

HM Land Registry and Ordnance Survey extend support to British start-ups

HM Land Registry and Ordnance Survey continue to provide financial support and expert advice through their successful Geovation Programme, as 4 new businesses are granted access to resource and support.

These additions will add to the 117 start-ups that have been supported since 2015 in introducing innovative digital products and services to their respective markets, raising over £77 million in third-party funding and creating 484 new jobs since 2015. The Accelerator Programme is designed to propel pre-seed or seed stage start-ups, in the location and property industries, to the next level.

To mitigate the added challenges coronavirus (COVID-19) has presented its London-based hub of networking, workshops, development support and more, the programme has responded and adapted to ensure it continues to offer the next generation of digital businesses an all-encompassing package of support through remote digital solutions. This includes access to:

- up to £20,000 in grant funding
- high quality data from Ordnance Survey (OS), HM Land Registry and British Geological Survey
- geospatial expertise from OS and land and property insight from HM Land Registry
- business and strategy development capabilities
- a team of full stack developers to help build their proof of concept/minimum viable product
- business mentorship and coaching from third-party professionals
- hub space at Geovation London, as well as partner hubs in Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh
- an extensive business network, including connection with investors and potential partners

Andrew Trigg, Interim Director of Digital, Data and Technology at HM Land Registry, comments:

Our ongoing support for PropTech small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on the Geovation Programme is enabling them to seize disruptive opportunities in the housing, land and planning sectors. We couldn't be more excited by the new innovators joining the programme, and can't wait for them to add to an already glowing track record of products, services, and job creation as an exciting part of the UK's digital economy.

Paul Cruddace, Head of Innovation and Geovation for OS, says:

New businesses, new thinking and innovation will be key to the British economy as the nation comes through the Covid pandemic and looks for stability. Start-ups face many challenges, regardless of the current pandemic, and so at this extraordinary time Ordnance Survey, HM Land Registry and the Geovation team will relish giving our best to help these businesses who have joined us succeed.

Talking about her start-up's experience of being on the Geovation Programme, Iris Kramer of ArchAI says:

Geovation helped us develop our commercial skills base, expand customer exploration and market penetration strategies. Because of COVID and the lockdown, every business owner has had to quickly shift to being online. Being part of Geovation has given us the opportunity to learn how to navigate this situation from dedicated experts through workshops, and by sharing experiences with the other founders in the cohort during group coaching sessions. This helped quickly apply our learnings to grow our business, automating archaeology assessments to speed up construction planning, something which would have taken us much longer to arrive at on our own.

For more information on Geovation's accelerator programme, and its wider PropTech and GeoTech membership community, visit <https://geovation.uk>.

Businesses joining the programme

BioCap

BioCap is working with landowners and partners to develop "The Opportunity Map" – a mapped plan for a region's countryside, which highlights existing important ecosystems, and then recommends further Nature-based interventions to create more valuable wildlife habitat and capture carbon.

Sail Homes

Sail Homes offers homeowners a stress-free sale by identifying the best buyer and quickly tying up the many legal details that can cause delays.

Mappin Technologies

Mappin Technologies develops solutions for administrators and users to interact digitally with buildings, from indoor navigation to asset-tracking, to create a digital smart-building ecosystem.

adoor

adoor is a new platform to track a house move. It keeps everyone involved up to date with the information they need, all in one place.

Background

About Geovation

Geovation was launched in 2010 by Ordnance Survey to support innovative start-ups using location and property data. Geovation operates 2 accelerator programmes, launched in 2016 and run in association with HM Land Registry and Registers of Scotland. These provide promising GeoTech and PropTech start-ups with focused guidance and support, access to quality data, and technical and financial resources to help them develop and thrive. Geovation has offices in London and Edinburgh and also has partnerships with innovation hubs in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Manchester to develop and support local start-ups.

For further information about Geovation visit <https://geovation.uk>

About HM Land Registry

HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.

