

CONVERGE

Converge Awards 2021

The stage is set to reveal the most
promising innovations of 2021

Streaming 30th September 2021 from 5:00 pm

[Programme](#)

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Welcome from Dr Claudia Cavalluzzo

Scotland's universities have always been important drivers of economic growth with a strong track record of producing successful new businesses that not only create jobs and wealth but wider social impact. As we emerge from the pandemic, with a renewed focus on our economic recovery, their role is even more critical than ever in delivering maximum benefit for our economy and society.

For over a decade, Converge has worked hand-in-hand with our university partners helping them to capitalise on their immense strengths including world-leading research, creativity and talent. Converge-supported companies, numbering in the many hundreds, are now a powerful economic driving force which to date have raised over £130million and created 500+ high-value jobs. Their products and services are enriching our lives and our planet.

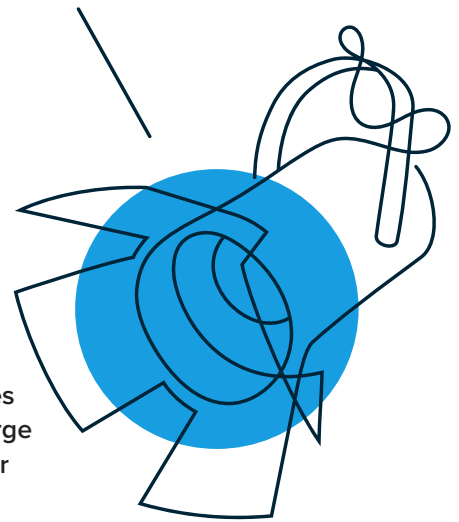
However, to achieve our full potential as an entrepreneurial nation, we believe that more needs to be done which is why, when Converge enters its new funding cycle in 2022, we plan to redouble our efforts by training and supporting more academic entrepreneurs than ever before and creating a series of regional hubs across Scotland where the same level of opportunity, mentoring and support is available to everyone.

This evening represents the culmination of our 2021 programme and the start of a journey for our winners and finalists. We hope to make that journey easier by providing them with equity-free cash prizes to fund their ventures; invaluable, free advice from our network of professional partners and a connected eco-system where they can find support, strength and guidance.

However, none of what we do – including tonight's Awards - would be possible without the dedication and support of a huge number of people and organisations including our funders, partners and sponsors. They include the Scottish Funding Council, Creative Scotland, our university partners and our network of commercial partners. Many thanks to you all.

I would also like to thank this year's judges, our trainers, our Strategic Advisory Board, our Steering Group and of course the Converge Team for all their hard work and commitment. It is fantastic to work with such an amazing group of people who do all they can to support those brave enough to start their own businesses.

Which brings me neatly onto this year's Awards. Good luck to everyone competing tonight and thank you to everyone for tuning in.



Dr Claudia Cavalluzzo
Director, Converge

Welcome from

Paul Atkinson

As an investor, and founding partner of Par Equity, one of Scotland's leading Venture Capital firms, I fully understand the importance of nurturing the next generation of companies with scale-up potential.

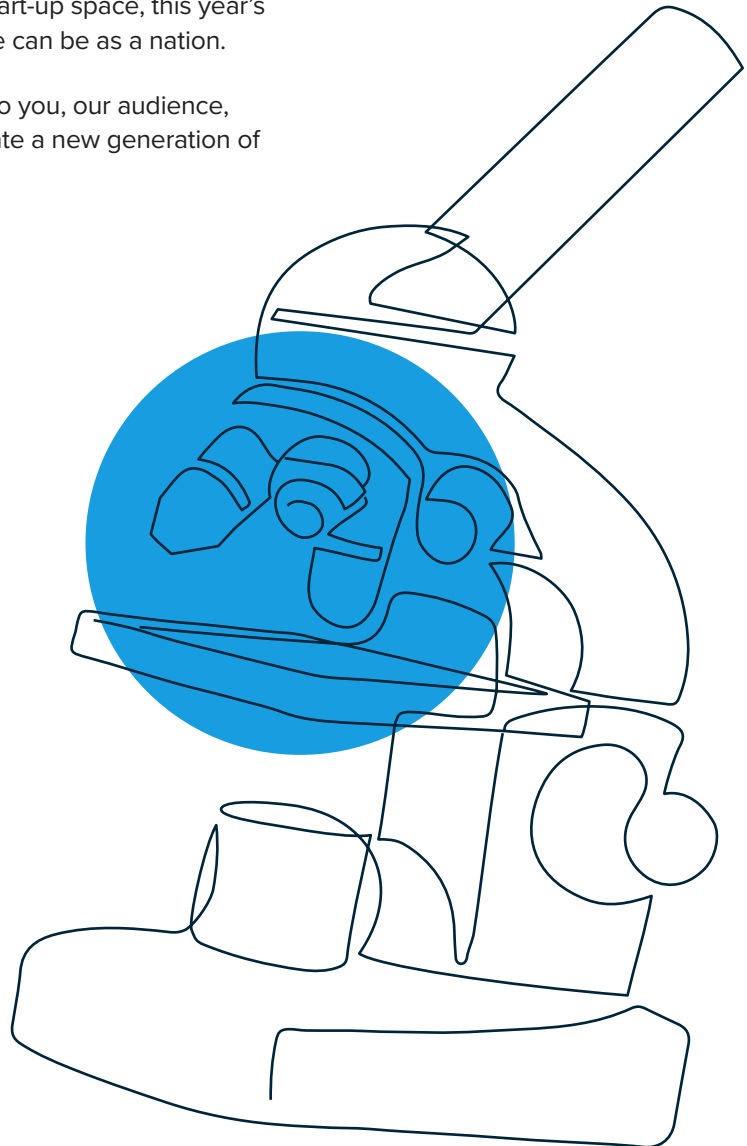
To ensure that sufficient companies reach the scale-up stage and generate economic growth, we need a healthy pipeline of early-stage start-ups and Converge, by working closely with all Scottish Universities, is playing a key role in nurturing new, innovative businesses on which so much of our future economic prosperity depends.

