

LAUNCH ACADEMY IMPACT REPORT 2020-2024



FOREWORD

Enabling, demonstrating and de-risking innovation in offshore renewables is core to the work we do at ORE Catapult, and this report showcases our flagship technology acceleration programme: **Launch Academy**.

Since its inception in 2020, Launch Academy has sought to foster innovation and accelerate the growth of high-potential SMEs and startups developing groundbreaking technologies in the offshore wind sector. As the UK transitions towards net-zero, we recognise the critical role that emerging technologies and entrepreneurial spirit play in driving the industry forward, enabling a greater pace of deployment and significant cost reductions to be achieved.

Throughout the Launch Academy programme, our commitment to supporting SMEs extends beyond providing in-depth industry expertise. We actively engage with participating companies; offering tailored mentorship, access to industry networks,

and a collaborative environment that nurtures their growth. By connecting SMEs with experienced researchers, industry leaders, and investors, we aim to bridge the gap between groundbreaking ideas and successful market entry.

This report highlights the tangible impact Launch Academy has been able to achieve with participating companies, demonstrating how the programme strategically tackles the challenges the SMEs face and prepare them for their next step in the market.

By nurturing SMEs and startups in this sector, we are not only accelerating the clean energy development efforts but also ensuring the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of this sector.

We are proud of the contributions made by our team and the companies we have partnered with, and we look forward to continuing to drive innovation and shape the future of offshore renewable energy in the UK.

DR STEPHEN WYATT
Director, ORE Catapult



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1 WHAT IS LAUNCH ACADEMY?



Launch Academy is ORE Catapult's award-winning flagship offshore wind technology accelerator programme that aims to support new start-ups and SMEs entering the sector.

The UK is a world leader in Offshore Wind Research and Innovation. Our project sponsors recognise the contribution and role that start-ups, spinouts and SMEs can play in the development, operation, and maintenance of UK wind farms.

ORE Catapult has brought technology development and business support under one roof, allowing companies to access its own in-house technical capability alongside a range of business growth expertise from our partners.

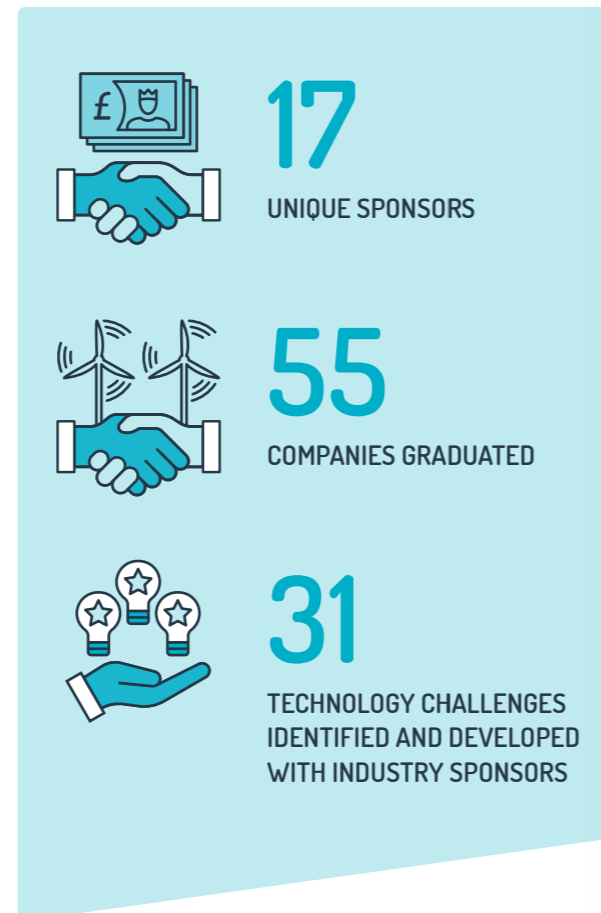
The programme provides a complete ecosystem of support for the commercialisation of ambitious companies launching new products and services in the sector. It also supports project developers to grow the UK supply chain by identifying specific technology challenges and interacting with the innovators that are solving them.



