

News story: Smart energy systems: apply for funding



Rajvant Nijjhar of BankEnergi.

UK organisations can apply for a share of up to £30 million to develop designs for smart local energy systems that make the best use of innovative technologies including cheaper renewables, energy storage, low carbon heat and digital infrastructure.

Empowering makers and innovators

Claire Perry, Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, said:

We are at the start of a smart energy revolution, which will see technology like energy storage, smart appliances and electric vehicles become part of the fabric of everyday life. A future built on digital, data-driven smart systems will transform the way society interacts with the grid – delivering cheaper, greener and more flexible access to energy for everyone.

This competition will help to give the UK's makers and innovators the tools to make this vision a reality, and seize on the business opportunities ahead.

The energy revolution

The competition is part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund programme, [prospering from the energy revolution](#). The challenge was established to support industry, academia, public bodies and local communities to work together and develop a world-leading, smart local energy systems industry in the UK.

Challenge director, Rob Saunders, said:

Smart local energy systems can intelligently link supply, storage and use of power, heat and transport in new ways that dramatically improve efficiency and work better for people. This competition will seek the very best ideas in British innovation to show how the energy sector of the future will be cleaner and greener and support the jobs and industries of the future.

Rajvant Nijjhar and Dr. Catarina Marques of BankEnergi.

Creating innovative, ambitious designs

The aim of the competition is to create a pipeline of highly innovative, ambitious, local energy system designs that are investable and ready to roll out across the UK in the 2020s.

Projects will create new market and business models using smart energy systems that enable deployment at scale of the latest in energy technologies across heat, power and transport, in a way that is reproducible across the UK.

Projects are expected to:

- the competition will open on 7 May 2019, and close at midday on 7 August 2019
- UK organisations of any size can apply
- Briefings will take place in:

Published 29 April 2019

Last updated 30 April 2019 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 30 April 2019 corrected spelling of Rajvant Nijjhar
2. 29 April 2019 First published.

[News story: Review of the Local Government Pension Scheme Northern Ireland actuarial valuation](#)

GAD review of the LGPS Northern Ireland actuarial valuation.

News story: Review of the Local Government Pension Scheme Northern Ireland actuarial valuation

Experts from the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) have carried out the first review of the 2016 actuarial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme Northern Ireland.

GAD assessed the fund valuation in terms of its:

- compliance
- consistency
- solvency
- long term cost efficiency

The review followed the introduction of new legislation – Section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. This new law requires the Department for Communities Northern Ireland to commission a report on the health of the scheme following each valuation.

The report concluded that the 2016 actuarial valuation of the [Local Government Pension Scheme Northern Ireland](#), and the resulting employer contribution rates, achieve the aims set out in Section 13 of the Act.

This followed a similar exercise in England and Wales. Section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 required the Government Actuary to review the funding valuations and employer contribution rates for each of the 91 local government pension scheme (LGPS) funds. GAD's review of the actuarial valuations of [LGPS funds](#) as at 31 March 2016 was published in September 2018.

Interested parties related to the Section 13 reports include the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Communities (Northern Ireland), the local authority pension funds and the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee, LGPS Advisory Boards and the 4 actuarial consultancy firms which prepared valuation reports for each fund.

News story: Travel advice for the European Games in Belarus, 21-30 June

2019

Travel advice for British Nationals travelling to Belarus for the European Games, 21-30 June 2019

News story: Travel advice for the European Games in Belarus, 21-30 June 2019

- Date: 21-30 June 2019
- Venue: 12 sporting venues in Minsk In addition to the following information, please check out our [travel advice for Belarus](#).

Passports and Visas

- From 10 June 2019 until 10 July 2019, provided you have a ticket for at least one European Games sporting event or an Opening/Closing ceremony, all British national passport holders can enter Belarus through any border checkpoint of Belarus. In addition to the ticket, [medical insurance](#) and funds equivalent to 25 euros per day are required, as per usual entry requirements.
- Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 3 months from the date of entry into Belarus.
- Please remember that if you visit Belarus from 10 June 2019 until 10 July 2019 for any other purpose than the European Games, usual entry requirements apply. To know more about these regimes please check out our [travel advice for Belarus](#).
- Anyone staying for more than 5 days in Belarus must register online (www.portal.gov.by) or with the local police office (OVIR) in the district in which they are staying. Registration will normally be arranged by your hotel. If you're not staying in a hotel registration must be organised by your host. There are fines for not registering in time.

