

# [News story: Automated cleaning of surgical instruments: apply for funding](#)

Surgical instruments and tools including scalpels, forceps and tweezers.

The [NHS in Scotland](#) – supported by the [Can Do Innovation Challenge Fund](#) – has up to £150,000 to invest in studies that look at new ways of automating the pre-cleaning of surgical instruments.

## **Importance of pre-cleaning**

Surgical instruments must be properly cleaned, inspected and sterilised within the sterile services process before each use.

Most existing procedures rely on manual cleaning. This is because current, automated pre-cleaning systems have a limited focus on one specific area, such as neurological surgery. They are also not designed for a range of instruments.

Improvements to automated systems could tackle clinical, health, safety and environmental concerns, improve efficiency and reduce costs.

## **Solutions must reduce cost and waste**

The competition aims to find a solution for automated pre-cleaning that reduces costs and waste, is easy to operate and connects with existing NHS equipment. It must include:

- pre-soaking and internal flushing
- automated chemical dosing
- coarse-contamination removal, ideally ultrasonics or a spray function
- fully programmable pre-cleaning steps
- measurement and monitoring
- integration with automated washers or washer-disinfectors

Funding of £150,000 is for a series of feasibility studies. A further £300,000 could be available in a second phase to develop the most promising ideas.

The competition is being run under SBRI (the Small Business Research Initiative).

## **Competition information**

- the competition opens on 5 March 2018, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 9 May 2018

- it is open to any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea
- we expect phase 1 contracts to be worth up to £30,000 and to last up to 6 months
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- a briefing event will be held on 18 April 2018