, an additional **£10,000** from **Michelin Development Fund** in late 2023 and a further **£45,000** under **MEANZ Business** project funded by Innovate UK for 2024/25;
- **TetraTech Ltd** appointed as Network Facilitator in early 2022 and due to support the network until June 2025;
- **8 SME's and 10 stakeholders/partners initially**, now **10 SME's active** on the network.



Innovate UK Fast Followers 'MEANZ Business' Project

- **Innovate UK** funded project under **Fast Followers** strand of the **Net Zero Living Programme**.
- Designed to help **Local Authorities** address **non-technical barriers** to achieving Net Zero targets.
- **MEANZ Business** will increase understanding and knowledge of decarbonisation and Net Zero.

Insights Programme



NZ Insights Webinars
Best Practice Visits
Knowledge Transfer
Net Zero Video Series

Corporate Decarbonisation



Data Analysis Tool
Planners Capacity Building Programme
NZ Skills Mapping

Industry Decarbonisation



CleanTech CGN Support
-Emissions Reporting Toolkit
-Capacity Building Programme
Consumer Insights Research

Future Ready Programme



Best Practice Sharing
Quarterly events and monthly webinars
Mentoring and Training

i4C Innovation & CleanTech Centre

- A driver for an enhanced **enterprise and innovation support ecosystem** in the Mid and East Antrim Borough.
- A hub for **CleanTech sector supports** for Northern Ireland aligned to the global transition to **NET ZERO**
- A flagship building for the **St Patrick's Barracks regeneration** site located in the heart of Ballymena.

i4C building comprising of:

- **Grade A office** space for corporate type tenants
- **Co-working** office space for entrepreneurs/SME'.
- **Workspace/labs** for short term SME rental and as part of thematic incubation/accelerator programmes
- House the **iLAB** (innovation lab) makerspace with STEAM & cleantech focus, providing hands on support to entrepreneurs/SME'.
- Council set to procure a **specialist operator** to run i4C and deliver innovation & cleantech programming
- MEABC currently procuring **design team** for building i.e. BREEAM 'excellent' standard

£24m+
Capital
investment



HyTech NI Project Collaboration

A **collaborative** project supported by the **NI Complementary Fund** (worth c£20m) that includes for

- Development of a **Hydrogen Technology Accelerator** supporting SME's/industry NI led by the Universities and
- A series of hydrogen economy commercialisation **demonstrators** in Ballymena as follows:

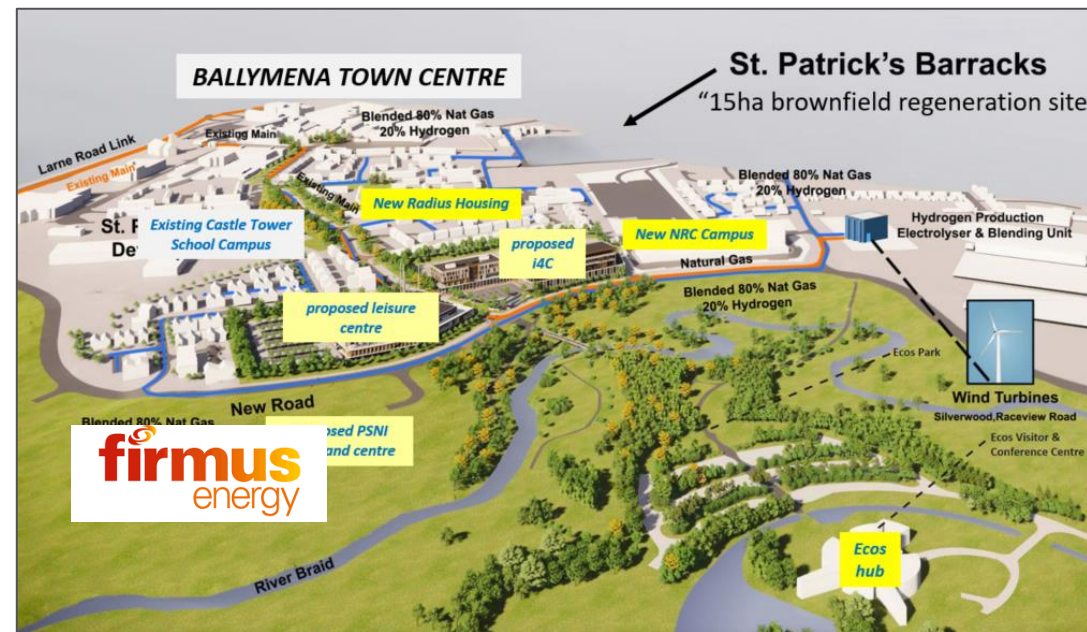
Hydrogen Mobility Trial

including for a re-fueling station & number of end users



Hydrogen Blending Demonstrator

in a closed loop section of local gas network



Green Hydrogen

Demonstration and Skills testbed at ECOS Hub



The Pilot Hydrogen Training Academy

- A Mid and East Antrim Borough Council led **award winning innovative public and private sector partnership** project.
- Objective: To develop a **continuous learning pathway**, create a **state of the art learning environment** and deliver **essential hydrogen skill training** to support a **greener future** for Northern Ireland.
- £800,000+ pilot project - Supported by a range of **funders** and private sector **sponsors**, including the **NI Government, UK Government's Community Renewal Fund** and **EP UK Investments Ltd**.
- **Innovative** public and private sector approach, **first-of-its-kind** hydrogen skills development project.

Hydrogen Training Academy Delivery Partners:



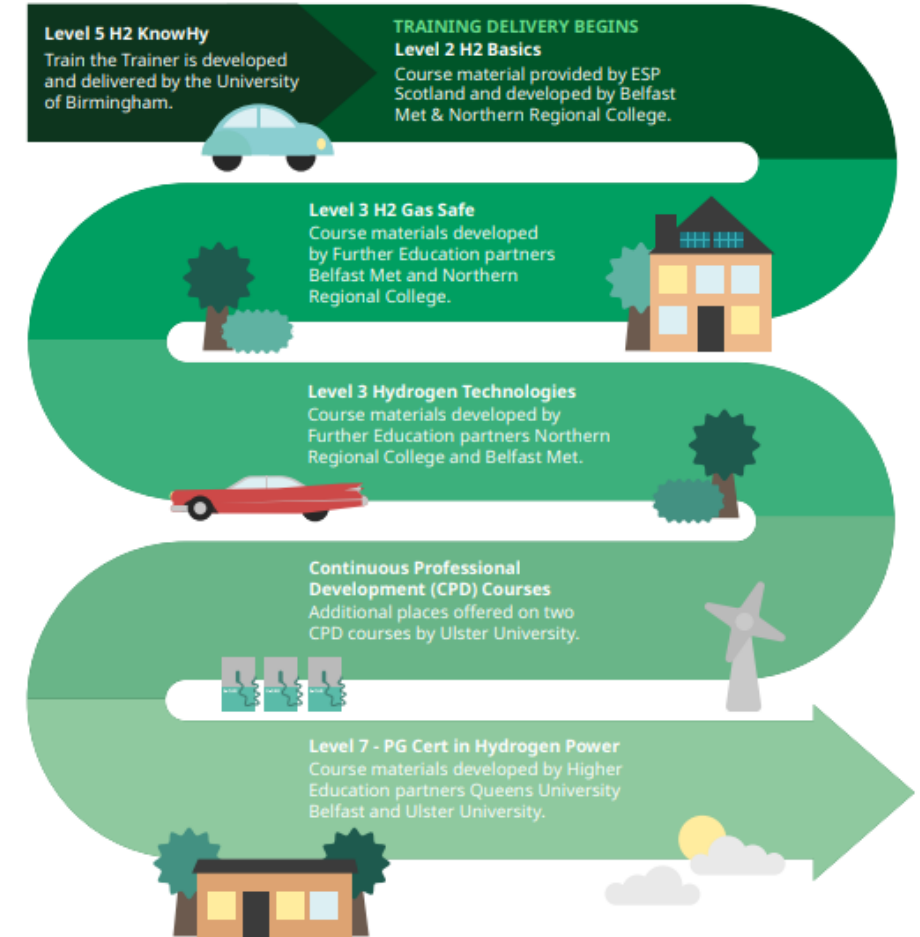
What is the Hydrogen Training Academy?

