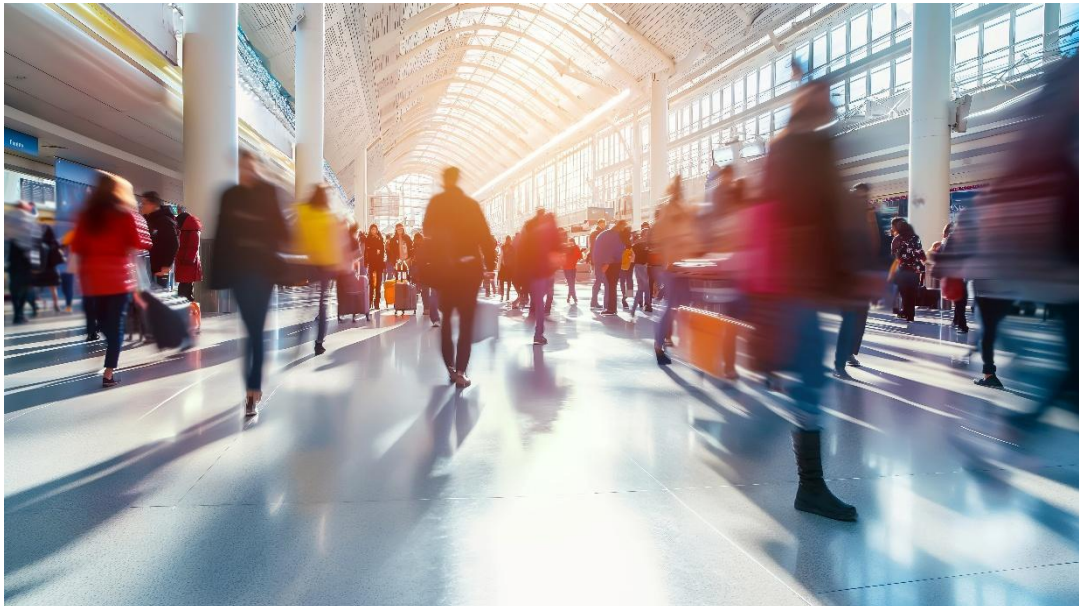


Hitachi Launches Startup Challenge, Calling on Innovators Worldwide to Shape the Future of Mobility and Manufacturing Solutions

- The Hitachi Startup Challenge FY26 invites innovative startups and scaleups worldwide to join an eight-week programme, working with participating Hitachi Business Units to develop Proof of Concept proposals, with successful teams potentially progressing to a pilot.
- The Challenge seeks solutions across five focus areas spanning mobility and manufacturing: Intermodal Mobility, Infrastructure & Vehicle Intelligence, Physical AI & Automation, Smart Engineering, and Wildcard Frontier Innovation.
- Applications are open until 8 November 2026.



London, 24 September, 2026 — Hitachi, Ltd. (TSE: 6501, “Hitachi”), in partnership with L Marks, launched the Hitachi Startup Challenge FY26, a global open innovation programme inviting market-ready startups and scaleups to address five challenges across mobility and manufacturing. Selected companies will work with participating Hitachi Business Units during an eight-week programme to develop a Proof of Concept plan, culminating in the Final Competition Day in February 2027, where successful solutions will have the opportunity to progress to pilot and potentially scale across Hitachi.

The programme is jointly owned and operated by the Corporate Venturing Office and eMobility team of Hitachi’s Strategic Social Innovation Business Unit (SSIB), in close collaboration with participating Business Units, including Hitachi Rail, and delivered in partnership with L Marks, a UK-based corporate innovation specialist. This cross-business approach is designed to identify solutions that can create value across mobility systems and manufacturing operations.