For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.

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About Ordnance Survey

Ordnance Survey is Great Britain's mapping service for government, business and citizens. Our geospatial data serves the national interest by enabling a safe, healthy and prosperous society. Everything happens somewhere, and every day we support the delivery of efficient public services, support land management & planning, help protect our environment and underpin national security, infrastructure and emergency services. With our partners, we provide expertise and accurate location data and services to help create a resilient nation, ready for next-generation technology. We're driven to ensure Britain can build a world-leading digital and connected economy of the future.

For further information about Ordnance Survey visit www.os.uk.

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Science Minister on 'The Research Landscape'

It's truly fantastic to be with you today – and thank you to Nick for the invitation.

With the disruption we're all facing, it's so important that we can keep meeting virtually like this.

It is truly a testament to how adaptable we are, that these virtual meetings now feel quite normal – a sign that we are all more capable of responding to change than we think we are.

And change is something which you, as a higher education community, are experts in responding to – with your heroic efforts over the last few months being just the latest example of how our universities are adapting to a changing world.

I like to think that science, research and innovation lie at the heart of this. Universities, as you know, they're full of creative people – people who are driven by a desire to create, to discover, to innovate.

That makes you so well-placed to help us solve the challenges of the 21st century. Not just the challenge of COVID – but major challenges like climate change, which I know we're all thinking about.

Or how to adapt to an ageing society, or indeed how to respond to the challenge to level up, right across the UK.

And I hope you can see that this government recognises the importance of science and innovation for our future.

That's why we remain committed to raising public spending on R&D to £22 billion per year by 2024/25.

And in July we published our ambitious [Roadmap](#), setting out an exciting vision for the future of UK R&D – and genuinely I'm excited by the Roadmap and how well it's been received by the community.

But as the Roadmap clearly said, we need to be honest about where we need to improve. And I really do believe that honesty is the best policy.

And that's because we have a duty to spend that money wisely so it can make the biggest difference possible.

Key to this is evaluation, which is what I want to talk about today.

It is only by evaluating the system that we can understand what works and what doesn't.

That we can make improvements that will lead to better outcomes.

And evaluation can be a powerful incentive – and it can change behaviours.

Through linking evaluation to funding, we have introduced policies intended to drive greater impact and openness from our research.

That's why in all honesty other countries look to the UK as the global experts in research evaluation – with nations as far-flung as Japan and Australia running exercises that are inspired by or benchmarked against our own [Research Excellence Framework \(REF\)](#).

But, if implemented in the wrong way, or in a way which doesn't evolve, evaluation can drive negative behaviours.

I have made a point of listening carefully to the research community over the last few months – talking to a wide range of people from all backgrounds and all career stages.

You – and I have to say thank you for this – have not been backwards in coming forwards about the things that are getting in your way – the restrictions that are holding you back.

The challenges you face in research – and the culture which is at the root of these.

It is clear to me that many of you feel pressure from the wider evaluation system – pressure to demonstrate particular things to your peers and your superiors – things which sometimes make very little sense.

For instance, I've already talked about the culture which has grown up around the academic publication process.

Researchers tell me they feel pressure to publish in particular venues in order to gain the respect of their peers, which wrongly suggests that where you publish something is more important than what you say. That just can't be right.

People talk to me about “REF-able publications” – a total distortion of the value of research and a constraint on the diversity of research objectives.

Despite the rich variety of outputs that can come from research, over 97% of outputs submitted to REF 2014 were text-based. Just think about that.

And it is surprising how commonplace it is to talk about the UK's leading

position in “citation impact” – an odd phrase, actually, which confuses a process with an outcome.

Indeed, the processes researchers use to communicate with each other have now become so ingrained into the recognition and reward system that publication and citation seem to have become ends in themselves.

This gives rise to related issues – we know people feel pressured to show significant results from their work, to get it published, just to justify the effort and investment involved.