One of the highlights of being Converge Chair is the opportunity to support the brightest academic entrepreneurs coming out of Scotland's universities. Testament to Scotland's vibrant start-up space, this year's Converge finalists show just how innovative we can be as a nation.

Good luck to all our finalists and many thanks to you, our audience, for joining us tonight as we reward and celebrate a new generation of academic innovators.



Paul Atkinson
Chair, Converge



Converge Awards 2021

The Converge Awards marks the culmination of our annual programme which has seen a cohort of 90 projects and fledgling businesses selected from hundreds of applicants, and then further whittled down to 28 finalists going head-to-head for a prize pot of over £300,000.

Finalists are competing in four Challenge categories – Converge, Impact, Creative and Kickstart – and have undergone a period of intense business training, taken part in masterclasses and pitching competitions, submitted business plans and cash flow projections, before arriving here at the final event.

Alongside the winner and runner-up prizes for the four Challenge categories, this year we are awarding three special prizes – the Future Tech award sponsored by Cisco, the Net Zero prize sponsored by SSE and the Rose Award for female entrepreneurs sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland.

Event Programme

5.00pm Join the event for real-time networking around virtual tables

5.15pm Introduction, Event host, broadcaster Rhona McLeod
Welcome, Dr Claudia Cavalluzzo, director, Converge
Principal's remarks, Professor Iain Gillespie, principal & vice-chancellor Dundee University
Chair's remarks by Paul Atkinson, chair, Converge
Kickstart Challenge showcase & announcement
Creative Challenge showcase & announcement
Paul Thwaite, chief executive, commercial banking, Nat West Group, announces the Rose Award winner
Impact Challenge showcase and announcement
Chintan Patel, chief technology officer Cisco UK and Ireland, announces the Future Tech Award winner
Keynote address by Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne, founder, Genius Foods, followed by live Q&A
Alistair Phillips-Davis, chief executive, SSE, announces the Net Zero Award winner
Ministerial address by Kate Forbes, cabinet secretary for finance and the economy
Converge Challenge showcase and announcement
Closing remarks

7.00pm Networking around virtual tables

7.30pm Event closes

Join the conversation on social media!

Keep up with the action on Twitter where we'll be live tweeting throughout the show. Follow us at [@ConvergeC](#) and search for [#ConvergeAwards](#)

You can also find us on Instagram and LinkedIn



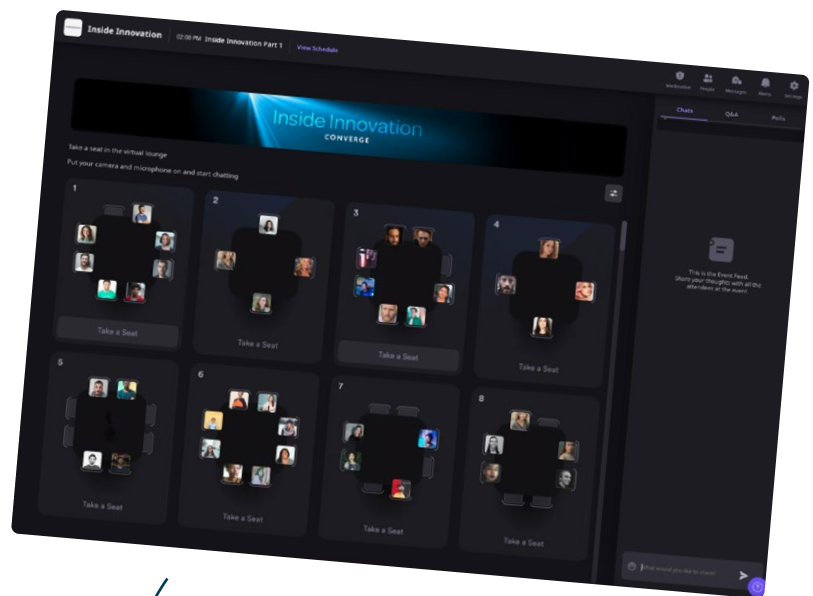
[@ConvergeC](#)



