

Innovate UK

# Competition for funding

Future retail

DEADLINE

**23 February  
2016**



IC tomorrow



**Innovate UK is offering 5 businesses up to £35,000 (excluding VAT) each to encourage innovation around ‘future retail’, across the themes of food waste reduction, virtual fitting, seamless shopping and enhancing in-store and market experiences.**

### The contest

Through our IC tomorrow programme, we are looking for proposals from companies with innovative digital ideas to enhance experiences, services and processes across the retail landscape – namely optimising virtual fitting, improving accessibility of digital services in-store and at markets, empowering customers to reduce food waste, and streamlining the process of replenishing everyday items within the home. The companies will not only benefit from funding, but also the opportunity to collaborate with commercial partners to accelerate development of their technologies.

We want to see solutions with potential appeal to a wide commercial market. Successful applicants will be expected to trial their proposed solutions with their industry partners for at least 3 months.

This contest is supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), who will broker introductions with leading experts within the social science community, and provide access to the knowledge, skills and resources developed within key initiatives of relevance to the sector, including the ESRC Consumer Data Research Centre and the ESRC Retail Sector Initiative.

#### Apply now to:

- trial your technology with major industry players while keeping your intellectual property
- secure up to £35,000 to develop your solution
- receive promotion, support and advice to speed up the commercialisation of your solution

#### Deadline

Noon 23 February 2016

#### Briefing event

21 January 2016, 2pm–5pm,  
41 Portland Place, London, W1B 1QH

#### Awards

5, up to £35,000

#### Full details

<http://bit.ly/RetailCon>

### The challenges

We are looking for innovative solutions to address one of our 5 contest challenges within the themes of food waste reduction, virtual fitting, seamless shopping and enhancing in-store and market experiences.

#### CHALLENGE 1

##### Pioneering new ways to fight food waste

**Partners:** Tesco and WRAP

According to the United Nations, up to a third of the world's food is wasted each year. Britain has the highest level of food waste in the European Union, with households throwing away 7 million tonnes of food and drink every year. While supermarkets are implementing systems to reduce waste associated with their stores, technology provides an opportunity to empower customers to take an active role in improving the situation further. This challenge, set in partnership with Tesco and WRAP, seeks multi-channel, customer-focused solutions to help reduce waste once items have left the shop.

#### CHALLENGE 2

##### Future of fitting

**Partner:** London College of Fashion

Having to try on clothes in store can be inconvenient for shoppers, and equally, it is disappointing when garments bought either online or offline turn out to be the incorrect size. Retailers typically report a returns rate of 20–40%, and a number of new digital fit innovations have proved successful in reducing this rate. However, there remains a significant opportunity for further innovation across the virtual fitting landscape, from retail to consumer, online and offline. This challenge, set in partnership with the London College of Fashion, seeks solutions that will optimise the virtual fitting experience.

#### CHALLENGE 3

##### Seamless shopping

**Partner:** Unilever

The UK retail landscape is going through a revolution because of the transformative effects of eCommerce. Retailers and suppliers need to adapt to the potential of the new shopping experience. This challenge, set in partnership with Unilever, seeks solutions that make the replenishment of a consumer's regular products seamless, convenient and simple. The successful company will have the opportunity to trial their technology with Unilever for a minimum period of 3 months, before being commercialised more widely.

#### CHALLENGE 4

##### Enhancing in-store experiences

**Partner:** Barclays

Many people have experienced the frustration of going to a bank and queuing to speak to an adviser. It can be a slow process in peak times despite banks providing extra staff, additional in-branch machines, as well as mobile and internet services. There is a significant opportunity to bring the best of the online world into physical stores in a way that is seamless and accessible to all generations. This

challenge, set in partnership with Barclays, seeks solutions that enable banks to provide more customer-friendly digital services and experiences in branches and/or in other retail locations, to help customers with their everyday banking needs.

#### CHALLENGE 5

##### Digital enhancement of street and covered markets

**Partner:** Greater London Authority

Markets play a vital role in the UK as places of employment, consumption and leisure. They provide diversity, history and character, and generate footfall on high streets and in town centres. However, a survey by the Retail Markets Alliance in 2012 found that 26% of all markets in the UK were seeing a decrease in performance. This challenge, set in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA), seeks to help London's markets adapt and grow through the take-up of new technologies by traders and operators. The successful company will have the opportunity to trial their technology in partnership with the GLA, who will support the winning company by providing access to potential industry partners, as well as access to an environment for testing the technology in a street or covered market in London.