This could be having a profound effect on the very integrity of science itself – leading to questionable research practices and evidence of a growing crisis in the reproducibility of research.

A crisis which over half of surveyed academics recognise as significant.

We have created this situation, in part because of the way we evaluate success.

These are not new problems, but the good news is that the UK is leading the way in tackling them.

I have written to fellow Science Ministers around the world about this.

And, building on work done by the UK’s Forum for Responsible Metrics, Research England and UKRI are working with Dutch and South African partners on a global event on Responsible Research Assessment.

This Global Research Council virtual event will discuss how research assessment can beneficially impact research culture and the research ecosystem, to take forward the points I make here.

And looking at the REF, the Stern Review in 2016 helped us make important reductions to institutional game-playing and the negative impact of the exercise on individual researchers.

But it’s clear we have to go further.

The REF exercise of today would be hardly recognisable to those involved in the early selectivity exercises of the 1980s.

Although intended for simple purposes, universities have turned the REF into a major industry, with rising costs and complexity. Lord Stern also commented on this, but I am not convinced that the changes introduced have gone far enough.

There are now very few parts of academic life in the UK that are not affected in some way by the REF.

The REF ruleset, implemented in a risk-averse way, has become the default tool for many university leaders to effect institutional change.

But a risk-averse compliance culture risks stifling creativity and diversity.

We risk breeding resentment and eroding trust in our ability to evaluate the system effectively and fairly.

Indeed, we know that 4 in 10 surveyed researchers believe that their workplace puts more value on metrics than on research quality.

Now it's really important that I say clearly up front. I have absolutely no intention of disrupting the important work of the current REF.

It is vital that this work continue as planned, delivering robust outcomes which will inform significant funding decisions over the coming years.

And, perhaps even more importantly, we must protect our dual support system, which is a key strategic advantage for the UK research base.

However, we must be prepared to look to the future and ask ourselves how the REF can be evolved for the better, so that universities and funders work together to help build the research culture we all aspire to.

We need to work together to build an evaluation system that achieves our goals.

More quality time spent on research.

A positive culture which recognises all contributions to research.

A culture which motivates people to do diverse, creative and risk-taking work.

Institutions improving in ways that align to their diverse missions.

And clear accountability for public funding without layer upon layer of complex bureaucracy.

We should not shy away from asking the tough questions.

We need to be prepared to take bold decisions.

But I realise of course that this will take time.

We need to consult widely – and intend to do so, and think carefully and deeply about the consequences of our actions.

Culture change doesn't happen overnight – and this is equally a conversation which we must not rush.

But we do need to get started.

So I have today written to Research England to ask them to start working with their counterparts in the devolved administrations on a plan for reforming the REF after the current exercise is complete.

Recognising the importance of protecting the current REF and valuing it.

But being clear that we need to continue the journey towards building that better system we need.

One which can enable everyone in research to fulfil their potential.

Where evaluation supports and enables brilliant work of all types.

And with it all underpinned by a positive and supportive culture.

Our R&D Roadmap is about setting us out on a journey – a journey which we've only just begun.

But our Roadmap is about evolution as much as it's about radical reform – recognising where we are successful, and where changes are needed.

There is a lot of excellent work we can build on, and I am looking forward to working with all of you to help make the changes we need, to strengthen our position as a science superpower.

Thank you.

[PM call with Prime Minister of Greece: 20 October 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Prime Minister Mitsotakis of Greece.



This morning the Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Mitsotakis of Greece.

They discussed their countries' respective efforts to fight coronavirus and agreed to work together to ensure a sustainable global recovery, including through the development of a vaccine.

The Prime Minister updated Prime Minister Mitsotakis on the UK's negotiations with the EU. He reaffirmed that the EU have effectively ended those negotiations by stating they did not want to change their negotiating position. Should the EU fundamentally change their position, then the UK would be willing to talk on that new basis.