[@convergechallenge](#)



[@Converge](#)



About our event platform, Airmee

Join us before and after the show for real-time video networking with other members of the audience on our Airmee event platform.

- **Airmee** is best accessed on a desktop or laptop computer, using Google Chrome as the preferred browser. (Other browsers are compatible – check your joining instructions or the Airmee help button for more details).
- Once in Airmee, take a seat in our virtual lounge and once there is more than one of you at a table, pop your camera and microphone on to get chatting with your fellow audience members. You can move tables at any time. Click on the “People” icon at the top of the screen to see who else is here, and send a direct message to anyone by clicking on their icon.
- Send a message to the whole audience in the chat, and once the show has started, you can show your appreciation for the pitchers by clicking on the emoji icons, or post a question for our keynote speaker.

Who's who at the Awards ceremony



Rhona McLeod

Broadcaster and event host

Rhona is a former international athlete, journalist and broadcaster, best known for presenting sport on BBC Scotland and the Adventure Show. Now a freelance broadcaster, she is also an accomplished host of events and conferences.



Dr Claudia Cavalluzzo

Director, Converge

Claudia leads the Converge team bringing dynamism, vision, leadership and creative energy to the country's most progressive and pioneering company creation programme. Appointed director in November 2018 from her role as deputy director, Claudia's previous roles include head of Saltire Fellowships at Entrepreneurial Scotland. A former Saltire Fellow with a PhD in Organic Chemistry, Claudia's experience spans everything from programme management and business development through to sustainability, strategic planning and commercial activity.



Professor Iain Gillespie

Principal and vice-chancellor, University of Dundee

Iain joined the University of Dundee in January 2021 from his previous role as pro vice chancellor, Research and Enterprise at the University of Leicester. During his time in Leicester, Iain led their £100M Space Park development, the designation of the UK's first Life Science Opportunity Zone at Charnwood, and the university's Global Strategy. He was formerly director of science and innovation at the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the UK's leading funder for environmental science, and was lead director for international research across all seven UK research councils that are now part of UKRI.



Paul Atkinson

Chair, Converge

Paul is a professional investor, venture capitalist and board advisor with a track record of creating value for companies and investors in the technology and business services sector. He is highly active as an angel investor, having personally invested in over 30 fast growing technology companies, including Rocela Group, which was acquired by Version 1 of Ireland and Mobiqu, which was acquired by NYSE listed NCR Corporation.



Paul Thwaite

Chief executive officer, commercial banking, The Royal Bank of Scotland

Paul Thwaite was appointed chief executive officer, Commercial Banking in November 2019, and is responsible for the business supporting clients ranging from SMEs through to multi-nationals. Paul has a track record of success in senior business and functional roles across Wholesale, Corporate, International and Retail Banking for the Group, and was most recently responsible for the bank's SME franchise and commercial product businesses, including Lombard Asset Finance and Transaction Services.

Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne

Founder, Genius Foods

Lucinda trained as a chef at Leith's School of Food and Wine and went on to run a private catering company in Italy and London before returning to a teaching role at Leith's. In 2008, she founded Genius Foods, now the UK's leading 'free from' bakery brand after discovering a lack of gluten free options catering to her son's gluten intolerance. Genius remains based in West Lothian and caters to customers across the UK, Europe, Australia and America.

Lucinda recently stepped down from the business to pursue other interests and has just been appointed chair of industry body Scotland Food and Drink. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and has been included in the Maserati Top 100 Innovators and as one of the Top 100 Women to Watch by Cranfield University, English Channel by paramotor.



Chintan Patel

Chief technology officer, Cisco UK and Ireland

Chintan currently leads the Cisco UK & Ireland CTO Office, as chief technologist, a team comprising of visionaries, technologists and specialists in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Cyber-security, IoT, Blockchain, Future Workplaces, Virtual Reality, and Conversational Interfaces. He's driven by the opportunity to transform businesses using innovative technologies and working across Cisco's major clients, partners, industry alliances and academia. He is privileged to be a frequent industry speaker and mentor to many start-up companies.



