

Climate Smart Cities Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions

Updates to the FAQ will be uploaded weekly. The deadline to submit questions is Friday, 15 January 2021 at 17.00 GMT.

ABOUT THE OPEN CALL

Why are you running the Open Call?

We are running the Open Call to find out about the aspirations of cities worldwide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and creating thriving communities. This information will help us to design the Climate Smart Cities Challenge and select the partner cities who will help us run city-based challenges, planned to launch in 2021.

Are there multiple phases to this Challenge? What phase is launching now?

Yes, this is the first step in developing the full Challenge. The full Challenge is expected to launch in October 2021 at the World Expo 2020 Dubai (1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022).

How is this funded?

The Climate Smart Cities Challenge Open Call is an initiative from Teknikföretagen, Viable Cities, UN-Habitat, Smart City Sweden, Vinnova, and the Swedish Energy Agency, delivered by Nesta Challenges. Teknikföretagen is funding the Open Call.

ENTRY

How do you enter the open call?

Visit the website <https://challenges.org/climate-smart-cities/> and click on the Apply button. This will take you to our online application form where you will be able to answer the required questions. A PDF of the application form can be found at <https://challenges.org/climate-smart-cities/>.

What are the key dates of the Open Call?

The Open Call launches on 9 November 2020 and closes on 22 January 2021 at 17.00 GMT.

When is the deadline to submit?

Friday, 22 January 2021 at 17.00 GMT.

How do I withdraw my entry?

If you would like to withdraw your entry please email climatesmartcities@nesta.org.uk.

Who can enter?

Entries can be made by both public and private organisations (including I/NGO's) on behalf of a city. The lead applicant may be the city/municipal government or equivalent. Alternatively, a private-sector agency or a public-private partnership with responsibility for public services may be the lead applicant, but must include the relevant city/municipal government or equivalent as a partner on the application. As part of your application you will be asked to describe the level of support that this proposal has from the senior decision-makers, such as city managers, elected officials or official committees in your city and provide evidence of this in the form of a letter of support, if possible.

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How are you defining a city?

The term 'city' includes a settled place of any size population (there is no minimum population size). A 'city' can be a multi-city region or metropolitan area comprising more than one contiguous municipality or local authority or equivalent.

What are you looking for in an application?

We want you to:

- Tell us about your city's aspirations to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions whilst creating a good future for all
- Present a problem that is specific and solvable in the near-term, meaning potential solutions could be introduced, adapted and scaled within the next five years
- Indicate a willingness to work with a global community of solution-providers and investors and to commit resources to test and implement solutions to your problem in your city

The criteria your application will be scored against includes:

- **Alignment with the Open Call statement:** Is the topic in-scope and does it address a challenge related to the statement?
- **Open innovation:** Is the problem one that can plausibly be addressed by open innovation, (i.e. you can clarify a clear goal which is open to multiple approaches being taken to solve it)?
- **Potential for impact, scale and innovation:** Will solving this challenge make a big difference, will it generate new approaches, and will these approaches be adopted more widely?
- **Capability and feasibility:** Do you have a good understanding of the challenge and what it will take to solve it? Does the application come from, or is it formally endorsed by, a city government, or a local or regional agency with responsibility for that city? Are you able to support solution-providers with testing, trialling and/or demonstrating solutions?

What are some examples of challenges, problems or barriers that are suitable?

We want to hear about specific challenges/problems/barriers that could be introduced, adapted and scaled within the next five years. For example,

- Converting the city's bus fleet to low-emission technologies
- Reducing methane emissions from city-owned landfills
- Retrofitting city-owned buildings' heating and cooling systems
- Installation of small-scale renewables on social housing
- Urban food production on disused land
- Circular economy models for city procurement
- Smart approaches to encourage behavioural change around personal emissions
- Green roof development and scaling
- Redesign of city streets and shared public spaces
- Methods for engagement and involvement of citizens and civil society
- Smart approaches for affordable housing and reduced urban segregation
- Fast ways to achieve better conditions for active mobility (walking, cycling, public transport) in cities
- Smart approaches for integrating perspectives of health and equality in urban remake

These are just examples and we want to hear about specific challenges/problems/barriers relevant to your city.

Note that policy barriers or funding shortfalls are likely not suitable for this context.

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Is the Challenge aimed at supporting pilot projects and proof of concepts, or fully implemented solutions?

