



The Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway

What is it?

The Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway will act as a catalyst for transforming the Solent Maritime region. The Solent's maritime sector is a strong, vibrant, world-leading industry. With a powerful £5.8bn maritime economy and 152,000-strong workforce, the Solent is the beating heart of the world's marine and maritime sector.

The challenge is coordination across the ecosystem and providing the path of least resistance for innovation, addressing opportunities and access to this pulsating community. Creating a "One Stop Shop", named the Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway, is our opportunity to provide a single point of access, coherence and an enterprise approach to building a flourishing environment of exciting ideas, strong relationships and pioneering innovative technology.

Who is involved?

The Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone, Connected Places Catapult and Maritime UK Solent will create the Vision Statement for the Maritime Innovation Gateway, how regional, national and international stakeholders will interact with it and how we coordinate our wealth of activity. In turn, this will establish clear, impactful next steps that will build on existing initiatives to support the region and maritime industry.

About the Solent

As the nation's global gateway, with 340 miles of coastline, three islands, three peninsulas, three major international gateway ports, and an emerging freeport, the Solent boasts a rich maritime heritage and is home to world-leading maritime organisations, leading the way in emerging disruptive technologies, including regulators, researchers, defence primes and large technology companies.

We are also home to leading consultancies, innovators, SMEs boat builders and manufacturers.

In a fast-changing world, the maritime sector is facing several changes - the transition to unlocking net zero, strengthening resilience, driving efficiency and digital transformation.

These challenges create significant opportunities for innovators in the Solent to coordinate activity and build on the Solent's position as a global leader in maritime innovation.

How will it work?

The Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway is a ground breaking collaboration introduced by Maritime UK Solent, the Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone and Connected Places Catapult. The Gateway will coordinate the region's exceptional business ecosystem, and leverage its unique elements and wealth of existing activity to ensure the Solent maximises its potential on the global stage.

The Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway will establish a business ecosystem, easily accessed by the Solent's innovators, researchers and businesses and a single point of contact for international and national investors. It will provide a hub and spoke approach, utilising existing innovation hubs and providing a "One Stop Shop" for customers, collaborators, and innovators through a digital platform; and will provide an accessible ecosystem for investors to find new opportunities and for innovators to access industry challenges and their potential future customers.

We will work with existing clusters to ensure that coherence is achieved; that the digital platform reflects the true extent of the facilities available, recognising and advertising business support across the complex innovation system. We will ask stakeholders to help build the vision, share knowledge, industry challenges and opportunities to support Solent businesses to utilise their entrepreneurial flair to enable the Solent to exploit its strengths and its unique selling points to attract inward investment.



About the Partners

Maritime UK Solent

Maritime UK Solent is the regional body within the Maritime UK national network that brings together the Solent's maritime strengths and assets and champions the region as a globally significant maritime cluster.

Our current plan is framed around four locally-significant priorities for the marine and maritime sector, each with a series of supporting future actions to guide a return to prosperity – see [here](#).

Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone

The Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone (Solent MEZ), established December 2019, is an umbrella organisation comprising a consortium of the Royal Navy, industry (including small and medium sized enterprises), government and academia working collaboratively in creating a centre of excellence for maritime research, innovation, education, skills and training.

The Solent MEZ consortium connects networks regionally and nationally, collaborates on key maritime initiatives to support the maritime sector in its broadest sense. Through an enterprise approach it partners with other regions, maritime clusters and cross-sectors to benefit maritime businesses and institutions. With the mantra 'Connect. Collaborate. Deliver.' the Solent MEZ optimises the enterprise approach to tackle key maritime issues.

Connected Place Catapult

The Connected Places Catapult is the UK's innovation accelerator for cities, transport and places. We provide impartial 'innovation as a service' for public bodies, businesses, and infrastructure providers to catalyse step-change improvements in the way people live, work and travel. We connect businesses and public sector leaders to cutting-edge research to spark innovation and grow new markets.

Decarbonisation of maritime and ports is a key focus area for Connected Places Catapult, having delivered the Department for Transport Ports of the Future study in 2020 and our Smart Ports use cases in 2021, working with ports around the UK in collaboration with Royal Haskoning DHV. Ports and the maritime sector in general have significant impacts on the UK economy and communities, both regionally and nationally, offering the potential to level up economies, lead the way in transport decarbonisation and stimulate cross-sector innovation..



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