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# CITYZEN

**BUILD YOUR WORLD**

## 2026 Award Project Pitch Guide



For pupils aged 16-18



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# The CityZen Award – Project Pitch video

## Use your knowledge

For your project pitch, you will present an original idea to effect change in your community. Think about the unique needs and challenges faced by people where you live. Is there an issue related to infrastructure, transportation, environmental sustainability or public amenities? Can you find an innovative and sustainable solution to address it?

Show us:

- the problem your team wants to solve
- your solution
- how it will benefit your community



**Pro Tip:** Draw on what you learnt in the CityZen Challenge

## Get creative

As a team, or on your own, you'll craft a compelling project pitch video. Be as creative as you can. Use visuals, animations, voiceovers or testimonials if you like. Or maybe you'll do something we haven't seen before!

## Be realistic

Remember, this is all about civil engineering in the real world. So think about how much it will cost to deliver your idea, versus the impact it will have. Look at the possible challenges you'll face, and what you could do to overcome them.

**Pro Tip:** Seeking advice from teachers, your mentor if you have one and local businesses could be really helpful.

## We're looking for:

- original and practical ideas
- a really clear explanation
- creative presentation and design skills
- ideas that will have a BIG impact on the problem you're trying to solve
- a clear demonstration of your learnings from the ICE CityZen Challenge

Each of these criteria is marked out of a score of five, with equal weighting.

### **IMPORTANT! Project pitch format.**

Your Project Pitch needs to be in **video** format, as one MP4 file and between 2-4 minutes long. It should also not be larger than 50MB file size. Submissions which aren't provided in the above format will be ineligible for entry.



## More on the Project Pitch...

Before we get to the advice from our competition partner Loud Speaker for your video, here are a few things we want you to consider when planning your project:

You can **present your Project Pitch in different ways**. Perhaps consider an unusual storytelling method to get the judges attention, especially if it enables us to hear from project stakeholders more clearly.

**Do remember the judging criteria.** They're looking for creativity so when it comes to presenting and editing, use your existing skills but don't be afraid to try something new!

**Don't use any photos or film footage that aren't yours** unless you have written permission to do so or they're available with a Free Photo Licence / Royalty-free / Public Domain. Check that any licence includes the right to reuse the imagery in the way you want and if it needs a credit (where you mention the owner) do this at the end of your film.

**Don't use music throughout the film as it will distract the audience from telling your story.** Be aware too that music tracks have performing rights attached so don't use any music that doesn't belong to you unless you've sourced it as Royalty-free / Public Domain / using a Free-to-use Licence.

**Don't infringe any other copyright!** Be wary of sound samples, brand-names, logos and even closely mimicking something that has a copyright. If in doubt, leave it out!

## Using AI for your Project Pitch

AI can be a helpful support in developing your project, but CityZen is designed to celebrate your ideas, thinking, and communication skills. For this reason, the core creative content of your pitch must be created by students, with AI used only to support – not replace – your work. See the competition Terms and Conditions for detail on allowed AI use.

To keep the competition fair, transparent, and focused on student creativity, **all 2026 entries must include a short statement at the end of the project pitch video explaining how AI was used, or confirming that it was not**. This applies to every entry.

### Examples of AI statements

General use: "We used AI to help brainstorm early ideas, but all scripting, filming and narration were created by us."

Editing / technical support use: "AI tools were used for noise reduction and subtitles only. All footage, voiceovers and visuals are student-created."

Where AI support was used but not for creation: "AI helped us organise our storyboard and improve the script structure, but the final script and all visuals are our own work."

Where AI was used for creation: "AI generated an initial draft of one script paragraph, but we rewrote and edited it so the final version is our own wording."

Minimal AI use: "AI was used only to define key engineering terms. The video itself was fully created by our team."

No AI use: "No AI-generated elements were included in our video."



## Past winners

The 2026 competition Project Pitch format is a 2-4 minute video.

Check out past CityZen Award-winning project films here: [bit.ly/CityZen-playlist](https://bit.ly/CityZen-playlist)



## Loud Speaker's top tips for speaking in front of a camera

Around 77% of people have a fear or anxiety around public speaking, and personally, we think the other 23% also hold some of this fear! Public speaking impacts our ability to create relationships and succeed in life in a variety of different ways, from delivering a presentation, motivating a team, ordering food at a restaurant, and most importantly, when trying to land your dream job during an interview.