Figure 1: Global Offshore Wind Awards 2023



Figure 2: Scottish Green Energy Awards 2022

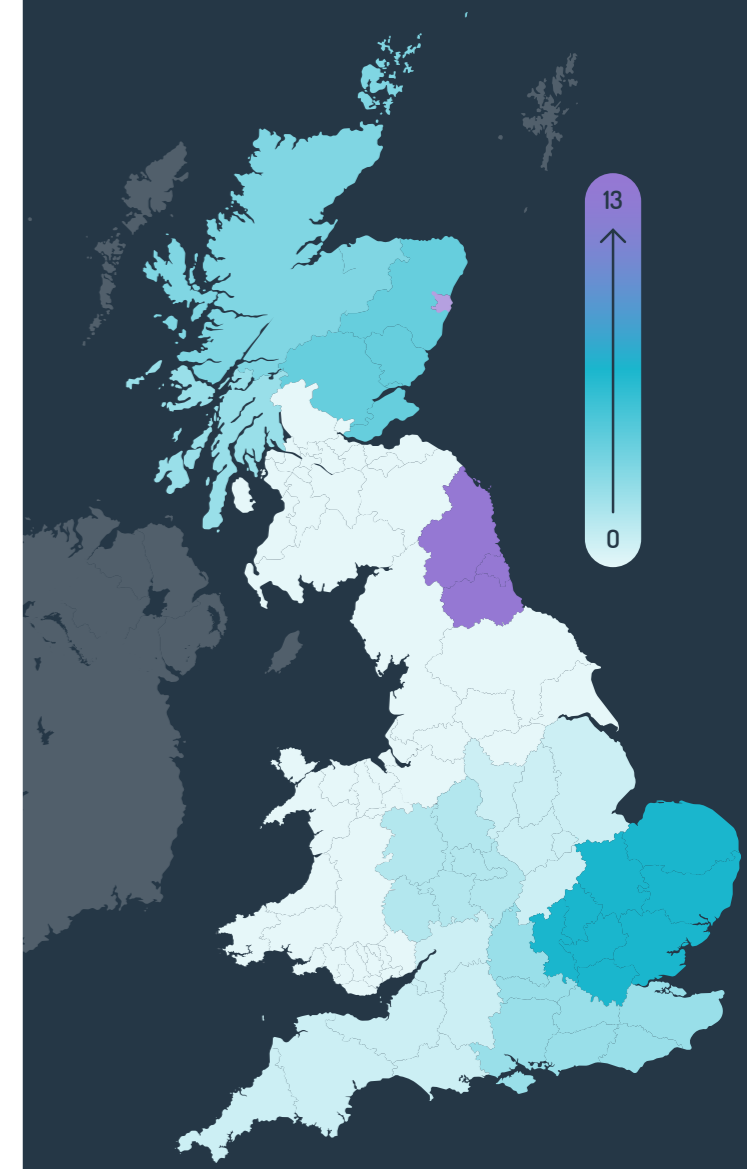


“ Launch Academy provides a platform for businesses to develop their technology or services, access mentoring and expertise, secure funding, and collaborate with industry leaders. We aim to create a vibrant ecosystem that fosters innovation and accelerates the commercialisation of cutting-edge technologies that benefit offshore renewable industry and the UK's supply chain.

RAVNEET KAUR
Senior Technology Acceleration Manager at ORE Catapult



Since 2019, ORE Catapult have delivered the programme at both a regional and national scale. Supporting 66 companies from all over the UK with up to 9 months of support helping to accelerate their technologies and commercial opportunities.



2 HOW DOES LAUNCH ACADEMY WORK?

THE SELECTION PROCESS

For the annual National Launch Academy, we have a two-stage application process. Our industry sponsors set specific technology challenges relevant to their offshore wind business priorities. These challenges form the basis for the competition and ensures that the innovations are highly relevant to the sponsors. We also run an open category to ensure we capture the full breadth of cutting-edge innovations in the programme.

For the regional programmes, like Launch Academy North East, Launch Academy East of England, and Launch Academy Scotland, the process is shortened to an Expression of Interest which confirms eligibility and suitability for the programme.

For both programme types, the second stage is a week of pitches to a panel of industry experts. Each company will pitch for 15-minutes, before a 15-minute question and answer. A set selected of industry experts will assess the pitches based on the technology relevance, technology viability, market opportunity and readiness to join the programme. The highest-scoring 10 companies are then enrolled in the programme. The selection process is highly competitive especially for the national program where applicants are up to four times the programme capacity.

ORE CATAPULT'S SUPPORT

Throughout the programme, our delivery team brings together technology development and business support under one roof, allowing companies to access our full in-house technical capability alongside a range of business growth expertise from our partners.

Launch Academy support is delivered in the form of a series of modules. Module delivery tends to have a varied format, including one-to-one interactions with delivery partners, group sessions/seminars, and small peer group activities and/or discussions. Throughout the programme our innovation manager works with each company to identify priorities for the development of the company's technology and business.

