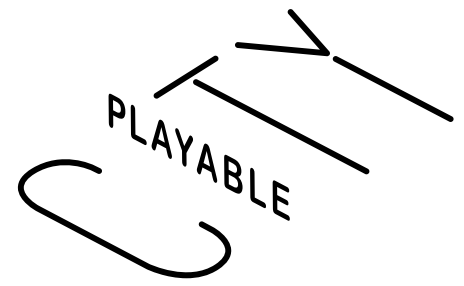# Playable City Sandbox

Playable City puts people and play at the heart of the future city, re-using city infrastructure and re-appropriating smart city technologies to create connections – person to person, person to city.

PLAYABLE CITY

UKRI UK Research and Innovation

MyWorld
myworld-creates.com

WATERSHED

Summary

Across the globe Playable City has built a networked community of creatives, producers and citizens, unlocking social dialogue and play through a series of hybrid labs, talent development programmes and playable installations. We have spent some time reflecting on how the world has changed and how we can more proactively address barriers to play and participation in public space.

Growing the global network, Watershed is now launching its first UK Playable City commission since 2016. We are inviting artists, designers, architects, technologists and creative practitioners to propose new and distinctive ideas responding to the theme. We will commission six teams to develop their ideas with an award of up to £45k each.

This document explains the information you need to know about the theme, the opportunity and the application process. If you have any access requirements that mean this document does not work for you please contact Rachael Burton on myworld@watershed.co.uk.

Playable City Sandbox is part of the the MyWorld IDEAS programme, funded by UKRI.

Image: Farrows Creative

What is Playable City?

Playable City puts people and play at the heart of the future city.

We will fund six brilliant ideas to reanimate our cities post-lockdown by inviting people to play and connect - person to person, person to city. By re-imagining existing city infrastructure, Playable City unlocks imagination and conversations between local communities and the places they live.

In previous Playable City commissions, audiences have shared secrets with postboxes, danced with their own shadows under lampposts and jumped with origami-like rabbits projected on pavements. Pushing the boundaries and encouraging experimentation, Playable City sits at the intersections of art, technology and culture.

In the last ten years, Playable City has reached five continents and nine cities, from Lagos to Recife, Tokyo to Melbourne and Singapore to Austin. We have worked with 74 partners and over 50 creatives, reaching over one million people globally since conception. Funded by MyWorld, this next phase of Playable City will give you the chance to produce your own Playable City prototype.

Image: Jon Aitken

What is a Sandbox?

The methodology we will use to support the development of your Playable City idea is called Sandbox. Watershed developed this tried-and-tested methodology to bring together teams of brilliant people to test new ideas with generosity and rigour. We will support you to take an experimental idea to a working prototype over three months of rapid research and development.

Sandbox helps to develop ideas with commercial potential; it is not for finished products or services, or one-off projects. We will bring the six teams together for a series of workshops offering peer learning and access to creative and business expertise.

Image: Jon Aitken

Image: Beto Figueiroa

"Playable city ideas are a human response to the coldness and anonymity of the urban environment. By encouraging activities that bring joy, we can create a happier, more cohesive urban future"

The Guardian

Creative Technology

We are looking for ideas that use creative technology. Innovations in technology are changing every part of our city landscapes - from how we navigate from A to B, to how we pay for things and how we consume social and cultural activities. Augmented Reality, motion capture, 5G, spatialized audio and virtual worlds are just some of the technologies changing how we operate and play within our cities.

We are interested in ideas exploring any kind of creative technology. We also have an exciting opportunity for two of the prototype teams to use a [5G nomadic node](#) (a pop-up 5G network in a box). The network is developed by the University of Bristol's Smart Internet Lab and will provide lower latency and higher location accuracy, as well as adapt mobile networks to better support video data. Developers have full control of the application through a local edge solution, which is a significant benefit that sets apart the capabilities from previous testbeds. You can read more about this in the [FAQs](#) .