What is often overlooked, however, is speaking to a camera. Just because there is no second person physically in the room with you, doesn't mean that this is any less daunting than speaking publicly, in fact, it is arguably harder and sometimes carries feelings of awkwardness.

Loud Speaker have compiled a list of their top tips to bring you every success when speaking on camera.

### 1. **Posture**

Sit tall with open body language to show confidence and avoid slouching and crossing your arms. Use your belly muscles to boost your voice when talking - try it out!

### 2. **Pronunciation**

Speak up and make sure your words are crystal clear, so everyone gets what you're saying. Avoid mumbling or speaking too fast, as words can be missed and it may change the meaning of what you're saying entirely.

### 3. **Pause**

Use silence and pauses to let the audience digest your key points...Even though this is a recording, don't be scared to ask rhetorical questions of the viewer to involve them.

### 4. **Pace**

Slow down to build suspense and emphasis, and speed up to show excitement and a climax to your story and main points. Your voice is your power (especially if your body language is being lost because not all of you is in the frame!).

### 5. **Passion**

Speak with genuine enthusiasm and belief in what you are talking about. Audiences connect with passionate speakers, so you demonstrating how much you care about what you are saying will allow them to buy into you - before they even fully understand your idea! Don't shy away from talking about your hobbies, passions, interests, and loves. These personal insights can make you more relatable and help build a connection with your audience.

### 6. **Hook your audience**

There are different ways you can hook your audience:

- Begin with a bang by setting a strong and surprising tone. Make a statement that piques your audience's curiosity and leaves them wanting more.
- Ask the viewer a question to consider, which you then address with your content.
- Use repetition to help the audience remember the most important part of your pitch.
- Use a quote - if you've found a really useful piece of information on your pitch topic you can use it as a quote to give evidence for your idea.
- Consider starting with a statistic or personal story that sets the tone and helps the audience understand the 'big issue' in your proposal.

### 7. **Have fun!**

Have a laugh - there's no need to be overly serious, even if you're dealing with a heavy topic, some humour can help your audience understand and remember the information you're imparting.

### Tips for filming 🎥

- **Sound:** Use a separate microphone if you can, the sound quality will be better and will not pick up any background noise. Top tip: you can use the voice memos application on your mobile phones or tablets.
- **Good lighting:** Ensure well-balanced lighting to make your video look good. Go for natural light or nice, soft artificial lighting. Just make sure the light is in front of you, not behind you!
- **Background considerations:** Ensure a clutter-free, visually appealing background. Plain walls are boring so pick somewhere with a nice, but not distracting view. Film in more than one place if possible. It will add interest to your film.
- **Camera:** You don't need a fancy camera, your mobile phone will do, as long as the quality is good. Just keep it steady, you can use a tripod if needed. Also think about if you will be filming in landscape or portrait and the camera angles you want to achieve.
- **Review and improve:** Watch your recordings back, check if you need to re-record anything before you begin to edit your videos into a convincing pitch.

### Tips for presenters

- **Authenticity matters:** People often connect with individuals who are genuine before they connect with the ideas or products. Discuss how you would improve your local area. What are the barriers stopping you and how would you overcome the challenges? People are often inspired by stories of resilience and determination.
- **Don't sweat the small stuff:** Instead of obsessing over perfection, focus on being genuine and passionate about your pitch. Small imperfections such as a stutter or a stumbling over your words can add character and relatability to your message.
- **Know who you're speaking to:** Understand who will be watching your video and tailor your message to their needs and interests. In the CityZen Award you will want to think carefully about the competition criteria before you start and focus on making a strong pitch to the competition judges.
- **Maintain eye contact and smile!:** Look directly into the camera lens to create a connection with your viewers. Don't forget to smile and keep a friendly face and tone.

Watch Loud Speaker Co-founder Calvin's top tips for presenting your Project Pitch by clicking the image here, or you can find it on [ice.org.uk/CityZen](https://ice.org.uk/CityZen)



So, get ready to speak out, remember you got this 🎤 and good luck in the competition!



