



Supporting companies to become more competitive within the Offshore Wind Supply Chain

Scope & Guidance  
North East England Cohort  
April 2025

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## Aim

The F4OR Programme is designed to help UK companies measure their current operations against the standards required to supply to the offshore renewables industry; and take the necessary steps to enter and / or grow in the market.

F4OR is an intermediate intensity programme which aims to support the UK supply chain to get ready to bid for work in the offshore renewable energy sector. The F4OR Programme supports the development of an increasingly competent, capable and competitive UK offshore renewable energy supply chain – maximising opportunity for the UK supply chain, both domestically and globally.

F4OR, which includes the principles of the well-respected Fit 4 Nuclear 'Business Excellence' model, has been developed by the Nuclear AMRC and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult. The programme also includes a comprehensive parallel sector specific strand to focus on the offshore renewables market.

The F4OR process will identify any gaps in a company's operations in terms of meeting the standards expected by project developers and their supply chain partners in key areas of business operation and performance.

As this cohort of F4OR is funded by North East Combined Authority (NECA) the focus will be on supporting companies to develop capabilities and competencies for the Offshore Wind sector.

## Target

This business transformation opportunity is targeted towards companies in the following categories:

- Established North East England North East England companies who work in other sectors who wish to transition into the offshore wind sector.
- Companies already working in the offshore wind sector wishing to benchmark their capabilities and competencies against an established framework to enhance their future direction and growth opportunities.

### Please note:

**Progression through the programme will require significant resources on the part of the participating company.** Companies should only apply if they have a strategic objective to enter into or grow their presence in the offshore wind market and have senior management commitment to provide the necessary resources to implement recommended improvements.

## Opportunity Summary

<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of an increasingly competent, capable and competitive North East England offshore wind supply chain – maximising opportunity for the supply chain, both domestically and globally.</li> <li>Support growth of the UK offshore wind sector by increasing turnover, jobs and exports of North East England supply chain companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant companies must be UK-registered with a turnover of &gt;£1m and headcount of &gt;10 employees.</li> <li>Applicant companies must have competence / expertise in one or more of the following areas: Manufacturing, Assembly, Fabrication, Service Provision or Engineering.</li> <li>Applicants must provide evidence as part of their application of a desire to work within or have an existing foothold in the offshore wind supply chain <b>and</b> demonstrate senior management commitment to provide the necessary resources to implement recommended improvements.</li> <li>Applicants must have ISO:9001 accreditation or be actively working towards securing it if they fit into Medium or large organisation definition</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	To help North East England companies measure their current operations against the standards required to supply the offshore wind industry; and take the necessary steps to enter and / or grow in the market.
<b>Activity Duration and Expectations</b>	<p>Support activities with selected companies will be delivered by ORE Catapult and their partners and expected to commence from in Jun/July 2025.</p> <p>The programme will last between on average 18 months from the kick-off meeting (dependent on the application route chosen), with focused assessment, guidance and workshops provided by ORE Catapult and their partners.</p> <p>Successful applicants will appoint a “F4OR Business Lead” to act as the primary point of contact and project coordinator, and a “F4OR Senior Sponsor” who is able to facilitate access to the required team members and guide colleagues with respect to prioritising this work.</p> <p>Participating companies will be required to facilitate calls, face to face meetings (where possible) or online meetings with ORE Catapult and their partners, to allow detailed understanding of their business and support and guidance to be provided.</p> <p>Participating companies will be responsible for addressing action plans, and submitting relevant evidence, in their own time with guidance from ORE Catapult and their partners. Failure to do so will result in companies not being granted the coveted F4OR Granted status.</p>
<b>Support Type</b>	<p>This opportunity will provide successful applicants with an assessment of their current capabilities against industry requirements, and/or sector specific knowledge sharing and development of action plans to meet industry recognised standards.</p> <p>Depending on the application route chosen, company action plans will be established based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both a Business Excellence and Sector Specific self-assessment in combination with a verification assessment by a programme expert.</li> <li>only a Business Excellence self-assessments in combination with a verification assessment by a programme expert.</li> <li>only a Sector Specific self-assessments in combination with a verification assessment by a programme expert.</li> </ul>
<b>Applications Open</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 (09:00)
<b>Applications Close</b>	23rd Feb 2025 (17:00)