Responsible Innovation

Watershed believes in responsible innovation. That means designing new experiences with an understanding of, and responsibility for, the social, cultural and environmental impact of your work. You should consider your audience from the outset. We want you to think about potential barriers to people engaging with your prototype and how you can remove those barriers (eg. do people have to travel to the city centre? do they need access to a smartphone?). You can use our Playable City design questions to help you think this through:

- Who feels safe and comfortable to play in the place where your prototype will be situated?
- What creates a sense of place for people? How do these change from person to person and how do they shift over time?
- What impact does the prototype have on its environment, can it be more sustainable/regenerative?
- Are there any social or cultural factors that will impact how people will play with your prototype?
- What biases are present in your materials, methods and expectations? How might these create barriers and/or limit access?

What do we expect from you?

- Attendance at an Ideas Lab.
- Attendance at all three Sandbox workshops (see timeline on page 10) and one-to-one meetings.
- A generous and open attitude.
- A willingness to participate in events and discussions with public, peers and partners while your work is in development.
- Contribution to press and media campaigns.
- Some time spent in residence at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol.
- Consideration of inclusion, equity and accessibility in your idea. We will support you to play-test your prototype with this in mind.

What do you get?

- A grant of £45,000 to focus intensively on the development of new intellectual property. This breaks down into company time, materials and specialist skills.
- Three Sandbox workshops with the cohort of six teams to inspire, challenge and upskill you around the theme of Playable City
- Support from a Producer, Business Mentor, Creative Technologist as you develop your prototype (these people will be working across the programme, you must have the core skills required to develop the prototype in your team)
- A panel of leading Industry Advisers who help develop ideas and potential routes to market
- Desk space and access to facilities in the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed in Bristol, connecting you to a vibrant community of artists and creative technologists
- Access to a series of workshops focussing on inclusive practice and leadership with a focus on peer support
- PR support, showcasing opportunities and feedback events offering the opportunity for discussion/collaboration with both peers and public
- Support with play testing your ideas (including the Playable City design questions)
- Access support
- A short promo film documenting your prototype
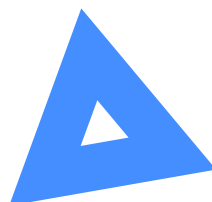
How to apply

The application process has two stages:

Stage One

You will submit a short online Expression of Interest form. We will select up to 60 people to attend a half day Ideas Lab at Watershed in September 2022.

We will select people for the Ideas Labs who demonstrate a wide range of skills, interests and ideas relevant to Playable City Sandbox. The Ideas Lab will offer participants a chance to:

- Meet other creatives and discuss thoughts, ideas and ambitions.
- Establish areas of interest, insights and thoughts around the Playable City theme.
- Learn more about the value of working in a Sandbox process, which is fast, iterative, open and collaborative.

Apply here for the Stage 1 expression of interest:
https://wshd.to/playablecityideaslab

Stage Two

Following the Ideas Lab, you will be invited to form teams and apply for up to £45k to develop your idea to prototype.

You will have the opportunity to attend a one-to-one surgery with the team to talk through your idea before submitting a full stage 2 proposal and a budget which will be assessed by a selection panel.

Shortlisted teams will then be invited to interview with members of the MyWorld partnership and external industry experts. We expect to commission six teams with a budget of up to £45,000 per team.

Assessment Criteria

We will assess proposals at Stage Two with the following criteria:

- Your idea responds to the Playable City theme with originality. It will use creative technology in an interesting way. The work may be sited outdoors or indoors but it must be in a place with public access and be suitable for subsequent touring.
- Your prototype has exciting potential for development beyond our funding (new sites, audiences, markets, income streams etc.).
- You have thoughtfully considered our Playable City design questions and are excited about building them into their making process (with our support).
- You demonstrate a desire to sustainably grow your business and products/ services.
- You will apply with a strong team in place with the expertise and ability to deliver your prototype. For more information about eligibility and the possible make up of teams, please see the FAQs.

