

Interreg EUROPEAN UNION

North-West Europe

OPIN

European Regional Development Fund



OCEAN POWER INNOVATION NETWORK

Innovation Support Scheme

Technology Assessment Processes

Guidelines for Applicants

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1 Introduction

This document sets the context for the Ocean Power Innovation Network Technology Assessment Processes (TAPs) and explains the process for applying for TAP support.

2 About OPIN

The Ocean Power Innovation Network (OPIN) is a 3-year initiative, running from 2019 to 2021. The project has a total project budget of €2.6M, with €1.5M in financial support contributed by Interreg North West Europe from the European Research and Development Fund (ERDF).

OPIN is a cross-sectoral collaborative network that aims to accelerate the growth of the ocean energy sector and its supply chains across the partner regions of Ireland, the UK, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany.

The scope of the OPIN project includes:

- wave, tidal stream, floating offshore wind and hybrid offshore renewable energy systems;
- subsystems, components, materials, enabling technologies, installation, operations and maintenance, decommissioning, related processes and services; and
- energy systems and storage solutions, to enable integration of ocean energy.

The basic premise of OPIN is to encourage both cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration for Offshore Renewable Energy SMEs. Cross-sectoral collaboration will bring already proven expertise, capabilities and products from other sectors into the ocean energy sector. This will help to reduce costs and accelerate technology development.

The Innovation Support Scheme is targeted on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the ocean energy sector and the current or potential value chain.

3 What is a TAP?

OPIN partners offer a high-level Technology Assessment Process to SMEs. This service is free of charge for SMEs on the basis that the process is a doorway to a potential collaboration with OPIN partners for onward technology development. TAP can look at either a whole system, or sub-system, or component level. TAP is an evidence-based assessment conducted through an informal interview process.

OPIN partners will discuss with the technology developer design principles, opportunities to de-risk onward development and the route to commercialisation (product to market). The TAP will look for opportunities to transfer technology from other sectors into ocean energy, or to grow technology that is already within the ocean energy sector

4 TAP Support

TAPs will be delivered by OPIN Project Partners to eligible companies (SMEs in the OPIN regions).

TAPs will be provided by a small team comprising OPIN partners, depending on which partners are best placed, in terms of location or expertise, to the suit the SME and the topic of the TAP.

The SME is not required to provide any financial contribution to the cost of a TAP but staff must be available for meetings and any information necessary to conduct the TAP must be available to the TAP provider.

Further information, including the general eligibility criteria applicants must meet, is provided in the [OPIN Innovation Support Scheme Guidance to Applicants](#). The value of the service provided will be **€2,000**.

5 TAP Application

SMEs may apply for a TAP voucher at any time. The OPIN Steering Group will consider TAP applications on a monthly basis.

The first stage is to complete a [TAP Application Form](#) and an [SME Declaration Form](#) which should be submitted to OPIN@seai.ie.

Original documents should be sent by post to OPIN Project, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, 3 Park Place, Hatch Street Upper, Dublin 2, D02 FX65, Ireland.

Forms should be completed in English.

Information provided in TAP Applications will be treated as confidential. For information regarding the treatment of personal data applicants should refer to the **Personal Data** section in the [OPIN Innovation Support Scheme Guidance to Applicants](#).

Before applying, it is recommended that the company gets in touch with one of the OPIN TAP delivery partners to discuss the project idea and TAP process.

| OPIN TAP Providers | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Country/region | Organisation | Contact | Telephone | Email |
| Ireland & UK | ORE Catapult | Michael Smailes | +441670543008 | Michael.smailes@ore.catapult.org.uk |
| Belgium | Sirris | Bart Teerlinck | +32498919394 | Bart.Teerlinck@sirris.be |
| Netherlands | DMEC | Justin den Hartog | +31650895090 | justin@dutchmarineenergy.com |

Table 5.1: OPIN TAP Providers

6 TAP Evaluation and Selection

Evaluation and selection will be completed by the OPIN Steering Group once a month. Evaluation of applications will be based on the following criteria:

General criteria:

1. SME eligibility for receipt of OPIN services, as set out in the [OPIN Innovation Support Scheme Guidance to Applicants](#).
2. Completion of the TAP application form and provision of background documentation

Strength of the Scientific/Technical Approach, as evidenced by:

1. the innovativeness of the idea and the approach/concept;
2. the significance of the scientific or technical challenge, and
3. the thoroughness of the (concept) presentation.

Ability to competently carry out the project/development, as evidenced by:

1. the qualifications of the key staff, subcontractors and consultants, if any, and the level of adequacy of methods, equipment and facilities required for the design and development of the concept/approach; and
2. the soundness and level of adequacy of the development plan to show progress toward proving the feasibility of the concept.

Impact, as evidenced by:

1. the significance of the technical and/or economic benefits of the concept, if successful;
2. the likelihood that the development of the concept under investigation could lead to a marketable product or process; and
3. the likelihood that the concept/approach could attract development funding and/or investments.

The decision of the OPIN Steering Group cannot be appealed but when an application is rejected, the applicant can contact the OPIN TAP provider to discuss the possibility of a new application. Applicants will be notified of the decision shortly after the Steering Group meeting has taken place.

7 TAP Agreement

Before the TAP can start, an agreement must be signed between the SME and the TAP provider. The agreement will be sent by the TAP provider to the applicant.

The applicant must sign and return the agreement, together with a signed [De minimis Self Declaration Form](#), as soon as possible. Work on the TAP will commence when these documents have been received and checked.

8 TAP Reporting and Follow-Up

On completion of the TAP, a report will be provided to the SME. The SME must confirm receipt of the TAP report and complete a short **TAP Recipient Feedback Statement**. To allow OPIN to collect evidence on the impact of the services provided, a further short report will be requested one year after completion of the TAP. These reports will address the following:

On completion:

- Did the TAP help you to consider the innovation described in the TAP application?
- How do you plan to use the outputs from the TAP?
 - Further refinement / development of the idea – please outline
 - Development of a new product – please outline
 - Development of a new market for your company - please outline
 - Do not plan to take this further – explain why
- What timeframe do you envisage for commercialisation of the product?
- What barriers do you still need to overcome before commercialisation?
- What additional support might help you with commercialisation?

Follow-Up:

- How have you used the TAP Report?
 - Further refinement / development of the idea – please outline
 - Development of a new product – please outline
 - Development of a new market for your company - please outline
 - Do not plan to take this further – explain why
- What timeframe do you envisage for commercialisation of the product?
- What barriers do you still need to overcome before commercialisation?
- What additional support might help you with commercialisation?

The information provided in these reports will be treated as confidential but will be used by OPIN partners for reporting of outputs to the Interreg North West Europe Programme. On the use of personal data applicants should refer to the **Personal Data** section in the [OPIN Innovation Support Scheme Guidance to Applicants](#).

OPIN partners will also discuss the feedback report with the SME to identify any appropriate mainstream report to assist with the next stage of the process or refer the SME to appropriate sources of assistance.