Table 1: F4OR Opportunity Summary

## Eligibility

To be supported through the F4OR Programme, the Applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK-registered company. (Please note, academic institutions and RTO's are not eligible for this opportunity).
- Show a clear intent to diversify their business into offshore wind or demonstrate existing capability in the sector.
- Have competence / expertise in one or more of the following areas: Manufacturing, Assembly, Fabrication, Service or Engineering.
- Have a turnover of >£500k and headcount of >7 employees
- Can clearly articulate their desire to enter / grow their presence in the offshore wind market.
- Hold ISO:9001 accreditation from a recognised body or be actively working towards this if they are Medium or large enterprise.
- Be open minded to identified needs and deficiencies as a business and have a proactive attitude to business improvement and constructive feedback.
- Provide detailed information to ORE Catapult and their dedicated programme partners to allow support delivery.
- Demonstrate how the support would impact their business and the additionality it would provide by participating in the programme.

## Application Process

The application process includes a number of distinct stages which are outlined below.

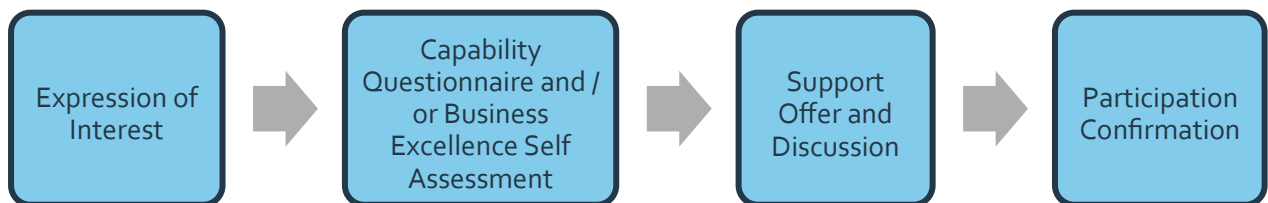


Table 2 below outlines the format, objective, and next steps for each stage.

<b>Expression of Interest</b>	Online form, via F4OR webpage.	Collect basic information about applicant organisation and their preferred route of support.	All Expressions of Interest (EOIs) shall be reviewed by the F4OR Team and our Funders and a "long list" of potential participants produced. "Long listed" organisations shall be invited to participate in the next stage.
<b>Capability Questionnaire and / or Business Excellence Self-Assessment</b>	Online, via the F4OR portal dependent on which application route selected.	Collect detailed information about applicant organisation, including current status of core management systems (where appropriate).	All Capability Questionnaires (CQ) and Business Excellence Self Assessments (BESA) shall be reviewed by the F4OR Team and our funders a "short list" of potential participants produced. "Short listed" organisations shall be invited to participate in the programme.
<b>Support Offer and Discussion</b>	Invitation to participate via email, potential follow-on discussion via phone or MS Teams.	Review details of EOI, CQ and / or BESA with applicant organisation where necessary.	Participation confirmed or not, by mutual agreement.
<b>Participation Confirmation</b>	Confirmation via email and requirement to return Support Offer Letter to F4OR team	Confirm participation of organisation.	Programme commences.

Table 2: F4OR Application

## Programme Routes

Working in collaboration, ORE Catapult have devised three independent routes which prospective supply chain companies can embark upon depending on the levels of experience / exposure to either the Offshore Wind Industry or other "F4x" Programmes.

The intent of having differing programme routes will allow ORE Catapult to deliver to more supply chain companies and speaks to the individuality of each company's journey.

The following table highlights the three different application routes available and eligibility criteria for each.

Route Title	Entry Criteria	Programme Duration	Description of Programme
<b>Classical F4OR Route</b>	Companies seeking to move into the Offshore Wind industry with limited prior experience / track record	Average 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Self-assessment</li> <li>Business Excellence (BE) &amp; Sector Specific (SS) verification assessment by experts</li> <li>Action plan definition by BE &amp; SS coach</li> <li>SS module Delivery</li> <li>Pre-Granting Verification Visit</li> <li>Granting Panel / Interview</li> </ul>
<b>Business Excellence Route</b>	Companies who have Offshore Wind knowledge and experience (can evidence tendering for and winning work in the sector and actively engaging with higher tiers in the sector) but who wish to be externally benchmarked on Business Excellence principles	Average 9 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Self-assessment</li> <li>Business Excellence (BE) verification assessment by experts</li> <li>Action plan definition by BE coach</li> <li>Pre-Granting Verification Visit</li> <li>Granting Panel / Interview</li> </ul>
<b>Sector Specific Route</b>	Companies who have received “F4x” Status within the last 3 years but who do not have Offshore Wind sectoral knowledge	Average 6 – 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Self-assessment</li> <li>Sector Specific (SS) verification assessment by experts</li> <li>Action plan definition by SS coach</li> <li>SS module Delivery</li> <li>Pre-Granting Verification Visit</li> <li>Granting Panel / Interview</li> </ul>

Table 3: F4OR Application Routes

## Expressions of Interest (EOI) – Guidance

An overview of the EOI form is included in Appendix 1 of this document. The EOI itself is available to access [here](#).