## Competition for funding

### Who can apply?

To apply for a £35,000\* award you must:

- be a company based in the UK or EU
- propose a solution that responds to one of the challenges
- propose a solution that is creatively, technically or commercially innovative
- propose a solution that has wider market potential beyond the challenge partnership
- have a clear idea of the revenue-earning potential and target market of your proposed solution

**You don't need** to have an existing app or service, or be currently active in the 'future retail' industry.

**You do need** to have a specific product, platform or service in mind, even if it is only at the idea stage.

\* Please note that Innovate UK funding is subject to the result of the Government Spending Review in autumn 2015.

### Responding to the challenge

Although you can submit multiple entries across different challenges in this contest, we can fund only one solution from each company. Applicants should carefully consider which challenge is best suited to their solution. To learn more about the contest, applicants should:

1. go to the web page for this competition at <http://bit.ly/RetailCon> and access the application form

2. download and read the *Guidance for Applicants* (<http://bit.ly/retailGfA>), as it includes a full description of the challenges, the application criteria and all the information you need to complete your application
3. attend the briefing event to find out about the challenges directly from the challenge partners

The briefing event is on 21 January 2016 in London. The event will be recorded and made available as a webinar, both live and also after the event, at <http://bit.ly/RetailCon>

Apply through our **\_connect** platform: <http://bit.ly/RetailCon>

### How does the contest work?

The contest is a 2-stage procurement process. Stage 1 involves filling in an application form and making a 2-minute video presentation of your idea.

We will select up to 15 entries to go through to the next stage. Stage 2 involves a live pitch and Q&A to a panel of judges who will make the final decision on which solutions to fund.

### Stage 1

Applicants can apply from **Monday 11 January 2016**.

1. Complete the online application form. You can save a partially completed application, update, finalise and submit the form at your convenience.

2. As part of your application, upload a 2-minute video. Note that we judge the video on the strength of your idea – not the production quality.

Remember to submit your completed application form before **noon on Tuesday 23 February 2016**.

**IMPORTANT: do not leave your submission until the last minute. Technical problems do occur and late submissions will not be accepted.**

### What sort of video are we looking for?

Video entries by previously successful contest applicants have included a mix of pitching to camera, animations and example footage of the proposed solution. They also clearly highlighted how their idea met the challenge in the contest. We do not expect you to share any intellectual property or commercially sensitive information.

Videos and written applications will remain confidential but they will be seen by a panel of expert assessors who will review the ideas described in them and select a shortlist based upon how well they address the above criteria. From that shortlist an internal panel will then choose up to 15 finalists to go through to stage 2.



## Stage 2

Stage 2 will involve a panel session held on **Wednesday 13 April 2016**.

Finalists will have 10 minutes to present their ideas and take part in a Q&A session with the contest panel, which will include members of the challenge partners. The panel will select up to 5 winning companies, one from each challenge area.

### What is IC tomorrow?

IC tomorrow is an Innovate UK programme to accelerate innovation in the digital sector by connecting high-potential start-ups and SMEs with commercial partners, through funded contests and strategic matchmaking activities.

### Key dates

Contest opens	Monday 11 January 2016
Briefing event	Thursday 21 January 2016
Submission deadline	noon Tuesday 23 February 2016
Finalists notified	Friday 18 March 2016
Practice pitch sessions at IC tomorrow office	Tuesday 22 March 2016 – for all finalists Monday 4 April 2016 – one-to-one sessions Tuesday 5 April 2016 – one-to-one sessions
Final panel session	Wednesday 13 April 2016
Winners announced	Friday 22 April 2016
Trials launched	winter 2017



## Publicity

As part of the application process all applicants are asked to submit a public description of the project. This should adequately describe the project but not disclose any information that may impact on intellectual property, is confidential or commercially sensitive. The titles of successful projects, names of organisations, amounts awarded and the public description will be published once the decision to offer an award has been communicated to applicants by email. Information about unsuccessful project applications will remain confidential and will not be made public. Email **pressoffice@innovateuk.gov.uk** with any queries.



**Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency.** Innovate UK works with people, companies and partner organisations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy – delivering productivity, new jobs and exports. Our aim at Innovate UK is to keep the UK globally competitive in the race for future prosperity.

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