Throughout the delivery of any given programme of activity, Launch Academy features a series of in-person events to allow the companies to network with ORE Catapult, our industry sponsors, and one another to share challenges and explore potential opportunities.

The 360-support approach that the programme adopts creates an ecosystem to support the successful commercialisation of innovative new products and services for offshore wind and encourage growth in the UK supply chain by providing vital business support specific to the offshore wind sector. It gives new businesses access to professional services and, in turn, accelerates their innovative technologies.



SPECIALIZED INDUSTRIAL KNOWLEDGE

- **BUSINESS CASE ANALYSIS**
Bespoke analysis delivered by ORE Catapult's Analysis and Insights team per company
- **TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**
Bespoke work delivered by ORE Engineering team to support each company's product development
- **OFFSHORE WIND 101**
An introductory workshop to the Offshore Wind sector delivered to the entire cohort

BUSINESS GROWTH EXPERTISE

- **STORY ACCELERATOR**
- **VALUE PROPOSITION AND INVESTOR READINESS**
A workshop and bespoke support to define product value proposition and develop investment pitch decks
- **INTERNATIONAL EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES**
A workshop to guide and assists SMEs to access and navigate various international markets
- **GRANT FUNDING 101**
A workshop and bespoke support to understand, navigate & leverage CR&D funding successfully

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- **LEGAL SUPPORT**
Bespoke legal support for each company
- **IP STRATEGY**
IP strategy development consultancy per company and workshop on IP consideration
- **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**
Workshop on importance and opportunities provided by embedding EDI in businesses early on.
- **HIGH-GROWTH ACCOUNTING**
Accountancy consultancy for each company and an interactive session on setting up SMEs for success



PROGRAMME SPONSORS

Since 2020, Launch Academy has been supported by a variety of offshore wind project developers, OEMs, and industry sponsors who are pivotal to the success of the Launch Academy programme. Participation and collaboration with industry enables Launch Academy to act as a filter and entry point for SMEs to engage with industry partners and solve real industry problems via the targeted innovation challenges that ORE Catapult develops in collaboration with industry.

Additionally, our programme sponsors also support Launch Academy in selecting successful participants by engaging throughout the application and pitch assessment process, and continuously engaging with participating companies throughout the duration of any given programme and beyond, if appropriate.

“Accelerating the development of new technologies within the offshore wind supply chain is critically important to supporting the growth of the sector in the UK and addressing key industry challenges.”

JAMES BATTENSBY
Senior Technology and Innovation Manager
at bp offshore wind

INDUSTRY SPONSORS

There has been a huge amount of support for Launch Academy from various industry sponsors over the years. They are immersed throughout the programme, engaging one-to-one with the participants, validating their technology, and offering ideas for next steps; all of which are aspects SMEs deem as priceless as collaborating with large offshore renewables developers such as bp, RWE, Orsted, SPR, Equinor, Ocean Winds, Blue Float Nadara, Inch Cape and Red Rock Renewables can often be difficult to achieve.

Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) have also expressed great interest in supporting Launch Academy. OEMs are the companies that manufacture the major offshore wind turbine components. Siemens Gamesa was one of the sponsors of the first cohort of Launch Academy in 2020 and was able to offer great insight into how SMEs can provide innovation to solve the challenges in wind turbine manufacturing.



PUBLIC AGENCIES

Public Agencies have also shown interest pushing a programme like Launch Academy forward particularly for the regional versions. For Launch Academy East of England, the councils of Norfolk, Essex, and Suffolk were very hands-on and keen to support their local SMEs. Currently, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise are all collaborating as active sponsors for Launch Academy Scotland; having been involved in the selection process and closely engaging with participating companies.



DELIVERY PARTNERS

Launch Academy is also supported by a host of delivery partners that offer professional services to the cohorts of participants either through workshops or bespoke support. The participating companies deemed this wraparound support as invaluable to their journey to successful commercialisation.

Stronger Stories are Launch Academy's partners that deliver a "Story Accelerator" module – designed to assist participants in building bespoke case studies of their work and progress to enable them to get their stories out there and promote their innovative businesses and solutions.

Shepherd & Wedderburn, a UK law firm known for its clean energy expertise, has been providing legal support to the majority of the Launch Academy cohorts since 2020. Targeted regional legal support has been provided by firms like Birketts, an East of England-based law firm, which allowed the cohort participants to gain a better understanding of the legal requirements and potential opportunities in their region.

