

[News story: Smart technology for public parks and spaces: apply for contracts](#)

The [amazing spaces, smart places challenge](#) is looking for ways to make public parks and spaces safer, more enjoyable and more accessible for people.

This competition has up to £120,000 for organisations with innovative technologies that can support better management of urban parks and open spaces. The focus is on Belfast, but there may be opportunities to develop proofs of concept in Dublin too.

Funding is via [Belfast City Council](#) and the [Department of Justice](#), with [Dublin City Council](#) also contributing.

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

Raising perceptions and respecting privacy

Between them, Belfast and Dublin councils manage more than 3,800 hectares of parks and open spaces. Both cities have a diverse range of public facilities that are popular for many uses and events, including sports and recreation, education and festivals.

The competition is looking for data-driven innovations that can increase visitor numbers and raise positive perceptions of public spaces, with particular emphasis on reducing antisocial behaviour. They should also protect the privacy of people using them.

As maintaining these spaces requires ongoing investment in their management and development, this competition is also looking for better ways to coordinate between different agencies to reduce management time and cost.

A 2-phase competition

Potentially, there will be 2 phases to this competition. For phase 1, businesses must be able to demonstrate a working prototype that the city councils can test, with a potential route to market.

If phase 2 goes ahead, it would build on successful phase 1 projects and look at how those projects could be further developed beyond Belfast and Dublin.

Areas of interest could include:

- gathering and using real-time data to better understand the use of public spaces
- using connected devices to measure the impact of investment decisions
- exploring how user-oriented design could encourage positive behaviour

- creating interactive 'playable city' experiences that engage and inform users
- putting new technologies into existing and planned infrastructure, such as buildings, signs, lamp posts and other street furniture

Projects must consider how they might affect and engage local communities, avoiding making improvements in one park or public area at the cost of others.

Competition information

- the competition is open and the deadline for registration is midday on 14 November 2018
- organisations of all sizes can apply
- successful applicants will be notified on 30 November 2018
- projects can last up to 4 months and must be completed by 31 March 2019
- contracts of up to £20,000 will be awarded
- applicants will need to register with [e-sourcingni](#) to apply