[News story: Automated design for a more efficient railway: apply for funding](#)

[Figures show that around 1.7 billion passengers](#) use the UK's railways every year. This number has more than doubled in the last 20 years – requiring innovative ways to design railway infrastructure that will support growth in future capacity.

Working with [Network Rail](#), Innovate UK has up to £300,000 for businesses with projects to fast-track automated design. The aim is to build safer and higher-capacity railway infrastructure, save money and improve services.

Long-term planning and capacity

Planning for the long-term future of the UK's railways involves navigating a complex range of systems.

As well as crossing many different types of terrain and land uses, there are underlying considerations such as stock and track maintenance, bridges and tunnels. Importantly, planning must reflect passenger need.

This competition is looking for ways to make automated design more efficient, allowing Network Rail to accelerate new designs, explore long-term performance and assess demand.

Building on existing technology

The competition is open to industrial research projects as well as experimental development projects that are closer to market.

Projects should automate the design of at least one of the following:

- track layout
- overhead line electrification
- traction power supply system
- signalling systems
- other railway infrastructure not mentioned here

All projects must show how they build on existing automated design technology and work in a simulated rail infrastructure design environment.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 22 October 2018 and the deadline for applications is at midday on 19 December 2018
- a briefing event will be held on [1 November 2018 in London](#), where you

can find out more about the competition and how to make a quality application
- total project costs must be between £50,000 and £200,000
- projects can last between 6 months and one year
- businesses could get up to 70% of their costs