Murgitroyd, Scintilla, Mathys & Squire and Marks & Clark are all intellectual property specialists with extensive experience in the renewable energy sector and have been leading on the development each company's IP strategy.

Sustainable Ventures, the founders of Europe's largest climate tech companies cluster, have been partnering with Launch Academy for several cohorts and supporting the participants' commercialisation journey by better identifying their value proposition, ensuring the SMEs are investor-ready and co-developing their marketing strategies.

Delivering the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion module for the programme has been Inclusive Employers; a renowned I&D consultancy that provided EDI training to prepare participants for the current workforce landscape and requirements.

BDO, Hutcheon Mearns, Blu Sky and Lovewell Blake have been partnering with Launch Academy to deliver financial and human resource advisory expertise and support for the various national and regional Launch Academy cohorts; supporting companies to navigate complex financial landscapes.



3 LAUNCH ACADEMY'S IMPACT

Launch Academy has proved to be a success to all stakeholders in the offshore wind industry. SMEs get the support they need to develop their ideas and grow their business, while industry leaders get innovative answers to their most challenging questions.

ORE Catapult eagerly tracks the impact that Launch Academy has on the offshore wind and start-up industry. Since 2019 the programme has delivered £1.7 million of in-kind support to 6 cohorts of companies. The programme's support has delivered the following impact on the graduated companies:



£27.5M

OF TOTAL INVESTMENTS THE COMPANIES RAISED SINCE JOINING THE PROGRAMME



46

NEW PRODUCTS COMMERCIALISED



£9.3M

OF GRANT FUNDING RAISED FROM 72 AWARDS



68

NEW JOBS CREATED



150

NEW PATENTS FILED. MORE THAN 3 PER GRADUATED COMPANY



26

GRADUATED COMPANIES THAT DEVELOPED EDI POLICIES



PROGRAMME ALUMNI



TUGDOCK

Tugdock is a fast-growing company that develops their patented submersible buoyancy products. Their products offer innovation in the space of the construction of floating offshore wind farms; taking on the challenges like the lack of suitable ports or infrastructure, the issue of insufficient water depth required for construction activities, and the limited available storage for heavy offshore structures.

Tugdock was one of the graduates of Launch Academy National 2023. Throughout the programme, ORE Catapult and the partners delivered bespoke work to prepare Tugdock for their next step in the market. Examples of such work included conducting in-depth structural analysis, design validation, and highlighting the business impact of different use cases of their products.

Recently, in December 2024, Tugdock was one of the organizations to successfully receive funding through the initial round of the Crown Estate's Supply Chain Accelerator which totals to £5 million. They have received funding to develop a heavy lift operations and maintenance base in Port Talbot in Wales, aiming to boost the economy in the Celtic Sea region.

“Tugdock technology opens new possibilities for floating wind power constructability, overcoming port infrastructure constraints that are holding back floating wind projects around the world. Joining Equinor and the Launch Academy National Cohort 2023 will help accelerate our business growth, enabling us to bring our pioneering solution to the fast-growing floating wind industry in the Celtic Sea. The programme will help enable our innovative technology to reach its full potential and will be a stepping stone for our further expansion into new markets such as the USA.

LUCAS LOWE-HOUGHTON
Director of Growth and Strategy at Tugdock



JET CONNECTIVITY

JET Connectivity develops in-house technology for 5G connectivity at sea which is essential for maintenance, monitoring and inspection operations but most importantly offshore safety. JET Connectivity joined the Launch Academy National 2022 programme in which they have further developed the mechanical design of their buoy and mooring structures and strengthened their business case based on insights from programme delivery teams.

Since the programme, JET Connectivity have joined a consortium with Microsoft, ORE Catapult, and others to develop a 5G Testbed which was launched in 2024 off the Port of Grimsby. The 5G enabled buoy can be used by companies developing and testing offshore technology that requires stable and secure connectivity; enabling the testing of technologies like drones and autonomous vessels.

Such technologies are a stepping stone to enable true digital transformation in offshore wind operations and maintenance and encourages further innovation in that space.



MJR POWER & AUTOMATION

MJR Power & Automation is now one of the UK's leading marine electrical engineering companies that specialise in designing, installing, and supporting solutions for marine vessels; focusing on innovative solutions for the various use cases within the offshore wind construction lifecycle, with a vision for clean maritime operations.