- Prior to completing the EOI, please review all questions in advance, and associated word limits. It is recommended you prepare a draft submission offline in advance, involving relevant colleagues as required. Relevant text and information can then be copied into the online EOI form. We also recommend you keep this text as a record of your submission.
- It is important you complete the EOI accurately and honestly.
- Once you have completed the EOI, it is submitted electronically online. Upon submission you shall receive an on-screen confirmation of submission, and an acknowledgement email within 48 hours. The acknowledgement email shall provide details of when you should expect to hear from the F4OR team regarding your application.
- EOIs are reviewed by the F4OR team to produce a long list of potential participants. Selection is based on guiding principles as shown in Table 5 below. These criteria are required to ensure the programme is able to develop a portfolio of granted companies who can offer real value to the offshore wind industry, and to ensure the programme is making best use of the funds provided to deliver it.

- Organisations which are not included in the long list shall be contacted to confirm this. Where relevant, guidance will be provided regarding other supply chain development programmes which may be more appropriate for those organisations.

Area	Criteria
<b>Revenue</b>	>£1m
<b>(Direct) Employees</b>	>10
<b>Product / Service</b>	Expertise in one or more of the following areas: Manufacturing, Assembly, Fabrication, Service Provision or Engineering which is directly applicable to or has transferability to the Offshore Wind sector
<b>Location</b>	North East England based trading entity and majority of product or service-related employees based in the UK
<b>Strategic Focus</b>	Offshore wind must have been identified as an area of strategic opportunity for the company and be recognized as a priority for the company Board of Directors
<b>Contact</b>	Senior manager with Director support
<b>Business Excellence Status</b>	Good, minimum threshold in business excellence areas – ISO 9001 or working towards it for medium or large companies. This is also an advantage for small companies.
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	High, the company must show significant potential to add value to the offshore wind supply chain. Either through high quality product / service delivery, novel product / service delivery or offering products / services which are acknowledged by the industry to be challenging to procure (in line with industry requirements)

Table 4: Key Application Criteria

## Capability Questionnaire and Business Excellence Self-Assessment – Guidance

Organisations who are long listed will be invited to complete a Capability Questionnaire (CQ) and / or Business Excellence Self-Assessment as the second stage of the application process depending on the application route which has been selected and reviewed as part of Stage 1.

A copy of the questions posed in the CQ are available in Appendix 2 of this document and those regarding the Self-Assessment will be shared upon moving into that phase of the process.

- The Capability Questionnaire and Business Excellence Self-Assessment are managed through an online form. The F4OR team will email you links to these forms at the point you are invited to progress to this stage.
- You will have around 10 days to complete the Capability Questionnaire and Business Excellence Self-Assessment. To ensure you complete both in an accurate and timely fashion we would recommend you appoint a "F4OR Business Lead" to act as the primary point of contact and project coordinator in your organisation, and a "F4OR Senior Sponsor" who is able to facilitate access to the required team members and guide colleagues with respect to prioritising this work.

### Capability Questionnaire:

This is used to collect more detailed information about your organisation, with a number of metrics of specific relevance to the programme. Please complete this using existing management information.



The Capability Questionnaire shall require input from your finance, operations, HSEQ and commercial teams. We would recommend that the F4OR Business Lead works with these teams to collate the relevant information and populate the Capability Questionnaire on the portal.

## Business Excellence Self-Assessment:

The self-assessment has been designed so that the six sections can be separated out and completed by different people (depending on the size of your business) to share the task. We would however advise that the whole response receives senior management approval prior to your submission.

The scope of the Business Excellence Self-Assessment is broad and covers the following areas:

- Strategy and Leadership
- People Excellence
- Health, Safety and Environment
- Quality
- Design and Project Delivery
- Process and Operations

We would recommend that the F4OR Business Lead works with relevant teams to self-assess the status of the relevant management systems in these areas.