- Development and accreditation of new training courses in hydrogen from Level 2 (entry) to Level 7 (post-graduate) and everything in between.
- Course content at Level 3 includes:
 1. Hydrogen generation, storage and distribution
 2. Hydrogen safety
 3. Principles of a hydrogen facility (H2 Gas Safe)
 4. Fuel cells for transport

Hydrogen Training Academy Funders:



EP UK Investments

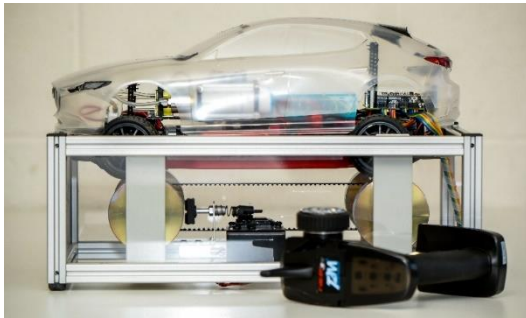


Led by
Mid & East Antrim
Borough Council

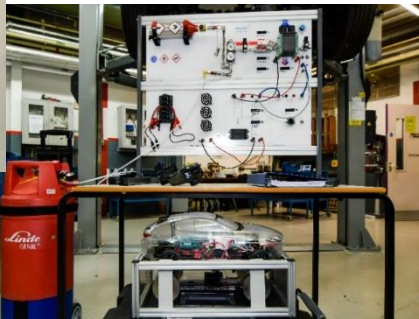
Two bespoke, innovative H2 training labs

H2 Gas Safe Lab at Silverwood, Ballymena

- Mobile ATEX **practical training lab** for work on gas blending.
- **First of its kind** in UK and Ireland.
- **Competence testing space** for work with commercial H2 and CH4/H2 blend.



EP UK Investments



H2 Fuel Cell Skills Lab, NRC, Ballymena

- **Desktop** and classroom based **equipment**.
- 50 watt **fuel cell trainers**, **fuel cell automotive trainers** and **unitrain fuel cell trainer interfaces**.
- Equipment provides a **hands on, educational hub** for **hydrogen applications**.

Pilot HTA Achievements



300+ trainees

70 at L5 IN H2
Production

215 at L3 in H2
Technologies
and
Applications

24 other
trainees



**500+ people
engaged**

Anything from
trainees or
stakeholders to
knowledge
transfer
requests from
education
providers.



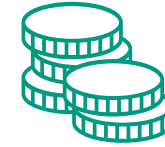
**220+
organisations**

Representing a
wide range of
public and
private sector
organisations
(55% private /
45% public)



**45+ H2 Gas Lab
Demos**

Delivered to
170+
individuals at
the H2 Gas
Safe Lab.



**£800k+
support**

From a range
of public and
private sector
funders.



5 Awards

Winners of five
national awards
and shortlisted
for two more.



**Training
Initiative of the
Year
Finalist**

**Collaboration
of the Year
Finalist**

November 2022



**Sustainability
Project of the
Year**

**Highly
Commended**

**February
2023**



**Council of the
Year Winner**

**Asset
Management
and
Regeneration
Winner**

March 2023



**Best Public /
Private
Partnership
Working
Initiative**

**Silver Award
Winner**

September 2023



**Best Energy
Initiative /
Project of the
Year**

**Silver Award
Winner**

October 2023

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Differing climate change views



Climate champions

Identifying the right opportunity



Be selective

Funding cycles



Bite size projects & phased planning

Industry stakeholder fatigue



Let industry inform & lead

Lack of technical knowledge



Procure expert partners

Contact Details

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