MJR were part of the Launch Academy National programme in 2022, and within the same year they won RenewableUK's Supply Chain Innovation Award for their development of the first offshore wind vessel charging system in the world.

Since then, Parkwind – a notable Belgian offshore wind developer – have collaborated with MJR to deploy their charging system in the Noblewind, their offshore wind farm 47 km off the shore in the Belgian North Sea

Such technologies unlock the door that allows CTVs and SOVs to be sourced by 100% green energy and pave the way to net zero operations of offshore wind farms.



4 FUTURE PLANS FOR LAUNCH ACADEMY

LAUNCH ACADEMY: SCOTLAND

Launch Academy: Scotland focuses on the development of SMEs within Scotland. Given the current UK government focus on the region demonstrated by the selection of Aberdeen as the hub for GB Energy and awarding a single floating offshore wind CfD contract in AR6 to a project located 80km off the NE coast of Scotland, ORE Catapult felt the need to provide focused support to the Scottish supply chain by rolling out its flagship programme to the region.

In October 2024, participating companies for this cohort were selected and delivery of our first Launch Academy: Scotland began. The industry sponsors supporting this cohort are Ocean Winds, Blue Float Nadara Partnership, and Inch Cape. The cohort met in Aberdeen to launch the programme, learn more about its mechanics, and to meet the various programme delivery partners.

This version of Launch Academy addresses specific challenges and opportunities associated with the 2022 ScotWind offshore wind allocation round. Another special aspect of this cohort is the selection of Scottish delivery partners, Scintilla and Hutcheon and Mearns, to lead the delivery of the IP and accounting modules to provide better insight and to promote local inclusion.

For this version of Launch Academy, it has been interesting seeing more companies join the energy transition movement and transforming their technology and businesses from legacy oil and gas to grasp opportunities in the offshore renewable energy market. ORE Catapult is excited to see this cohort's technology development throughout the programme and how they could lead the way for other Scottish SMEs to follow.

LAUNCH ACADEMY 2025

There's already been indications that 2025 will be a transformative year for the Offshore Wind sector; the implementation of the Industrial Growth Plan, the development of the recently established GB Energy which is expected bring in more public investment in offshore wind energy, and the much anticipated Allocation Round 7 which many believe will be the biggest offshore wind allocation round to date. All of these developments in the ecosystem further emphasise the need to accelerate and expand current UK supply chain capabilities. Launch Academy 2025 is sponsored by bp and SPR for the fourth year and EDF for the first time. Each of these industry sponsors have selected programme challenges that will focus on offshore wind farm lifetime extension, decarbonisation of offshore wind farm construction and operations, and unlocking floating offshore operations given limited land availability.

Launch Academy National 2025 has opened its applications and is expected to launch in April. ORE Catapult hopes to collaborate and support more companies with cross-sector technologies to participate this year; bringing in expertise from sectors like AI development, Oil and Gas, and Energy Storage.

Launch Academy is striving to become a launchpad for companies looking to penetrate the offshore renewable energy market. The programme promises to keep delivering innovation that unlocks the offshore renewable energy sector's biggest challenges and capitalises on its greatest opportunities.



CONTACT US

ENGAGE WITH US

GLASGOW

ORE Catapult
Inovo
121 George Street
Glasgow
G1 1RD

+44 (0)333 004 1400

PEMBROKESHIRE

Marine Energy Engineering
Centre of Excellence (MEECE)
Bridge Innovation Centre
Pembrokeshire Science
& Technology Park
Pembroke Dock, Wales
SA72 6UN

+44 (0)333 004 1400

ABERDEEN

Floating Wind Innovation
Centre (FLOWIC)
ORE Catapult
W-Zero-1
Energy Transition Zone
Altens Industrial Estate
Hareness Road
Aberdeen
AB12 3LE

CORNWALL

Hayle Marine Renewables
Business Park
North Quay
Hayle, Cornwall
TR27 4DD

+44 (0)1872 322 119

GRIMSBY

O&M Centre of Excellence
ORE Catapult, Port Office
Cleethorpe Road
Grimsby
DN31 3LL

+44 (0)333 004 1400

BLYTH

National Renewable
Energy Centre
Offshore House
Albert Street, Blyth
Northumberland
NE24 1LZ

+44 (0)1670 359555

LEVENMOUTH

Levenmouth Demonstration
Turbine
Ajax Way
Leven
KY8 3RS

+44 (0)1670 357649

LOWESTOFT

OrbisEnergy
Wilde Street
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR32 1XH

+44 (0)1502 563368