**Apply here for the Stage 1 expression of interest:
https://wshd.to/playablecityideaslab**

We understand that online forms do not work for everyone. If you would like to register your expression of interest by alternative means please email Rachael Burton on myworld@watershed.co.uk.

Image: Beto Figueiroa
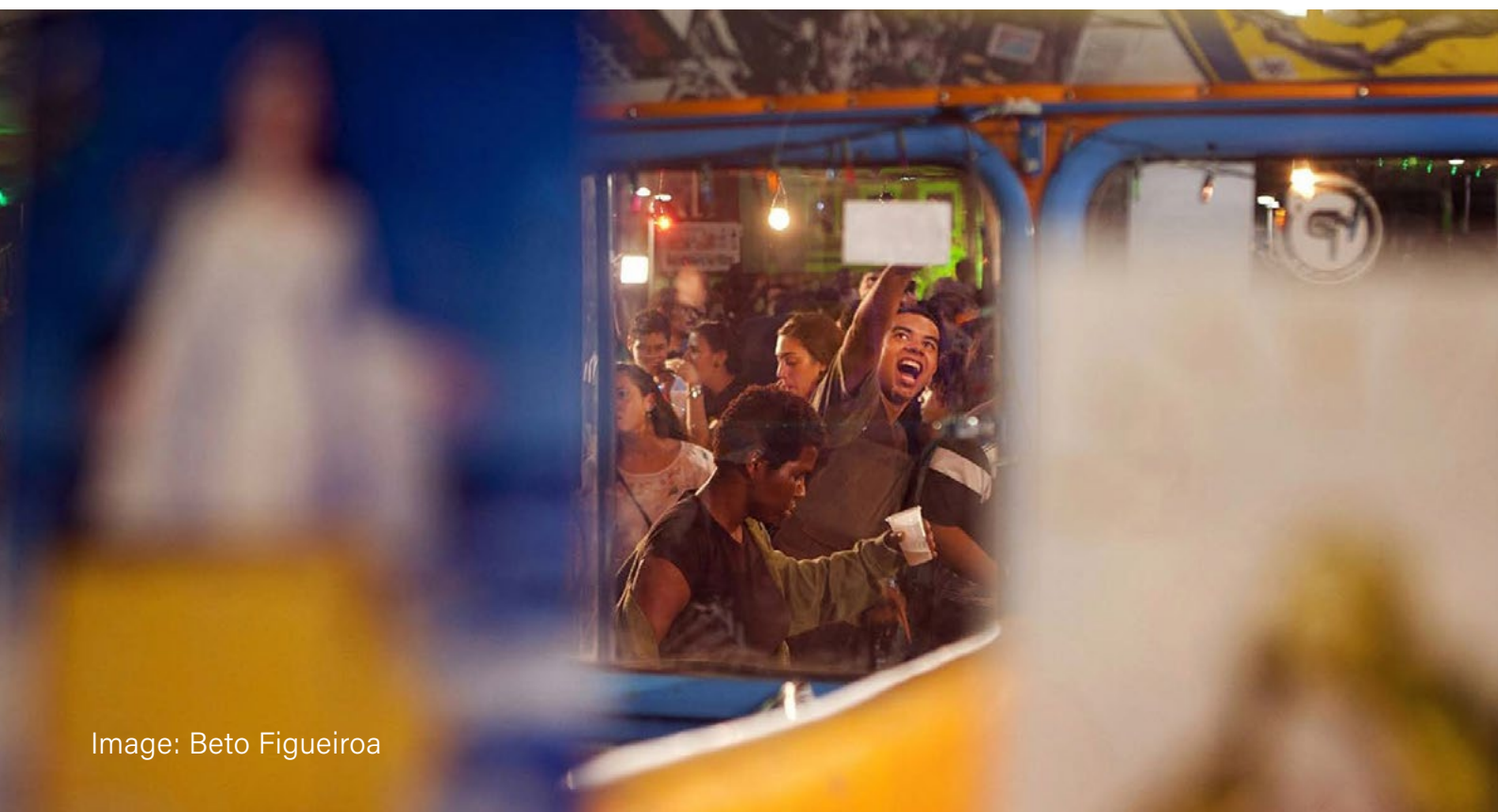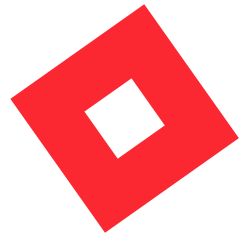
Timeline