Getting to/from the airport

Minsk airport is located 40 km from Minsk.

- It takes 35 to 40 minutes to get from the airport to Minsk city centre by taxi; taxis are the most convenient way to get to central Minsk; for a journey to Minsk city centre expect to pay between 30 to 40 BYN (Belarusian roubles). 1 GBP ~ 2.80 BYN.

REMEMBER ALWAYS TO ASK ABOUT PRICE BEFORE YOU START YOUR JOURNEY.

- Buses run a 24/7 (every 20 to 30 minutes during the day) service from the airport to the central bus/railway station. The price is 5 BYN. Details on departure times and route can be found on the [Minsk International Airport website](#).

Sport events

To check the schedule of sport events, sights where these events will take place as well updates and all necessary information related to the Games, please visit the official [European Games webpage](#).

Local information

Climate and Time

The average temperature in June is around 16°C. You can find information at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/625144> Minsk is plus 2 hours BST

Language

The main languages are Belarusian and Russian.

Crime

- crime levels in Minsk are generally low, but muggings do occur from time to time
- take sensible precautions: be vigilant, avoid carrying large sums of money and try to avoid walking alone at night

Personal Security

- look after your personal belongings, in particular your passport and your money
- carry a photocopy of the personal details pages of your passport and keep it in a safe place separate from your passport

Disabled Travellers

- the Belarusian authorities have advised that there will be a designated area at the stadium (fan sector) for supporters with disabilities
- generally, while things are steadily improving, Minsk has limited facilities for the disabled traveller – the pavements, even on the main roads can be difficult to negotiate for those with disabilities

Road Safety

- pedestrians should be vigilant at all times when crossing roads; red traffic lights and zebra crossings don't necessarily mean a car will stop; use the underpasses where available
- when using a taxi make sure it has working seatbelts; some cars are

poorly maintained

- accidents happen, mainly due to poor or reckless driving and inconsistent enforcement of traffic rules
- do not 'jay walk' – cross the road only when the green man alights. You're liable to be fined if you do jay walk.

Religion

- most of the population of Belarus is Christian (mostly Orthodox); Belarus is a largely secular society and religion is usually considered a private matter
- respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of your actions to ensure they don't offend other cultures or religious beliefs

Telephones

- the international dialling code for Belarus is +375; before travelling check with your mobile phone provider that it will work in Minsk
- local sim cards are available with Velcom, MTS and Life being the leading mobile operators; you can buy local sim cards only in the mobile operator's shops showing your passport

Currency

- all goods and services are paid in local currency (Belarusian Rouble – BYN); sterling, US dollars and Euros are easily exchanged; major hotels and international supermarkets and restaurants accept credit and debit cards
- ATMs in Minsk will almost always accept UK credit and debit cards; before leaving the UK, let your bank know you're travelling to Belarus

Consular Assistance

If there's a genuine emergency during your visit to Minsk (e.g. one involving accident, injury or loss/theft of your passport) call +375 17 2298200 and follow the instructions to be put through to a consular officer.

Lost or stolen passports

If your passport is lost or stolen report the loss to the local police as soon as possible and get a copy of the police report. You can't travel back to the UK without a valid travel document. You'll need to apply to the Consular Section of the British Embassy Minsk for an Emergency Travel Document (ETD). Please see our [ETD web page](#) for more information.

Lost or stolen credit/debit cards

If you lose your wallet or purse try to cancel your credit/debit cards as soon as possible. British consular officials can't give you money to help you return home. You can transfer money from the UK using many of the commercial money transfer agencies in Minsk, including Western Union. You can also use

most major credit and debit cards to obtain money from ATMs. For more information visit the [British Embassy, Minsk web page] (<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-minsk>).

Our address is: 37 Karl Marx Street Minsk Belarus Tel: +375 17 2298200 (24 hrs) Email: consular.enquiriesminsk@fco.gov.uk The consular section of the British Embassy in Minsk is open to visitors from Monday to Thursday from 09:00hrs to 17:30hrs and on Friday from 09:00hrs to 15:00hrs, excluding public holidays. You can also check our [Travel Advice for Belarus](#).

Emergency services numbers

• Fire – 101 • Police – 102 • Ambulance – 103

Enjoy the Games and your visit to Belarus!