

[News story: Cleaner and more efficient railways: apply for contracts](#)

The £3.5 million funding opportunity for businesses will encourage innovation in the UK rail sector, demonstrate new technologies to customers and industry and build better railways for everyone.

Innovate UK is launching this competition on behalf of the [Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#).

It is being run through the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI).

Growing demand and expectations

[Statistics show](#) that the UK rail industry transported more than 1.7 billion passengers as well as millions of tonnes of freight last year. The number is likely to double within a decade.

This, coupled with growing customer expectations, present a real challenge to the rail and light-rail industries.

New technologies could help to meet the demand and offer more sustainable, quality services, journeys and better value to users.

Greener railways and a better customer experience

We are looking for well-developed innovations that are ready to be tested in an environment with railway customers and industry.

The competition has 2 themes.

In the first, projects should look at reducing the carbon footprint of railways across stations, rolling stock and infrastructure. Your project could focus on:

- building stations with a zero carbon footprint
- improving air quality in stations and across the network
- reducing noise and pollution
- finding alternatives to fossil fuels, batteries or dual power systems, or supporting cheaper electrification
- developing lightweight, energy-efficient rolling stock
- transferring knowledge from other sectors, such as automotive or aerospace
- making better use of energy generation and storage

The second is inviting projects that use innovative technology to build a station of the future that improves the passenger experience. This could include:

- offering a seamless end-to-end journey
- supporting accessibility for all passengers
- developing ticketless gate lines and barrier-free access
- developing virtual assistant technology
- providing reliable, consistent information during disruption and delays

Addressing the big 4

Funding is for integration and direct testing with users. Your project should gather feedback, show how it would benefit passengers and demonstrate a significant change for the rail industry.

It must also look at:

- reducing costs by 50% or more
- doubling capacity
- halving carbon emissions
- improving the experiences of customers

Competition information

- the competition opens on 8 October 2018 and the deadline for registration is midday on 21 November 2018
- it is open to organisations of all sizes and sectors
- we expect to fund up to 12 projects with total costs of between £250,000 and £350,000, including VAT
- projects will be 100% funded
- briefing events will be held on [9 October 2018 in York](#), [11 October in London](#) as well as [an online webinar](#)
- projects must start by 1 March 2019 and can last up to 9 months

[News story: Make sure you submit your charity annual return on time](#)

Updated: Added information about the annual return deadline for 2017.

You will need to submit your annual return for 2017 before you can do the return for 2018.

Thousands of charities have already filed their annual returns, but there are still many that haven't.

If you haven't filed your return, your charity runs the risk of trying to file nearer to the deadline, potentially without the correct information or the password needed to access the service.

Not filing on time means you will go into default and that information will be displayed to the public on the charity register.

The deadline for submitting your 2017 annual return is 31 October 2018, if your charity has a 12-month accounting period.

[Send your annual return online now.](#)

If you are submitting your annual return for the first time, or you are not sure what you need to include, read our guidance about how to [prepare an annual return](#).

New questions for the 2018 annual return

The 2018 annual return will include new questions which you can view before you log in to send your annual return.

- [all 2018 annual return questions \(open document text file\)](#)
(ODT, 37.8KB)
- [all 2018 annual return questions \(Excel file\)](#)
(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 190KB)

We recognise that for some charities the new questions will create additional work. Certain questions will be optional this year to give you time to put the systems in place to collect the information easily, requiring less effort in future.

Why we are asking about salaries and benefits in charities

Our research into [public trust and confidence in charities](#) shows that the public is concerned about high levels of pay in charities.

Because of this we will be asking charities to provide more information about salaries to increase accountability.

In the annual return for 2018 we will ask for a breakdown of salaries across income bands, and the amount of total employee benefits for the highest paid member of staff.

But, in response to concerns raised during the consultation, we will not publish details of benefits given to the paid member of staff on the public register.

Why we are asking about overseas expenditure

We will build on the current annual return questions about charitable expenditure overseas, to establish how charities transfer and monitor funds sent overseas.

We are doing this because all money transfer processes bear risks, and it's important that charities take appropriate steps to manage these.

We recognise that some charities will need to make changes to their record keeping to answer parts of this question. For this reason the questions about methods of transferring money outside the regulated banking system, and about monitoring controls and risk management, will be optional for the 2018 annual return.

These questions will be mandatory for the annual return 2019 onwards.

Why we are asking about income from outside the UK

To get a better understanding of the income sources from outside of the UK, we are introducing questions about the breakdown of sources of income from each country a charity receives funds from.