With passenger numbers rising, multimodal transport expected to expand and industrial operations becoming increasingly digital, Hitachi has set the challenge categories in line with its strategy to advance sustainable mobility and transform manufacturing through digital technologies. The Hitachi Startup Challenge FY26 is seeking solutions in the following five areas:

1. **Intermodal Mobility:** Solutions that give operators a single view of a network across all transport modes, help them make better use of existing capacity, and improve end-to-end passenger experience.
2. **Infrastructure & Vehicle Intelligence:** Sensing, monitoring, and perception technologies that create real-time data of assets, infrastructure, and operating environments, enabling predictive maintenance and precise localisation for autonomous vehicles.
3. **Physical AI & Automation:** Robotics and Physical AI solutions for inspection, maintenance, operational processes and complex manufacturing tasks across mobility, energy, infrastructure enablement, and manufacturing, including autonomous ground vehicles for factory and logistics operations.
4. **Smart Engineering:** Solutions that connect engineering data across the product lifecycle, automate the processing of legacy documents and requirements, and speed up design with AI agents.
5. **Wildcard Frontier Innovation:** Innovative solutions beyond the core challenge areas with the potential to redefine the future of mobility and create value for customers, operators, and society. This could include emerging areas such as post-quantum cybersecurity, advanced and lightweight materials, circular economy solutions, next-generation mobility concepts, and other breakthrough innovations.

The programme is seeking market-ready solutions with a proven team and demonstrated traction.

Seishi Hanaoka, General Manager, Corporate Venturing Office, Strategic Social Innovation Business Unit, Hitachi, Ltd. said: “At Hitachi, corporate venturing is about combining the speed, creativity and technologies of startups with our deep domain expertise and global business capabilities to create meaningful social innovation business and societal impact for a harmonised society. By working with our Business Units from the outset, the Hitachi Startup Challenge aims to turn promising ideas into solutions that can be validated, deployed and scaled across mobility and manufacturing. We look forward to working with ambitious startups and scaleups to shape a more reliable, cleaner, and more connected future.”

Daniel Saunders, Chief Executive of L Marks, said: “We are excited to partner with Hitachi and launch the Hitachi Startup Challenge. Together, we are focused on some of the most important opportunities shaping the future of mobility and manufacturing—from connecting transport networks more intelligently to using AI, data and robotics to transform infrastructure, engineering and industrial operations. Over the next few months, we will identify exceptional companies that can turn these opportunities into real-world solutions and help Hitachi take them from Proof of Concept to scale.”

At the Final Competition Day in February 2027, each company will present its Proof of Concept plan together with the relevant Business Unit members to a panel of senior Hitachi leaders. The panel will select the winning teams, which will have the opportunity to pilot and potentially scale their solutions across Hitachi’s mobility and manufacturing operations.

Applications close on 8 November 2026 at 11:59pm GMT.

Find out more: <https://www.hitachi.com/en-eu/about/events/hitachi-startup-challenge-2026/>

Apply here: <https://bridge.lmarks.com/programmes/hitachi>

About Hitachi, Ltd.

Through its Social Innovation Business (SIB) that brings together IT, OT (Operational Technology) and products, Hitachi aims to be a global leader in continuously transforming social infrastructure through digital, contributing to a harmonised society where the environment, wellbeing, and economic growth are in balance. Hitachi operates worldwide across four sectors – Digital Systems & Services, Energy, Mobility, and Connective Industries – as well as a Strategic SIB Business Unit focused on new growth areas. With Lumada at its core, Hitachi creates value by combining data, technology and domain knowledge to solve customer and social challenges. Revenues for FY2025 (ended March 31, 2026) totalled 10,586.7 billion yen, with 606 consolidated subsidiaries and approximately 290,000 employees worldwide. Visit us at www.hitachi.com.

About L Marks

L Marks is the global leader in corporate innovation, trusted by many of the world’s most respected brands and organisations to identify, validate, and implement transformative solutions. Through its global network spanning over 80 countries, L Marks discovers more than 10,000 startups and scaleups annually and has enabled over 500 to pilot with corporate partners, achieving an industry-leading deployment rate of 78%. Its alumni have collectively raised over \$9.4 billion in venture funding. With over a decade of experience in delivering 120+ award-winning innovation programmes across Europe, North America, and Asia, L Marks is embedding new structures and technologies, driving an innovative culture, and ultimately fuelling sustainable growth. To learn more, visit lmarks.com.

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