The two leaders discussed the recent tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Prime Minister stressed the need for dialogue and welcomed the public commitment from Greece to resolve differences with Turkey diplomatically. He confirmed the UK would continue to work with both sides to de-escalate the situation.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Mitsotakis also reflected on the outcome of the recent Turkish Cypriot elections. The Prime Minister was clear that a settlement in Cyprus was in everyone's interest.

Finally, the leaders resolved to continue to work together to enhance the UK-Greece relationship, particularly ahead of Greece's bicentenary in 2021.

Published 20 October 2020

[West London burglar jailed for longer](#)

News story

Erica Norris has had her sentence increased following intervention from the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A woman who pretended to be a carer in order to steal from an elderly couple has had her sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Erica Norris, 36, knocked on the door of an elderly couple in Ealing on 1 April 2020 and pretended she was a carer. She walked into the house without permission from Robert Jones, 82, who was alone at the time. Norris stole a

wallet and cash before leaving the property.

Norris returned to the house on 10 April. After knocking on the door she again entered without permission and began looking around the house for jewellery. A neighbour heard Norris in the property and called the police, who soon arrived and arrested Norris.

Norris was sentenced to 4 years and 6 months' imprisonment on 16 June 2020 at Isleworth Crown Court. Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, on 20 October the sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to 6 years and 6 months' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Norris targeted a vulnerable, elderly couple during the pandemic and caused a significant amount of distress to the victims. The Court of Appeal has rightly increased her sentence today.

Published 20 October 2020

[More Nightingale Courts open as temporary jury rooms rolled out](#)

Press release

Two new 'Nightingale Courts' in Bristol and Chester will begin hearing cases this week as part of a government move to tackle the impact of coronavirus on the justice system.



- Nightingale Courts in Bristol and Chester open their doors
- temporary jury rooms rolled out at courts across the country to boost

capacity

- part of plans to ensure the courts system recovers from the pandemic as quickly as possible

Located temporarily at the Bristol Law Society and Chester Town Hall, they will free up rooms in nearby crown courts – allowing more cases to be heard and delivering quicker justice for victims.

It brings the total number of Nightingale Courts, set up nationwide to alleviate pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic, to 14. A further 3 are due to open later this month, in total providing an additional 22 courtrooms.

Meanwhile, portable jury rooms have been installed at courts across Yorkshire to unlock even more capacity. The Portakabin® buildings erected at Bradford, Hull, and Leeds Crown Courts will be used for jurors to deliberate and will allow eight courtrooms to resume hearing trials.

Crucially, the portable facilities provide sufficient space for 2 metre social distancing between jurors and come equipped with Plexiglass screens as well as hand sanitation stations, to help stop the spread of Covid-19. The temporary rooms will be installed at further courts across the country in the coming months.

Justice Minister Chris Philp said:

These additional facilities will help to boost the capacity of these courts – reducing delays and ensuring speedier justice for all.

This is the latest step in our plan to work with the judiciary and legal sector in pursuing every available option to ensure our courts recover as quickly as possible.

Today's (20 October 2020) announcement follows a recent [£80 million investment]

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/suspected-criminals-held-for-longer-as-criminal-courts-recovery-plan-announced>) in the courts system to meet the unprecedented challenge presented by the pandemic. This will fund the employment of [1,600 new staff](#) to support the recovery, with more temporary Nightingale Courts and technology to boost capacity. These measures are beginning to show positive results:

- Magistrate courts are seeing the number of [outstanding cases](#) drop – dealing with over 21,000 cases a week
- Crown courts are currently holding over 100 jury trials, and clear over 1,700 cases a week
- 250 Crown Court rooms will be available for jury trials by the end of October following the roll out of Plexiglass screens to more than 200 court rooms and 100 jury deliberation rooms

Meanwhile, a major [£153 million investment](#) across the courts system announced in July will speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms.

Notes to editors

Published 20 October 2020