Alistair Phillips-Davies

Chief executive, SSE

Alistair joined SSE in 1997, and possesses a detailed knowledge of the operations of each business area having held a number of senior roles throughout the Company.

Prior to joining the Board in 2002 as energy supply director, Alistair was director of corporate finance and business development. In 2010, he became generation and supply director, before deputy chief executive in 2012, then chief executive in 2013. As chief executive, Alistair is responsible for leading the group executive committee and for ensuring the delivery of strategy as agreed by the board.



Kate Forbes MSP

Cabinet secretary for finance and the economy

Kate Forbes was appointed as cabinet secretary for finance and the economy in May 2021. She is the Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency (which includes Dingwall, the Black Isle and the Great Glen) Kate is from Dingwall, although she spent part of her upbringing in Glasgow and India. Until she was elected as MSP, Kate was employed as an accountant in the banking industry. Prior to that she studied History at the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh.

Kickstart Challenge

The Kickstart Challenge, sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland, is for aspiring entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas they'd like to test, validate and prepare for launch.



The 2021 Kickstart finalists are...

DeepQA

Thomas Cartwright
University of Edinburgh



As software companies have moved towards agile development there has been an increased need for iterative software testing solutions. Releasing software with bugs can negatively affect a company's reputation. DeepQA solves this problem by utilising artificial intelligence (A.I.) to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of software testing. Beyond this initial focus, DeepQA will then use computer vision and user tracking to automate the creation of new tests.

@deep_qa

ForCence

Badri L Aekbote
University of Glasgow



Drug discovery and screening is a lengthy and costly process with a low success rate. It is estimated that 90% of the drugs which go through clinical trials never make it to market. This causes a huge loss of revenue in the pharmaceutical industry. Studies have shown that this is due to the low efficiency of drugs towards their target and the lack of validated platforms at early stages of drug development. Hence, we have developed a versatile in-vitro drug screening platform for studying mechanical diseases (abnormal cellular force generation) by measuring cellular forces as a drug assessment parameter.

@badriaekbote

Field to Fabric

Rosie Bristow
Heriot-Watt University



'Spinning Straw into Gold' a new mill connecting regenerative agriculture to sustainable fashion. We will produce natural fibre yarn which is grown, processed and spun in the UK. We can no longer ignore the systemic waste, pollution and worker's rights atrocities in the global fashion supply chain, the time is right for a local soil-to-soil textile economy which nourishes the earth and community in which it grows. Inspired by the Fibershed movement we envisage a farming/milling operation run with solar power and within walking distance of the workers homes which can produce yarn and fabric with a negative carbon footprint.

@straw_into_gold

Gibson Robotics

Joe Gibson
University of Strathclyde



Founded by an award-winning engineering student from the University of Strathclyde, Gibson Robotics sets out to truly ensure safe airspace. Disruption to airports by drones costs the industry hundreds of millions every year but more importantly puts hundreds of lives at risk. Gibson Robotics has developed a rapidly responding fixed wing platform capable of safely capturing an aerial threat and handing it over to the relevant authorities - guaranteeing airspace safety to airports, prisons, public spaces and other critical infrastructure.

@GibsonRobotics

FireHorse

Anna Renouf
University of the Highlands and Islands



FireHorse will be producing fully sustainable and renewable biomass briquettes to be sold on the fire fuel market. The business will offer a waste collection and disposal service to equestrian facilities and will convert that waste into a high calorific biomass fuel to be sold on the domestic and commercial market.

@FireHorseEco

Kickstart finalists

mPulseO2

Victor Ochoa-Gutierrez
University of Glasgow



The measurement of blood-oxygen levels is a critical, vital factor in treatment of patients with acute illness. Although blood-oxygen pulse oximeters have been used routinely, the current COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that they are less accurate for people with darker skin pigmentation. The USA FDA has shown that people of colour have a higher chance of occult hypoxemia, not detected by current pulse oximeters, when compared to white patients. We are developing a multiwavelength approach to provide more accurate pulse oximeters for individuals, regardless of skin pigmentation.

[@mPulseO2](#)

Nozzle Cycles

Glen Craig
University of Dundee



Nozzle Cycles Ltd, designs and manufactures high-end, fully recyclable, unibody road bike frames to order, utilizing 3D printing technologies to allow customization of colours, sizes and components, with quicker manufacture and quicker delivery for the customer. Nozzle aim to provide the perfect fit and customisations for all riders creating comfortable and safe rides. Nozzle's tailored fit will reduce chances of injuries or strain and create better riding experiences. Nozzle provides what you want and need for your specific body type. Furthermore, Nozzle's additive manufacturing approach minimises any waste being produced, reducing our impact on the planet.

