

FinEst Centre
for Smart Cities

SMART CITY CHALLENGE 2025

City Challenge

Max 3 pages

send to smartcity@taltech.ee by Sept 30, 2025

Challenge Title – **Lost Children on the Beach**

City/county and country – Municipality of The Hague, Netherlands

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1. What is the future urban challenge that would need a solution to?

- Please describe the challenge of your city / county neighboring a city?
 - *The Hague is a city by the sea, where many residents, (water) sports enthusiasts, and tourists enjoy the beach and the water. On busy summer days, parents and children sometimes become separated unintentionally. This causes significant concern for parents. At the same time, reuniting lost children with their parents requires significant resources from emergency services.*
 - *Our challenge: How can we quickly reunite lost children on the beach with their parents/guardians, saving time for emergency services and beach businesses?*
- Which category your challenge is primarily in:
 - *Safe city*
- Why is it important for your city to solve it? How big priority it is for you and why?
 - *On busy summer days, as many as 15 to 30 children can go missing at the same time. Searching for lost children or their parents takes up a lot of time for emergency services and beach businesses. And it can be a very stressful experience for both children and parents.*
- Is this a unique challenge/problem of your city, why or is this by your knowledge a challenge/problem that many cities have – which kind of other cities?
 - *The challenge described is a problem that occurs every year in The Hague and also in other busy coastal cities.*
 - *There are no statistics readily available on the exact frequency of children getting lost on beaches, but it is a common occurrence, with lifeguards dealing with thousands of lost children each year in busy areas. While often resolved quickly with the child being found safe and sound, the experience can be terrifying for both children and parents.*

2. Innovation.

- How have you solved that issue so far?
 - *Preventive: Free distribution of wristbands to write down first name and phone number; Awareness campaigns; Recognition poles on the beach; Trial with a wristband with 5G and QR for quick location of children.*
 - *Reactive: Childcare facility on the beach run by volunteers; Beach businesses share photos and information about lost or found children via WhatsApp for quick reunification.*



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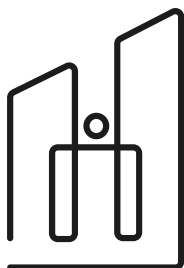


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- Why aren't the present solutions good enough? Are there legal obstacles, which ones?
 - *Preventive: Reaches a low amount of people with children; Too expensive.*
 - *Reactive: Shortage of volunteers; There are legal obstacles, especially around privacy and legislation.*
 - *Other obstacles: Different nationalities; Unfamiliarity with the area and the dangers of the sea; Sometimes fear of the government.*
- What should be the main features, characteristics of the future solution to be potentially best for that challenge or problem?
 - *Quickly reunite lost children with their parents*
 - *Quickly assess the severity of the situation and immediately escalate if necessary*
 - *Accessible to everyone and available in all languages*
 - *Secure processing of privacy sensitive data*
 - *Save time for emergency services and beach bar operators*
 - *Provide a clear framework for action for all involved*

3. Expected impact of your pilot solution.

- What is the expected impact to your city environment you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?
 - *Parents and children quickly find each other on the beach with minimal involvement from emergency services.*
 - *Emergency services and beach businesses have access to the same information and know what their role is.*
 - *In a serious situation, the response is quickly scaled up.*
- What is the expected impact to your citizens you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?
 - *Residents and tourists who have lost their children know what to do to get help quickly and remain calm.*
 - *Less panic and stress for parents, children, and bystanders*
- What is the expected impact to your city governance you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?
 - *A good solution will ensure that emergency services can devote more time to other important tasks.*
 - *The solution contributes to the municipality's general duty of care for the safety of citizens, including beach safety, as part of public administration and crisis management. This duty means that, depending on the situation, municipalities are obliged to ensure the safety of swimming locations, identify risks, warn of dangers such as rip currents, and take measures to prevent accidents and casualties.*
 - *Through an innovative and well-organized approach, the municipality demonstrates that it is proactive and forward-looking, strengthening the confidence of residents and visitors in municipal safety policy and setting an example for other coastal cities.*

4. Piloting

- Why would you be interested to become a piloting partner of a proposed solution to the challenge you are describing here? Describe shortly your capability to participate.
 - *The challenge described is a problem that occurs every year in The Hague and also in other busy coastal cities.*
 - *How grateful parents will be if we can come up with an innovative solution together, enabling parents and children to quickly find each other again in busy areas and feel positively supported.*
 - *If this challenge is selected, we would of course like to participate in this pilot project by providing people and a test location. The coastal area (Scheveningen) also serves as a living lab: Living Lab Scheveningen. See: <https://smartcity.denhaag.nl/en/whitepaper> for more information.*



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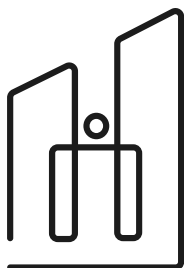


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CHECKLIST AND FAQ

Are you a city, municipality or a campus / private real estate developer?

Yes – you are warmly welcome to propose 1-3 challenges, one challenge per one template

No – do not send us any challenges but wait until we have gathered urban challenges and you are welcome to propose solution ideas by November 30

Are you describing challenge or problem? – Yes, then great.

Does a city need to propose a solution idea as well? – No, the researchers and companies will propose their solution ideas to the challenges proposal by the cities.

Can only Estonian cities propose challenges? Can only EU cities propose challenges? – No, cities* from whatever country are warmly welcome.

*A **City** is a local administrative unit where the majority of the population lives in an urban centre of at least 50 000 inhabitants and cities from countries with less than 5 cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants if they have more than 10 000 inhabitants. Those countries are: Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Slovenia (SI) and Slovakia (SK).

Can our city participate without proposing a challenge? – Yes, that is also possible but then you need to vote for challenges proposed by other cities. This can be done between Oct 2-30.

How will the challenges be evaluated? – We will not evaluate the proposed challenges but other cities/municipalities/campuses/private real estate developers can vote for the proposed challenges. In Round 5 researchers will start to propose solution ideas only to the challenges that have minimum one Estonian city/county and one city/county from another country.



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