## Very important points for video creation

Before you create video content for your Project Pitch please read the following points very carefully.

**Don't put yourself in danger!** Don't film on or very close to roads, railway tracks, heights or anywhere else where there is a risk of being hurt if you're busy looking through or into a lens. It goes without saying too that you should never enter a building site (unless you have been given full consent and help to visit/film safely whilst there).

**Don't film anyone who hasn't given permission.** This could be members of the public, or students and teachers in your school. Team members who don't want to be filmed can take part in other ways, for example, by narrating, by overseeing operating the camera, by directing the shots, or by helping with editing the footage.

**Don't film on private property without permission.** This includes most buildings and some open areas in UK cities. If you're unsure, check online before heading out with your camera.

Deadline for submissions will be **18 December 2026**. Stay safe, good luck and have fun!



The link for uploading project pitches is here. Please note, this must be done by a teacher taking responsibility for running the competition in your school.

<https://bit.ly/CityZen-submit>





## Project pro tip: work like a government!

Did you know the Institution of Civil Engineers gives governments around the world advice on how to best plan their infrastructure?

That's because we've got over 200 years of expert knowledge at our fingertips – from the papers of John Smeaton (who first coined the term 'civil engineering'), to the cutting-edge research and practice of today's industry leaders.

The [Enabling Better Infrastructure \(EBI\) framework](#) is where we've distilled advice for the most effective ways to choose and build infrastructure projects... it's a useful tool that governments all around the world are using today.

**Check it out and see how it can help you shape your CityZen Award project pitch!**

### What does the EBI framework do?

The programme supports infrastructure planners to create sustainable and resilient infrastructure that meets everyone's needs. This allows people to live safe, healthy and productive lives, and the planet to thrive.

### How does it work?

The EBI framework can be used for any type of project. It's got three parts:

**Eight key principles** – like a checklist of 'must-dos', these are very important considerations. You'll find most, if not all of these familiar from scenarios in the CityZen game we think. If you'd like to, learn more about the principles here:

<https://bit.ly/EBI8principles>

**A three-step process** – this is the 'how to' part that guides infrastructure planners to follow a logical course.

**A gap assessment tool** – this helps countries figure out where their infrastructure planning could improve by grading their progress in some key areas.



Explore ICE's EBI framework: <https://bit.ly/EBIprogramme>





## Project Pitch Planning Worksheet

Ideas

How will your chosen idea deliver?

Satisfaction	Sustainability	Value for money

What more do we need to know, and where can we find it out?

Questions to research or ask our Mentor:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....



## More opportunities

Creating an ICE CityZen Award Project Pitch opens up other exciting opportunities...

### Enter the Big Bang Competition!

Your project pitch video could be eligible for a second free competition with great prizes! The Big Bang Competition is open to students studying in state-funded secondary schools or teams of joint state-independent students working together.

Entry deadline will be March 2027 (date tbc).

Find out more here:

<https://www.thebigbang.org.uk/the-big-bang-competition/>



### Get a CREST award too!

CREST is a nationally recognised scheme for student-led project work in STEM subjects.

Completing a CityZen Award project pitch offers the chance to gain an Explorer level CREST Award. For the code to apply for this, contact ICE's CityZen team: [careers@ice.org.uk](mailto:careers@ice.org.uk)

Find out more about CREST Awards: <https://www.crestawards.org/>



### Make it real with Project Earth

Is your Project Pitch idea something you could, and want to, make really happen? With a bit of help of course.

Project Earth - an Earthshot Affiliate initiative - boasts a phenomenal group of expert advisors around the world to empower young people aged up to 18 years to innovate.

They offer support and advice to bring ideas to fruition, to amplify ideas and to showcase creativity and imagination.

Find out more: <https://projectearth.global/>



The logo for the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) features the lowercase letters 'ice' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are positioned on a dark teal rectangular background. Below the letters, the full name 'Institution of Civil Engineers' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Institution of Civil Engineers

The background of the page is a dark teal color with a light teal diamond-shaped grid pattern. Overlaid on this is a faint, light teal architectural floor plan of a building. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements. There are several circular callouts with numbers: '1' in the top left, '3' in the middle left, and '150' and '120' near the bottom left. The text for the ICE contact information is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the floor plan.

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