Podspectrix

Marija Vella
Heriot-Watt University



In the UK, diabetes affects 4.7 million people, of which 15% develop diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs). Podspectrix is a medical imaging device aided by machine learning, to prevent the development and progression of DFUs. It identifies at-risk patients earlier, allowing simple treatments that prevent progression to more serious pathology. It can give prognostic and treatment guidance, saving thousands from the distress of protracted wound care and limb amputations. It will also streamline the healthcare provider's workflow and save the NHS millions of pounds each year.

[@podspectrix](#)

ViSion-RF

Penny Kontou
Heriot Watt University



An electronic system that can capture remotely a set of physiological vital signs of a user using low-power and low-cost radar-based technology supplemented by powerful machine-learning, all encompassed in a single device. This unique device will be a 24/7 live health monitor that can track continuously and unobtrusively: breathing rate (BR), heart rate (HR), heart pulse shape, coughing patterns (CgP), body posture and body position, while fully respecting user/patient privacy. Most importantly, it operates completely wirelessly.

WhiteHaul

Mohamed Kassem
University of Edinburgh



WhiteHaul intends to solve the digital divide problem by developing a cost-effective and efficient system for high-speed wireless backhaul network over TV White Space (TVWS) spectrum. In a nutshell, WhiteHaul is capable of providing high Internet speeds with an order of magnitude lower cost. By alleviating the cost problem, WhiteHaul aims at motivating Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and mobile operators to extend their coverage to rural and under-served regions.

[@_whitehaul](#)

Creative Challenge

The Creative Challenge is for aspiring entrepreneurs in Scotland's creative industries with original ideas that have the potential to flourish into sustainable businesses.

The 2021 Creative Challenge finalists are...

Cancha

Jack Oswald

University of Stirling

Cancha designs and sells customisable sport and travel bags that can be adapted to suit a range of sports and activities. Cancha bags feature a unique modular design that allows them to attach and detach from a range of purpose-built accessories in seconds. Cancha bags are also made from abrasion-resistant, high-tenacity nylon, and incorporate the latest advancements in textile manufacturing processes. This gives Cancha bags an exciting, modern style and ensures they are built to last.

[@canchabags](#)



Neosome

Jo-Anne Tait

Robert Gordon University

We are developing an online seat viewer that can be applied to any venue, enabling people to select the seats from within a venue. Users will be able to see what the view to the stage will be like from their selected seat, as well as being able to satisfy their own accessibility requirements. There will also be an option to switch onto "full-house" mode to experience what it will feel like when the auditorium is full.

[@iamneosome](#)



The Grey Hill

Barry Robertson

Robert Gordon University

The Grey Hill is a multimedia tech-based theatre company. We are a digital-first company that provides audiences with accessible theatre content. Since our launch, we have 14 theatre production titles for digital distribution in multiple formats. We produce and distribute our content internationally via online stores and support local theatre venues with our services to go digital with our storefronts and production capacity.

[@thgreyhill](#)



Make Your Own Musicals

Jonathan O'Neill

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

"Make Your Own Musicals" creates musical theatre activity packs for children at home or school to write their very own musicals. Each pack contains child-friendly writing prompts, original backing tracks and interactive sound effects. The packs also provide fun educational resources to develop children's creative skills. The product currently exists in a downloadable activity pack form. However, we are developing a Make Your Own Musicals App which will improve the accessibility of the pack, add interactive games and masterclasses, and allow a subscription model with new musicals being released each month.

[@myomusicals](#)



Knit It

Lucy Fisher

Robert Gordon University

Knit It has developed a new innovative digital platform which enables knitters to have a choice in how they follow a pattern, making knitting simpler, easier and fun. Knit It 'digital patterns' have smart interactive tools that teach less confident knitters new skills and allow the more experienced to push the boundaries of their craft! Our aim is to reinvent knitting to make it more accessible to the digital savvy generation. Our ancillary product the 'KnitPic Kit' transforms a customer's photo into a knitting pattern giving them all the goodies to Knit It!

[@hello_knit_it](#)



Impact Challenge

The Impact Challenge, sponsored by Social Investment Scotland, is for sustainable business ideas with the potential for significant and long term social or environmental impact.

The 2021 Impact Challenge finalists are...



BioLiberty

Ross O'Hanlon
University of Edinburgh



In the UK, more than 2.5 million citizens suffer from a loss of hand strength or coordination. 87% of all stroke survivors experience hand paralysis, and it crushes independence. The Grip Assist glove is a new novel product which combines breakthrough advances in robotics and digital signal processing. The glove improves hand strength, putting the hand in specific positions dictated by the muscle activity along the wrist and forearm. Grip Assist aims to put revolutionary technology in people's hands.

