

Press release: Bed bugs project is among 53 business ideas to receive funding

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) has identified a new bed bug aggregation pheromone, which acts as a powerful lure. A spin-out company from the LSHTM, [Vecotech Ltd](#), has received a grant of £220,034 to help the commercialisation of a product to detect infestations at an early stage, which would lead to more effective control.

Professor James Logan, of Vecotech and Head of Department of Disease Control at LSHTM, said:

Bed bug control remains one of the most lucrative and growing markets in the pest management industry globally and insect numbers are also reported to be increasing rapidly.

The common bed bug bite can cause reactions ranging from minor irritation to severe allergic hypersensitivity. They are a pest of significant public health importance and a major global economic problem, widely infesting homes, hospitals and dormitories and damaging the hospitality industry through infestation of hotels, cinemas and transport.

There are a few bed bug detection methods and monitoring devices available, but there are no established products with proven reliability and efficacy for detecting low level infestations quickly.

The objective of this project is to develop an effective test prototype of this powerful lure, to be used in a bed bug-specific trap, capable of detecting early stage infestations, that is effective, sensitive, long lasting, safe, affordable and discrete.

Other projects to receive grant funding include West Midlands' [Key Forensic Services Ltd](#) (£599,260), who are developing a desktop DNA sampling system to dramatically speed up crime scene investigation.

Also, Northern Ireland-based [Almac Diagnostics Ltd](#) (£500,001) are working on a lab and software solution to improve the success of clinical cancer trials for a range of patients, while Cambridge business [Entomics Biosystems Ltd](#)

(£571,166) is leading a partnership developing an innovative system to enable insects to become a nutritious and sustainable feed ingredient for the UK poultry market.

In this round, a total of £17.44 million has been allocated by Innovate UK for projects which cover new products, processes or services that have the potential to generate significant positive impact and growth for the UK economy.

Fionnuala Costello, Head of Open Programmes at Innovate UK, said:

All of these projects are tackling issues that affect many people and cover key sectors linked to government's Industrial Strategy. They have the potential to have a lasting impact.

The overall quality of applications from across the country was of exceptionally high standard and covers a wide range of industries, from digital and creative to biosciences and medicine development, which shows the appetite of UK businesses to innovate and grow.

Through our ongoing funding programme we are supporting hundreds of high-growth businesses, collaborations and industries to innovate and compete in future global markets.

Innovate UK's open competition programme is available to any technology, science, engineering or industrial area for innovation projects at various stages. Projects should cost between £25,000 and £2 million and last up to 36 months. It is designed to help develop cutting-edge projects at any stage from conceptualisation, through to prototype development and demonstration, with a view to eventual commercialisation.