

Bristol's Science Creates leads £1.5m funding round into smartphone chip firm

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A Bristol deep-tech support organisation has invested into a Cambridge company planning to change how smartphones and other wearable tech is designed.

Science Creates, which helps scientists and engineers accelerate their ideas, led the £1.5m funding round into fabless semiconductor firm Forefront RF. Other investors included Foresight Williams Technology; BGF; and the Cambridge Angels.

The funding will be used to accelerate the launch of Forefront's products, according to the firm.

Forefront RF was founded in 2020 by Dr Leo Laughlin and Julian Hildersley. Phil O'Donovan, managing director and co-founder of bluetooth chip business CSR, has joined the founding team as chairman.

According to Forefront RF, its chip enables connected devices to operate across the range of 3G to 6G mobile telephony frequency bands.

Its cancellation technology redesigns the radio-frequency

system in a wireless device, enabling manufacturers to simplify the design and delivery of frequency agnostic products, while reducing cost and supply chain waste.

Dr Laughlin said the round of investment represented a “vote of confidence” in the company and would enable it to recruit the team necessary to accelerate the launch of its products.

He said: “The growth in mobile networks driven by the ever-increasing demand for data means that available frequency bands vary from region to region and, using today’s technology, has driven the need for region-specific smartphone variants each including multiple RF components. The space consumed within each smartphone adds cost and leads to inefficiencies in the supply chain.”

Harry Destecroix, general partner at Science Creates Ventures, said he was “extremely impressed” by the Forefront RF team and its technology.

“[We] are delighted to be working with them and our co-investors,” he added.

“Together, we will enable the company to accelerate its impact on this important global industry.”

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