🐦 @bio_liberty

eMoodie

Claire Ann Banga
University of Edinburgh



eMoodie is a digital mental health platform which facilitates early screening, and tailored symptom-management. We do this by pairing an individual's self-reported symptoms with their smartphone sensing data in combination with AI-driven algorithms to determine their current problems and engage them in digitally delivered interventions. Our solutions are aimed at giving individuals the tools they need to manage their mental health - thus preventing deterioration of milder symptoms into clinical disorders. The mounting tide of mental health problems in our society is at a crisis point and eMoodie is positioned to help flatten the curve.

🐦 @eMoodieLabs

LU

Erin Reid
Edinburgh Napier University



Military personnel spend long periods of time in rural, often unhygienic environments, making it hard to stay hygienic. However, because menstruation is seen as a hassle, inconvenience, and a women's problem it is not catered for in training. 83% of surveyed Army women agreed that they did not receive enough information or resources regarding menstrual hygiene putting them at risk of toxic shock, UTIs or cervical cancer. LU understands military menstruators' needs and answers them in an easy-to-use product while helping to provide training guides for staff, eliminating the taboo in one of the most masculine, male dominated environments.

🐦 @TheLU.uk

Silver Lion Innovations

Ruth Crozier
University of Strathclyde



Silver Lion Innovations Ltd is a Scottish family start-up which focuses on digital health solutions that allow people with immobility to self-manage their condition and promote their independence. It was founded after CEO Ruth Crozier's experience in caring for a parent managing their Parkinson's Disease for the past 14 years. The first product 'EasyOver' is a 'smart' mattress topper powered by technology that safely turns people with mobility issues over in bed, facilitating uninterrupted sleep for the person and those who care for them. Ultimately, we exist to provide healthcare solutions for better, easier and longer living.

🐦 @easyoversleep

Converge Challenge

Converge Challenge is for novel business ideas with solid intellectual property foundations, high commercial potential and evident scalability.

The 2021 Converge Challenge finalists...

Exergy 3

Markus Rondé

University of Edinburgh

Through storing energy at low cost, we have the ability to reduce the CO2 emissions of thermal power plant operators by 50-70%. This solves two key problems for thermal power plant operators. Firstly, operators can use our technology to manage zero and negative pricing of electricity due to excess generation without demand. Secondly, they can reduce the amount of green-house gases they produce. Our high temperature thermal energy storage technology can store 40MWh (thermal) in a 40-foot shipping container with only 0.6% energy loss per day. The innovative insulation structure allows us to build compact, cheap energy storage systems.



Lightwater Sensors

Ross Gillanders

University of St Andrews

Lightwater Sensors, winner of the 2020 Converge Kickstart Challenge, answers the critical need across the planet for real-time water pollution detection. A hand-held, portable system that can be deployed in waterways can save time and money for monitoring the cleanliness of water and reduce the impact in responding to a pollution event. Drinking water is a major focus for this technology, and water quality is of significant interest to industries including food & drink, agriculture, mining, power generation, oil & gas, and also reduces public health risks caused by pollution.



[@LightwaterSens](#)

Fitabeo Therapeutics Ltd

Mallikarjun Chityala

University of Strathclyde

Fitabeo Therapeutics (FTx), a University of Strathclyde spin-out company, is a specialty pharmaceutical company developing new medicine platforms for patients with advanced incurable diseases. FTx will use novel, patented technology to focus on the development of immediate and controlled release oral thin films (OTF) for palliative care.



[@FitabeoTx](#)

MI:RNA Ltd

Eve Hanks

SRUC

MI:RNA offers reliable, early stage disease testing for the veterinary market. Using biomarkers with bespoke A.I. modelling, a variety of diseases can be accurately identified in a wide range of species. This novel test is quick, highly sensitive and specific and requires only a simple blood sample. The technology is globally applicable and will revolutionise issues of food safety, agricultural sustainability and animal welfare.



This patent pending innovation facilitates improved clinical outcomes, provides critical economic and environmental advantages, and is easily accessible. We are led by a team of experts and by engagement with vets, owners and farmers throughout the UK.

[@MIRNA_Diag](#)

Converge Challenge finalists

Microplate Dx

Stuart Hannah

University of Strathclyde

Current antibiotic susceptibility testing (AST) is expensive and time consuming. Meanwhile, the wrong antibiotic may be prescribed which can be detrimental to patient health and can drive antibiotic resistance (AMR). New diagnostic tests are vital to improve patient care, to mitigate development of resistance and to facilitate better antibiotic stewardship. Microplate is a rapid, low-cost, sensor-based, antibiotic susceptibility test. With the potential to be agnostic to sample type, Microplate provides a summary indication of which antibiotic to use for each patient with bacterial or fungal infections at the point-of-care.