- **Deadline for Stage 1 expressions of interest**
Friday 12 August 2022 at 10:00

- **Applicants will hear from us by**
Friday 19 August 2022

- **Ideas Labs (you will be invited to attend one)**
Thursday 8 & Monday 12 September 2022

- **Bookable one-to-one surgeries:**
Between 26 September and 7 October 2022

- **Sandbox Stage 2 application deadline:**
Monday 17 October 2022 at 10.00

- **Shortlisted applicants will hear from us by**
Friday 4 November 2022

- **Interviews**
22, 23 and 24 November 2022

- **Sandbox Production Period**
February - April 2023

- **Public Showcase**
Between 23 – 30 April 2023

Image: Hirsch & Mann
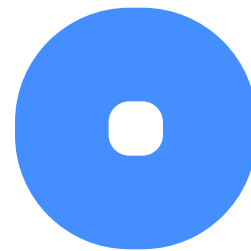
Talk to Us

We have shared some FAQs here. If your question has not been answered please contact Rachael Burton on myworld@watershed.co.uk

Stage 1 expression of interest application form:
https://wshd.to/playablecityideaslab

MyWorld IDEAS Programme

Playable City Sandbox is part of the MyWorld IDEAS programme, led by Watershed.

Watershed is a partner in MyWorld, a project led by the University of Bristol that will celebrate the West of England's reputation as an international trailblazer in creative technology and screen-based media.

The IDEAS programme provides small-medium enterprise businesses, freelancers and the public the opportunity to experiment with new technologies, creating meaningful experiences for audiences. It also offers the opportunity to test and question how these technologies are or could be applied, thereby placing people, arts and culture at the heart of new, innovative technologies.The IDEAS programme encourages responsible forms of innovation and actively explores points of crossover and connection.

Tweet Us!
@pmstudio
@wshed
@PlayableCity

Image: Jon Aitken

"Sandbox has been one of the best funded projects I've ever been involved with [...] it combines meaningful financing, sensitive support and input, and a laser focus on good commercial product design."

Alex Fleetwood, previous Sandbox participant

About Pervasive Media Studio and Watershed

The Pervasive Media Studio hosts a brilliant community of over 100 artists, creative companies, technologists and academics exploring experience design and creative technology.

The Pervasive Media Studio is based within Watershed in Bristol, a cutural organisation championing engagement, imagination and ingenuity. We have an open plan studio with a culture of generosity, curiosity and interuptability. We believe that by clustering together people from a broad range of backgrounds, with differing skills, experiences and opinions, all of our ideas get better.

It is a collaboration between Watershed, University of Bristol and UWE Bristol.

About MyWorld

Watershed and the Pervasive Media Studio are part of a programme called MyWorld which will showcase the latest advances in digital production and research.

Led by the University of Bristol, the aim of MyWorld is to position the West of England as an international trailblazer in screen-based media, forge dynamic collaborations to progress technological innovation, deliver creative excellence, establish and operate state of the art facilities, offer skills training and drive inward investment, raising the region's profile on the global stage.

MyWorld is funded through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) 'Strength in Places fund.'

Main Delivery partners: University of Bristol, University of the West of England, University of Bath, Bath Spa University, Digital Catapult, Aardman Animations, BDH, Esprit Film and Television, Bristol Old Vic and Opposable Games.