The options we've provided for you to choose from are:

- overseas governments or quasi government bodies
- overseas charities, non-governmental organisations or non-profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs)
- other overseas institutions (for example private company donations)
- individual donors resident overseas
- unknown

Some charities will need to make changes to their financial systems to collect and sort the information more easily.

For this reason, we have made those parts of the question set relating to other private institutions outside the UK (other than charities, Non-Governmental Organisations and Non-Profit Organisations) and individual donors outside the UK optional to answer for the 2018 annual return.

These questions will be mandatory from 2019 onwards.

[Press release: Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field meets](#)

with Pacific Island leaders at UN General Assembly

The Minister said:

This event was an excellent and welcome opportunity to deepen our already strong collaboration with Pacific Island partners. The UK is doubling our diplomatic presence in the Pacific through the opening of High Commissions in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, underlining our deep commitment to the region.

With Pacific leaders today, I discussed work to strengthen climate resilience. This is an immediate priority for the Pacific, but is not just a Pacific issue – it is a global issue, which requires a global response. The UK is at the forefront of this, helping to secure a long-term sustainable future for the region. We talked about clean oceans, where the UK is a committed co-Chair – with Vanuatu – of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.

We also discussed the UK's determination to boost trade with the Pacific nations, in order to support the creation of sustainable economies, based not on aid or loans but on investment and exports.

Finally, I underlined our commitment to helping Pacific nations achieve their international objectives through successful engagement in multilateral fora, including the UN.

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Published 25 September 2018

Speech: PM speech about girls' education at UNGA: 25 September 2018

I would first like to thank President Macron and Prime Minister Trudeau – and thank you also to the governments of Kenya, Niger and Jordan as co-hosts of this event with whom we are working to support girls' education around the world.

Today over 130 million girls did not go to school. 130 million girls – most of them in the world's poorer countries – did not have the opportunity to learn and develop the skills that most of us in this room take for granted. 130 million girls did not receive an education, without which their unique and almost unlimited potential will never be unlocked.

By denying girls an education we deny them a voice, we deny them choice, we deny them their future.

Now I know I am extraordinarily grateful for the choices the education I had gave me. Growing up I was blessed with good schools, a supportive learning environment, encouragement from my teachers and my parents. I have always said: "Education is the key that unlocks the door to your future." And I want all girls around the world to be able to unlock that door.

Over the next decade, millions of young girls will enter the jobs market. As they do so, they have the potential not just to lift themselves, their families and their countries out of poverty, but also to grow the global economy, create new markets and find solutions to shared challenges that we all face. Yet without education, that incredible potential will not be realised – and all our futures will be all the poorer for it.

So Improving access to education is not only the right thing to do, it is also at the heart of the UK's drive to boost economic growth, improve stability and reduce conflict around the world. A more educated world is a better world for all of us, and the UK has long led the way in making it easier for girls around the globe to access 12 years of quality education.

Since 2015 we have helped at least 5.6 million girls in developing countries gain a decent education, and this commitment will continue. Earlier this year, I pledged almost £400 million of UK Aid for the second phase of our Girls' Education Challenge. This is a programme that is already supporting 1 million girls around the world to continue their education through primary, secondary school and training. And it is also giving girls who have dropped out or never attended school due to poverty, motherhood, disability or conflict a chance to learn through catch-up classes and vital skills training.

And phase two of the Challenge will see new projects that specifically target the most vulnerable and marginalised girls, including those with disabilities. And I am pleased to announce today nine such projects, which

will support more than 170,000 of the world's most marginalised girls. This includes in Ethiopia, where we will fund counselling and mentoring to help girls enrol and stay in school, and teacher training to help improve the quality of education. And that project will help over 70,000 girls access education, including up to 3,500 girls with disabilities.

And elsewhere, we will be funding projects that help girls affected by war – who are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared to those not living in conflict zones.

And while our work is making an immeasurable difference to the lives of those it helps, to make sure no girls are left behind requires truly global co-ordinated action. Nations, donors, multilaterals and other organisations working together to secure real and lasting change.

So we have launched a global campaign and are pushing for commitments to girls' education from governments around the world. And we received many such commitments at April's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, at which leaders pledged to ensure girls across the Commonwealth will be able to access 12 years of quality education and learning by 2030.

And, today, I am calling on everyone here to join our campaign. To commit to the individual, collective and governmental action that is needed to break down barriers to girls' education. To increase girls' access to schools and learning. to ensure that every girl, in every corner of the world, can access the 12 years of education they need to unleash their potential, embrace the opportunities before them, and help change the world for the better.