 @microplated



WellFish Diagnostics

Brian Quinn

University of the West of Scotland

Scotland's salmon farming sector is worth over £2 billion to the country's economy. Despite its importance, fish health is currently assessed using slow, lethal techniques. Aquaculture Health Laboratory has developed rapid, non-lethal methods to assess fish health using re-purposed human diagnostic assays. We have essentially developed blood tests for fish to enable the development of a novel, pro-active fish healthcare model. Clinically significant results are available to fish health managers within 24 hours of analysis via a mobile app facilitating data-informed husbandry. This approach minimises the time between health challenge diagnosis and intervention, reducing mortalities and increasing productivity.

 @WellfishD



Net AI

Paul Patras

University of Edinburgh

Net AI's Microscope is a cloud-native technology that uses artificial intelligence to disentangle massive data traffic streams into the individual mobile services that make up such aggregates (including Netflix, Facebook, Spotify, etc.). This allows mobile network operators to see how much traffic is coming from any given service, at any given time and from which location, at any level within the network (from base stations, all the way to core datacentres). Our solution enables efficient allocation of resources, saving costs and ensuring Quality of Service. Unlike conventional packet-based traffic analysis, Microscope is scalable, encryption-agnostic, and non-intrusive.

 @NetAITech



X-Genix Ltd

Rebecca Goss

University of St Andrews

Over 90% of pharmaceuticals are manufactured using a process called halogenation which bonds carbon to a halogen (typically chlorine, bromine or iodine). This is conventionally called a C-X bond. Over 20% of pharmaceuticals, including drugs used to treat medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, high cholesterol, stomach ulcers, anaemia, asthma, epilepsy, contain this X-factor in the final product. Whilst the ability to selectively make C-X bonds is essential, current chemical methods to achieve this are inefficient, expensive and require toxic chemicals. X-Genix uses natural tools (bespoke enzymes and salt) to selectively install C-X bonds without waste and reducing costs.

 @X-Genix



Challenge prizes and special awards

Today's finalists are competing for a combined prize pot of over £300,000, plus packages of tailored in-kind support from Converge's hand-picked roster of professional partners

Prize pot

The cash prizes at stake are:

Converge Challenge	£2k Finalist	£20k Runner-up	£50k Winner
Creative Challenge	£2k Finalist	£10k Runner-up	£20k Winner
Impact Challenge	£2k Finalist	£10k Runner-up	£20k Winner
Kickstart Challenge	£500 Finalist	£5k Runner-up	£10k Winner

All winners are eligible for tailored packages of in-kind support from our professional partners too.

Special awards

There are also three special prizes to be awarded this year

The Rose Award

Awarded to an aspiring female founder from this year's pool of Converge semi-finalists and designed to boost female entrepreneurship in Scotland, the prize includes £10k in cash plus a money-can't-buy mentoring session with the Royal Bank of Scotland's CEO, Alison Rose.



Sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland

The Future Tech Award

Designed to support innovative technology start-ups emerging from Scotland's universities, one lucky winner from this year's Converge cohort will win £5k in equity free cash plus a package of in-kind support including a mentoring session with Cisco UKI, CTO, Chintan Patel and a 12-month package of tailored Cisco support including technology and advice.



Sponsored by Cisco

The Net Zero Award

This prize of £20k equity-free cash and appropriate in-kind support will be awarded to a climate-conscious entrepreneur developing new technologies or solutions to create a cleaner, greener and more resilient world.



Sponsored by SSE

Special Thanks

We could not run the Converge programme without the support of those who give up their time to judge the applications at all stages of the process.

Our sincere thanks go to:

Marion Anderson

University of Glasgow

Libby Anson

Glasgow School of Art

Jessica Bonehill

Creative Scotland

Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne

Genius Foods Ltd

Kate Cameron

Cytochroma

Gary Campbell

University of the Highlands and Islands

Pearse Coyle

Deep Tech Seed Fund

Paul Devlin

Heriot-Watt University

Roy Donaldson

Cisco

Lorna Edwards

Abertay University

Nick Fannin

Edinburgh Napier University

Gillian Fleming

Mint Ventures

Simon Fraser

Abertay University

Morven Fraser-Walther

University of Glasgow

Jenn Galloway

Royal Bank of Scotland

Caroline Halliday

Green Angel Syndicate

Rob Halliday

Social Investment Scotland

Fiona Henderson

Glasgow Caledonian University

Zac Hickman

University of Aberdeen

Robert Hokin

Greenbackers

Deborah Keogh

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Tom Kneen

Cisco

Nick Kuenssberg

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Natasha Lobley

University of Strathclyde

Josiah Lockhart

First Port

Jamie Macfarlane

Creator Fund

Poonam Malik

University of Strathclyde

Fiona Mason

Edinburgh Napier University

Pete McLean

Edinburgh Napier University

Brian McNicoll

University of Dundee

Keith Millican

University of St Andrews

Chris Moule

Robert Gordon University

Andrew Noble

Par Equity

Robert Pembleton

University of Edinburgh

Edward Pollock

Robert Gordon University

Andy Porter

Elasmogen

Graham Reid

Apollo Informal Investment

Paula Ritchie

The Royal Bank of Scotland

Sasha Saunders

University of Stirling

Teresa Shutter

Scotlands Rural College (SRUC)

