

# Press release: Funding awarded to innovative data projects

- Ten innovative schemes from across the UK have won government funding to look at new ways of using location-based data to help people in their everyday lives
- One project will look at ways to use crowdsourced information to create indoor maps to help people find their way around public buildings, such as universities and hospitals
- Other winners will create a UK database of trees and map the safest routes for cyclists to take through cities

New systems designed to highlight the safest roads for cyclists to use in busy cities, create a database of all the UK's trees, and launch an indoor mapping system to help people find their way around public buildings, could soon be created thanks to a government competition designed to find new ways to use data.

In November, the Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, announced a [£1.5 million competition](#) to help organisations find innovative ways to use crowdsourcing and location-based data.

Among the 10 winners are schemes including:

- COMMUNITREE – a collaborative project to collect data on trees from across the UK to create a publicly accessible database
- RIDE – a London-based project to help cyclists find the safest routes around cities
- PINPOINT – a project to create an indoor mapping system to help people find their way around complex public buildings, such as hospitals and universities.

The Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, said:

We are investing in location-based data technology to improve public services and the way people experience them.

I'm delighted to see such innovative ideas come forward, which will help people in their everyday lives and keep the UK at the forefront of this exciting new technology.

London-based Cartographix is one of the organisations which have been awarded funding through the crowdsourcing competition, which was led by the government's Geospatial Commission in partnership with Innovate UK.

By using existing infrastructure, such as WiFi hotspot locations and smartphone sensors, the programmers at Cartographix hope to create a sat-nav-

style system for people to use as they walk around public buildings. Organisations would volunteer to have their buildings included on the system and the maps would be made available through existing phone apps.

Anu Joy from Cartographix said:

The aim of our mapping system is to make life easier for people. And we would not be able to do this work without the funding we are receiving from the government.

Also receiving funding are projects to highlight mobile phone signal blackspots, help tackle travel problems experienced by disabled people, and boost public understanding of the planning system.

The projects will be worked on by organisations across the UK and see research carried out by University College London, the University of Warwick, the University of Exeter and the Open University.

A full list of all the winners of the competition can be found below.

## **Notes for editors**

### **What is the Geospatial Commission?**

The [Geospatial Commission](#) is an impartial, expert committee within the Cabinet Office, set up in April 2018 and supported by £80 million of funding. The Geospatial Commission is chaired by Sir Andrew Dilnot. Nigel Clifford is the Deputy Chair.

The commission has been set up to drive the use of location-linked data more productively, to unlock up to £11 billion of extra value for the economy every year. The commission is currently developing the UK's national geospatial strategy, that it will publish at the end of this year. It is running a range of projects to inform this work.

### **About the competition**

The aim of the competition is to explore the benefits and challenges of using crowdsourced data, while delivering public benefit through individual projects. It also aims to showcase the importance of geospatial data for improving public services.

The competition asked different organisations to work together to identify innovative new ways for crowdsourced data, to either:

- improve the delivery of public services
- support the third sector
- enhance the quality of open public datasets

As well as delivering this exciting range of initiatives, the Geospatial Commission will use the lessons learned from each programme to help inform

the development of the national geospatial strategy.

[Original press release for the 1.5 million competition.](#)

## **What is crowdsourcing?**

Crowdsourcing is [defined by the Oxford English Dictionary](#) as “the practice of obtaining information or input into a task or project by enlisting the services of a large number of people, either paid or unpaid, typically via the Internet.”

The sources of geospatial data are many and diverse and many services already use the concept of ‘crowdsourcing’ to enhance the depth and currency of the data supporting the service. Examples are ‘WAZE’, OpenStreetMap, Google traffic app, Uber, and Trip Advisor which is based on user feedback to inform other users.

The rise of the smart cities agenda, connected online communities and the growth of smartphones means that crowdsourcing products are part of a growing market which the Geospatial Commission wishes to explore through a competition.

## **Competition winners**

### **COMMUNITREE**

Project partners: Forest Research, Open University, Treework Services Limited  
This project will develop the largest and highest quality urban tree map in the world for use by business, government and other research needs.

### **YOUR.VU.CITY**

Project partners: Vu.City, Pipers Projects Limited, University College London  
Vu.City will engage the public with the planning process to improve the understanding of the built environment.

### **Crowd Blackspot Intelligence for 5G Rollout**

Project partners: Ranplan Wireless Network Design, University of Warwick  
This project will look at crowdsourcing service complaints to help guide 5G rollout for rural and urban areas.

### **Crowdsourcing for a Digital Geospatial Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

Project partners: City Science Corporation Limited, University of Exeter  
Relevant databases will be brought together to enable members of the public to take an active role in health outcomes, by crowdsourcing data such as air quality, to enable practitioners to improve targeting of resources and the health of the nation.

### **Precision INdoor P0sitioning INformation sysTem (PINPOINT)**

Project partner: Cartographix LTD

This project will use WiFi networks and smartphone sensors to help better indoor navigation of public buildings.

### **StreetFocus**

Project partners: Cyclestreets, Planit  
Communities will be able to automatically identify areas that need improvements to street infrastructure.

### **Coreo**

Project partner: Natural Apptitude  
This platform will enable anyone to build and run geospatial citizen science projects to improve collection, management and maintenance of geospatial data.

### **Routing Innovation through Data Engineering (RIDE)**

Project partner: Beeline  
RIDE will develop route optimisation to increase cyclist safety and uptake.

### **Generating crowdsourcing geospatial data**

Project partner: Transreport Limited  
This project will undertake research to understand the accessibility issues for transportation and the user experience for a wide range of disabilities, and how the data collected can be used to improve the service.

### **The Neighbourhood safety index**

Project partner: Synced LTD  
This will produce the first integrated live score of how safe a neighbourhood is.