A separate document will be provided to you upon being asked to progress to this stage.

This document lists the questions you should answer to complete the online F4OR self-assessment. It is intended to help you prepare to fill out the online self-assessment and keep track of your responses. We recommend that you print this document to use to prepare your answers before starting the online self-assessment.

It is critical that this self-assessment process is completed in an open and honest manner.

## Submission Guidance

The application form for this opportunity is available from the ORE catapult website or by clicking [here](#).

Applicants will be able to complete and submit this form until the stated EoI Application closing date and time.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You will **NOT** be able to save and return to your application responses within the form. We strongly recommend that you draft responses to the questions outlined before copying into the form for submission.

Once submitted, a confirmation email will inform the Applicant that the submission has been received. Please contact the F4OR team at [F4OR@ore.catapult.org.uk](mailto:F4OR@ore.catapult.org.uk) if you do not receive a confirmation email after submitting a response. We recommend that you check your junk mail before doing this and wait 48 hours before contacting.

## Key Dates

The following table provides a list of key dates for this opportunity:

Task	Start Date	Duration	End Date
Launch/Release EOI Form	07/04/2025	6 Weeks	18/05/2025
Applications & Longlist Down-selection	19/05/2025	2 Weeks	01/06/2025
Stage 2 Application Submission	02/06/2025	2 Weeks	15/06/2025
Successful Companies Notified	16/06/2025		16/06/2025
Kick-off (KO) Meeting	07/07/2025		

## Participation Offer and Discussion

Organisations short-listed for participation in the programme may be invited to attend a short call with the F4OR team. The call is an opportunity for both sides to discuss the programme and satisfy themselves that participation in the programme is appropriate for the organisation and the programme. This call may potentially recommend a different route than selected, dependent on questions answered.

No additional questions or assessment are included in this phase, only a discussion on the programme, ability to fund (where appropriate) and information collected about the organisation.

## Confidential Information and Data Protection

During the F4OR application process a range of relevant data is collected by the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult. This data is collected to ensure the ORE Catapult select appropriate organisations for participation in the programme. It may also be used by ORE Catapult as the basis to recommend other relevant programmes, products and services to your organisation.

### **Expression of Interest:**

The data within the Expression of Interest will be shared with Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult. All of the information held by the ORE Catapult relating to the Expression of Interest will be processed and managed in accordance with our obligations and duties under the: Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Capability Questionnaire, Online Self-Assessment:**

The business information you provide in response to the online questionnaire and self-assessment will be held securely. Operational and performance data will only be used by ORE Catapult and the delivery partners for the purpose of your company's participation in the F4OR programme.

### **General:**

If you have any queries regarding the F4OR programme, please email [F4OR@ore.catapult.org.uk](mailto:F4OR@ore.catapult.org.uk)

Fit 4 Offshore Renewables questionnaire, online self-assessment and all content is copyright.

**Contact Information:**

The ORE Catapult may use your contact details to approach you about future activities and initiatives (programmes, projects, events, training opportunities, etc.).

## Appendix 1 F4OR Expression of Interest Questions

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1. Company Name
2. Companies House Number
3. Contact Person
4. Email
5. Street Address
6. Mobile Phone Number
7. Landline Number
8. Website URL
9. Number of Direct, Full-Time Employees
10. Number of Indirect Employees\* (e.g. contractors)
11. Annual Turnover (£)
12. Which route do you feel most applicable to your business (more information can be found in table 3 of the scope and guidance). Please note that selection does not guarantee this route and an alternative may be discussed.

1 – Classic Route

2 – Business Excellence

3 – Sector Specific

13. Overview of business activities in the UK?\* (Word Count 300 Max)
14. What products and / or services do you currently provide from the facility named above?\* (Word Count 500 Max)
15. Which market sectors do you work in today? Please describe the sector and detail the percentage of your business that comes from each sector.
16. Sector 1 e.g. Offshore Wind xx% 18. Sector 2 e.g. Oil & Gas  
xx% 19. Sector 3 e.g. Subsea Survey xx%
20. Does your company currently supply the offshore wind sector? If so, who are your key customers? (Word Count 300 Max)
21. What relevant accreditations does your organisation have? (Word Count 300 Max)
22. Has your organisation identified offshore wind as a strategic opportunity for growth? If so, how will your Senior Management Team act to ensure that resources are available to facilitate engagement and deployment through your company in the F4OR programme, if selected? (500 words max).