Marta Smart

SSE

Fiona Strang

University of Strathclyde

John Thomson

DC Thomson

Gavin Tweedie

Scottish Net Zero Community

Martin Valenti

South of Scotland Enterprise

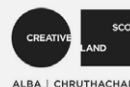
Jenny Young

University of Edinburgh

Our funders and partners

Converge is funded by the Scottish Funding Council, all 18 Scottish Universities and Creative Scotland. We are very grateful for their funding and support.

Funders



Partners



The Royal Bank of Scotland is a UK-based banking and financial services company, headquartered in Edinburgh. Royal Bank of Scotland has paved the way in banking since it was established nearly 300 years ago. From the world's first overdraft, and the first house purchase loan by a UK bank, to the first fully-fledged internet banking service, the bank has a history of using innovation to make banking easier for their customers.



MBM Commercial is an award-winning commercial law firm that helps entrepreneurial businesses. The firm provides a full range of commercial legal services, including corporate finance, commercial contracts, insolvency/restructuring, commercial property, dispute resolution, employment/HR and company administration.



Murgitroyd is a global intellectual property (IP) attorney firm specialising in patents, trademarks, designs and copyright, helping companies of all sizes, from all sectors, to maximise value from their IP assets by providing tailored strategic advice and services. The Murgitroyd team has particular expertise in helping start-up businesses to grow and develop through good use and protection of their IP assets.



Social Investment Scotland (SIS) provides social loan finance and business support to social enterprises and charities across Scotland. SIS, a charity and social enterprise itself, seeks to support organisations scale their impact and increase sustainability through investment and additional support and training. SIS is sole sponsor of the Impact Challenge category providing both cash and in-kind business support to our Impact Challenge participants.



i4 Product Design is an employee-owned company with a +15-year track record of working with start-ups and multinationals to deliver commercially successful products. Clients utilise the i4 Product Design team to accelerate challenging roadmaps and/or innovate a way past technical challenges.



BeyondHR is an HR consultancy with a proven track record of providing high quality and affordable HR support solutions across Scotland and Northern Ireland. With more than 25 years' experience, their team of qualified HR Consultants provide a full range of HR and Employee Relations support services across all industries. They take a pragmatic stance to problem solving and ensure that they make the lives of their clients pain-free by taking the stress out of HR issues while ensuring the best outcomes for their businesses.

Partners

Chiene+Tait

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

The team at Chiene + Tait has an unrivalled knowledge of the Scottish investment and startup market. From their market leading Entrepreneurial Tax team that offer advice on Enterprise Investment Schemes (EIS), Seed Enterprise Investment Schemes (SEIS), Enterprise Management Incentives (EMI) share schemes and Research & Development (R&D) Tax Relief, through to their digital solutions focused accounts team, they are here every step of the way to provide clients with honest advice and tech-savvy solutions.



CPI Enterprises is the private investor engagement and ventures arm of CPI, a leading independent technology innovation centre and a founding member of the UK Government's High Value Manufacturing Catapult. Enterprises stimulates impactful investment into early-stage deep tech companies, leveraging our world-class technical expertise, facilities and innovation network to benefit both investors and companies alike.



Cisco helps seize the opportunities of tomorrow by proving that amazing things can happen when you connect the unconnected. An integral part of our DNA is creating long-lasting customer partnerships, working together to identify our customers' needs and provide solutions that fuel their success. Nearly every Internet connection in the UK touches Cisco technology and we're investing in projects across Scotland to support innovation, from smart cities to transport, healthcare and manufacturing, to cyber-security and digital skills.



SSE is the leading generator of renewable electricity in the UK and Ireland, providing energy needed today while building a better world of energy for tomorrow. A principal partner of the upcoming climate change summit COP26, it develops and operates low-carbon infrastructure supporting the net zero transition, including onshore and offshore wind, hydro power, electricity transmission and distribution grids, and efficient gas-fired generation, alongside providing energy products and services for businesses. UK listed, SSE is a major contributor to the UK and Ireland economies, employs 12,000 people and is real Living Wage and Fair Tax Mark accredited.

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