

New support to grow Scottish geospatial sector

The UK Government Geospatial Commission, working with Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government, is helping to establish the new Scottish Geospatial Network Integrator, with a £200,000 joint investment.

Geospatial data, which is data linked to location, underpins our public services such as emergency planning, building our homes, protecting our environment, supporting our transport and helping our security services to keep us safe.

The Scottish Geospatial Network Integrator will enhance the use of location-based data across Scotland, including:

- Helping to build a dedicated network of geospatial organisations across Scotland
- Boosting collaboration, knowledge sharing and the profile of the Scottish sector
- Developing the supply chain and signpost to potential growth opportunities

Scotland has a healthy geospatial sector but research by Scottish Enterprise has shown that more support is needed to encourage greater cooperation in the sector.

The new project will help to unlock part of the estimated £11 billion of value to the UK's economy each year from geospatial services. The new network is also a key commitment of the UK's Geospatial Strategy that was launched in June 2020.

The Scottish Geospatial Network Integrator (SGNI) will work to:

- Build a community of businesses and organisations working on location-based data
- Raise awareness of the Scottish geospatial sector to other economic sectors, including promoting how location-based data can benefit other sectors, such as tourism, food, drink and agriculture
- Signpost geospatial companies to support and economic growth opportunities
- Further develop the Scottish geospatial supply chain by identifying and bringing organisations together who can help develop geospatial technologies

The SGNI will be run by the business Optimat.

Thalia Baldwin, Geospatial Commission Director said:

Realising the UK's national geospatial strategy requires collective

effort, connecting policy, data, people and systems and today's announcement demonstrates how we can work on shared goals with both Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government to grow Scotland's geospatial and wider data community.

Ian Blewett, Head of Digital Economy at Scottish Enterprise added:

Location data is used across society: from governments taking infrastructure decisions; shipping companies planning logistics; to public health. The recent use of data around Covid 19 tracking is bringing the value of geospatial data into sharp focus too.

The Network Integrator project will bring together businesses, public sector and academia to create opportunities for innovation to benefit not only the economy but also society, with data as an intrinsic part of efficient and impactful decision making.

Scotland is well placed due to having many sectors that depend on geospatial data as well as a strong established ecosystem. Not only that, but the development taking place in the space sector around the creation and use of Earth observation data adds to the wealth of geospatial data that continues to drive forward innovation. This excellent partnership being delivered by Optimat on behalf of the UK Geospatial Commission, the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise will build on this and support future growth.

Albert King, Chief Data Officer at the Scottish Government:

The Scottish Geospatial Network Integrator project is an opportunity to promote the innovation and entrepreneurship that exists within the growing geospatial and space sectors in Scotland.

The use of accurate location data is proving invaluable in the Scottish Government's fight against Coronavirus (COVID-19), exemplifying how the use of location data can help save time, money and lives.

Scotland is already seen as a thriving and innovative place to conduct geospatial business. This initiative will help drive further investment in our world-leading tech industries, which are providing high value, skilled jobs and have an important role to play in Scotland's sustainable economic recovery.

Dr Ashley Stewart, Optimat added:

We are delighted to be working with Scottish Enterprise and the wider geospatial sector in Scotland in the role of Network Integrator. Having previously undertaken an industry research into this sector to determine the appetite for, and scale and nature of, a geospatial cluster, we are looking forward to working with the key partners and integrators to clearly identify and build a cluster of innovative Scottish businesses, academics and public bodies to identify emerging opportunities in this exciting and evolving sector.

The network integrator project forms an essential part of the Scottish Geospatial Action Plan.

Background

Geospatial Commission

The Geospatial Commission was established in 2018 as an independent, expert committee responsible for setting the UK's geospatial strategy and coordinating public sector geospatial activity. Its aim is to unlock the significant economic, social and environmental opportunities offered by location data and to boost the UK's global geospatial expertise. Find out more about the [UK Geospatial Strategy](#)

Contact us: geospatialcommission@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

About Scottish Enterprise

Scottish Enterprise is Scotland's national economic development agency. We're committed to growing the Scottish economy for the benefit of all, helping create more quality jobs and a brighter future for every region.

About Optimat

Optimat is an independent research and strategy consultancy specialising in helping clients to exploit market and technology developments. We work mainly at the interface of industries, markets and technologies and now have over 30 years' experience of studies and projects for clients as diverse as SMEs and the European Commission across the whole innovation life cycle including evaluation, science/innovation policy, R&D programmes, innovation infrastructure, technology commercialisation and exploitation and knowledge transfer. At the heart of this is our specialism in engaging with leading industry players to understand requirements and opportunities for new and advanced technologies.