Some short simple responses to the following questions will help to focus your replies. Whilst high level detail if available is very helpful, "Not at this time", would be an equally valid answer.

- 1) Is Offshore Wind referred to in your Strategic Plan?
- 2) How do you maintain strategic awareness of the business opportunities in Offshore Renewables and Offshore Wind?
- 3) Do you have a plan to deploy this to relevant parts of your business?
- 4) Do you have one or several senior managers who will lead the change required, with the authority

to allocate the necessary resource?

5) Do you have a plan or a process to communicate your strategy both internally and externally?

23. How did you hear about F4OR?

24. Would you like to receive Re-Energise Online, ORE Catapult's monthly email newsletter?

## Appendix 2 F4OR Capability Questionnaire

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Please note that the capability questionnaire will change based on the route most applicable for the company; Full Programme, Business Excellence or Sector Specific. To give an understanding of the questions that might be asked, please see below.

### Company:

- Name
- Registration number
- VAT number
- Ownership
- Website
- Definition (large company, SME, micro-enterprise)
- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Previous offshore renewables experience?
- Registered trading address
- Assessment address

### Contact person:

- Name
- Email
- Job title
- Telephone

### Collaborative or strategic alliances

### Performance

#### *Turnover*

- Turnover reported
- Percentage of turnover from export
- Turnover in-year forecast
- Percent of in-year forecast from export
- EBIT (as percentage of turnover: <0; 0–5%; 5–10%; >10%)

#### *Employment*

- Number of direct employees
- Number of indirect employees

For the following topics, we can accept data in a range of metrics – please use whichever measure you use internally.

#### *Safety (choice of metrics)*

- Number of RIDDOR reported incidents in last year
- Number of lost time accidents in last year

- Number of days since last lost time accident
- Number of H&S training days in last year
- % of H&S audits completed

*Quality (choice of metrics)*

- Number of customer complaints in last year
- % internal scrap or % lost time (services) due to error in last year
- Rework in last year
- Cost of quality in last year
- Number of major non-conformances raised in last year
- Number of minor non-conformances raised in last year
- Number of internal audits completed last year
- Other

*Delivery (choice of metrics)*

- % OTIF (on time in full) last year
- Number of deliveries missed in last year
- Delivery schedule achievement % last year
- Project on-time completion %
- Other

*People (choice of metrics)*

- Productivity added value per employee
- Absence percent
- Training spend per employee per annum
- Staff turnover

*Profitability (choice of metrics)*

- Profitability (choice of metrics)
- Gross profit for last financial year
- Net profit for last financial year
- Gross profit margin
- Net profit margin • Other

*Gearing (choice of metrics)*

- Debt shareholder funds
- Stockturn
- Other

**Products**

- Capability (select relevant areas)
- Bearings, seals & drives
- Castings
- Coatings & treatments (inc heat treatment)
- Enclosures
- Fasteners
- Forgings
- Heating & ventilation
- Heavy fabrications
- Instrumentation & control equipment
- Light and medium fabrications
- Mechanical handling & cranes
- Pipework systems & seals

- Power & data supply
- Precision machining
- Pressure vessels, heat exchangers & tanks
- Pumps & valves
- Steel fabrications
- Testing & inspection
- Workshop equipment
- Ancillary equipment (back-up power, lighting, fire safety ventilation, heating systems, etc)
- Blade technology
- Cables (within turbine, inter-array or export cable)
- Certification
- Coatings and treatments
- Electrical systems (generator, power converter, transformer etc)
- Environmental Survey
- Foundations and structures
- In-situ asset testing and inspection
- Lubrication or hydraulics systems (tanks, pipes, pumps etc)
- Marine operations (vessels, marine coordination, divers etc)
- Material supplier
- Mechanical systems (bearings, gearbox, motors, shafts, brakes, etc)
- PPE
- Remote refurbishing, root cause and component testing
- Sensors, instrumentation, control and communications hardware
- Software and data systems
- Training
- Vessels
- Workshop equipment
- Other

**Suppliers (list)**

**Do you manufacture a product in the UK?**

**UK products and services (list)**

**Products and services manufactured outside the UK**

**Customers (list)**

**Registered client portals (list)**

**Supplier contacts (list)**

**Codes and standards (list)**

**Maintain continuous improvement plan?**

**Accreditations (list) Additional supporting information**

**Agree to data sharing**