This will depend on the nature of the specific challenges, but it is anticipated that the Challenge would aim to support solutions moving from pilot stage at the start (2021) to be fully implementable by the end of the challenge (2022/2023).

Are challenges that are about offsetting emissions in scope?

Yes.

How are you defining greenhouse gas emissions?

According to the [US EPA](#), at the global scale, the key greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are:

- Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- Methane (CH₄)
- Nitrous oxide (N₂O)
- Fluorinated gases (F-gases)

Can a city submit more than one application?

Yes, you may submit more than one entry to the Open Call.

Can you enter in partnership with another organisation?

Yes, we will accept applications with multiple partners but there must be one lead organisation. If the lead applicant is not the city/local government, the city/local government should be a partner applicant.

Is there funding available?

No. The Open Call is the first step in selecting cities to partner with to develop city-based challenges in 2021.

But what about funding for the future solutions providers?

When the open innovation competition launches in 2021, yes, there will be prize funding available for the solutions providers. The amount of funding is not yet finalised.

Would the participating city be required to pay for their solution, or will this be funded?

The Climate Smart Cities Challenge anticipates awarding prize money to solution providers. The city may choose to go on to procure a solution developed as part of the Challenge but would not be required to procure a solution. If it chooses to do so, the city would follow its own requirements.

Is there a winner? What happens to cities that get selected? How many cities will be selected?

This first stage is an Open Call. We will shortlist up to 20 cities who will then be invited into further discussions about partnering with us to run an open innovation challenge in their city in 2021. We aim to inform the shortlisted cities by 1 March 2021. We hope to eventually select 3 cities to take part in the challenge to be fully launched in October 2021.

Who will be reviewing the application?

Applications to the Open Call will be assessed by representatives of the partner organisations including Teknikföretagen, Viable Cities, UN-Habitat, Swedish Energy Agency, Smart City Sweden, Vinnova, and Nesta Challenges.

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When will applicants be notified of the outcome of their application?

We will aim to inform all applicants of the shortlisted entries by 1 March 2021.

What language can I submit my application in?

All applications must be made in English.

THE OVERALL CHALLENGE

What are challenge prizes?

Challenge prizes offer a reward to whoever can first or most effectively meet a defined challenge. Through a public competition, challenge prizes aim to tap into and engage the broadest possible community of innovators to solve a specific problem or challenge.

Rather than specifying what a solution must look like, challenge prizes set out a clearly defined goal, along with information on how success will be measured and invite problem-solvers to propose how they think it could be solved. This approach allows for a wide range of solutions to be considered. For more information and examples of challenge prizes [see here](#).

What do you mean by testbed?

We anticipate that organisations who compete in the city-based challenges will need to test, trial or demonstrate their solutions in close to real-world conditions. Broadly speaking, we are keen to partner with cities that can support this testing. The details will depend on the nature of your challenge. A testbed enables innovation to be tested in collaboration among users, providers and, often, regulators and other relevant institutions.

A testbed can be a physical place in the city but it doesn't have to be - for instance it could instead involve access to datasets to experiment with, access to city assets or infrastructure, regulatory permission to test out an innovation, or an expedited route to public procurement. We are interested in hearing how you would approach testing innovation or hosting pilots or demos in your city. For more background, consider Nesta's report, [Testing Innovation in the Real World](#).

How can I stay up to date about the programme?

To stay up to date, please continue to regularly check the website challenges.org/climate-smart-cities/ and follow us on social media at [@NestaChallenges](#).

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Who is running the Open Call?

The Climate Smart Cities Challenge Open Call is an initiative of Teknikföretagen, Viable Cities, UN-Habitat, Smart City Sweden, Vinnova, and the Swedish Energy Agency, delivered by Nesta Challenges. Nesta Challenges is designing and administering the Open Call application process.

Who is Nesta Challenges?

Nesta Challenges exists to design challenge prizes that help solve pressing problems that lack solutions. We shine a spotlight where it matters and incentivise people to solve these issues.

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We are independent supporters of change to help communities thrive and inspire the best places and most diverse groups of people around the world to take action.

We support the boldest and bravest ideas to become real, and seed long term change to advance society and build a better future for everyone. Nesta Challenges is part of the global innovation foundation Nesta.

Whom should I contact with any further questions?

If you have further questions please submit them to climatesmartcities@nesta.org.uk. Updates to the FAQ will be uploaded to the website weekly. The deadline to submit questions is Friday, 15 January 2021 at 17.00 GMT.