

# Entrepreneurship news

The University seeks to develop commercial opportunities from its research through a number of routes, such as licensing technologies and setting up 'spin-out' companies. Through its division of Research & Enterprise Development (RED), it works with researchers, business, industry and other partner organisations to create a culture of enterprise, and make Bristol University a key player in the knowledge-driven economy.

## Moving forward

A unique partnership between the four universities of Bristol, Bath, Southampton and Surrey has recently received the largest award from the DTI's Higher Education Innovation Fund to encourage enterprise, build new businesses, and work more effectively with industry. This collaboration, the only one of its kind in the UK to encapsulate all aspects of university enterprise, has been awarded £13 million over two years. The funding means that businesses of today and those of the future can benefit from enterprise training and education, and are given greater access to innovative research which could lead to new products and processes. Further initiatives involve helping entrepreneurs across the southern region, both within and outside of the universities, to succeed in setting up new businesses.

## Translating drug discovery

Bristol spin-out ProXara Biotechnology Ltd has recently received a University Translation Award for just under £600,000 from the Wellcome Trust. The company uses a novel cell-based screening approach to identify drugs to treat cancer, inflammatory and metabolic diseases. This prestigious award will be used to improve and optimise the company's initial drug leads, and to continue its screening operations. The ultimate aim is to take any potential drugs through Phase I clinical trials.

## More power for start-up

Invro Ltd, a start-up company based on low-power radio technology licensed from the University of Bristol, has recently received a SMART award to undertake a feasibility study of its idea. SMART, a government initiative

that helps companies to research and develop technologically innovative products and processes, is providing £42,000, while Oxford Technology Venture Capital Trust, a venture capital trust which invests in early-stage technology-based companies, is providing £15,000 of additional funding.

Dr **Duncan Grant** of the University of Bristol and the academic founder of Invro Ltd summed up the difference this funding could make: "High-tech ventures are difficult to get off the ground, particularly at a time when investors are nervous about the technology sector. This feasibility study will enable us to demonstrate to investors the potential of this technology, thereby reducing their risk in making further investments in the company. Funding like this at an early stage can make the difference between success and failure."

## Success in the pipeline

One of the most recent spin-out companies to come out of the University of Bristol is Cleanicepig Limited. The novel technology cleans pipelines and complex structures in manufacturing plants by pumping ice around the systems. The company recently caused a stir when it launched this innovative product at the recent Foodex Meatex exhibition in Birmingham. The UK Food and Drink industry was able to see how Cleanicepig's technology will help to reduce pressure on companies' ever-increasing operating margins, and provide a solution for sustained competitiveness. The technology will also contribute to reducing environmental pollution from processing factories. ■

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