

Entrepreneur Harry Destecroix opens second deep-tech incubator in Bristol

Bristol healthtech guru Dr Harry Destecroix has opened a second deep-tech incubator hub in the city.

Dr Destecroix's Science Creates is an ecosystem offering specialised workspace to science and engineering start-ups and spin-outs, an investment fund and access to a network of expert partners and mentors.

The new incubator, on Old Market, will be home to scientists-turned-entrepreneurs using advanced technologies such as AI, synthetic biology, nano technologies and quantum computing to tackle major problems such as cancer, vaccine development and climate change.

The hub includes 30,000 sq ft of state-of-the-art laboratories, offices and event space. Science Creates also has an incubator in St Philips, which is now at full capacity.

Both incubators are operated in partnership with the University of Bristol and Research England. They bring Science Creates' physical footprint to 45,000 sq ft, supporting around 100 companies.

Science Creates was first established as an incubator in 2017 by Dr Destecroix, a former University of Bristol PhD student whose spin-out Ziylo – a biotech business which uses tech to treat diabetes – was sold to pharma giant Novo Nordisk in 2018 for £623m.

He went on to expand his incubator into an ecosystem that invests in and supports other deep-tech innovations.

Dr Destecroix said: "Boston might be the powerhouse for deep

tech, but we believe Bristol will also become famous for being a world-class ecosystem that supports scientists and engineers in commercialising ground-breaking innovations.

“The city is home to creative, innovative trendsetters and it has world-class research universities and a strong sense of community. But we are only just getting started.

“Bristol continues to grow as a hub for helping scientists take their discoveries off the shelf and into the real world. Our strength lies in deep tech – an area that is growing more than twice as fast as any other tech sector.”



Science Creates has opened an incubator on Old Market in Bristol

(Image: Science Creates)

In 2020, Science Creates also launched a dedicated venture

capital fund, Science Creates Ventures, which has gone on to lead numerous rounds.

Science Creates is already incubating some major UK deep-tech companies. According to Dr Destecroix, these businesses have collectively raised £18.4m in 2021. Among them are:

- Imophoron – a University of Bristol biotech start-up developing a novel, next-generation [rapid-response vaccine](#) platform. It has raised £4m, led by Science Creates Ventures.
- CytoSeek – a University of Bristol spin-out developing new cell therapies to treat solid tumours. It raised £3.5m in March, in a round led by Science Creates Ventures.
- KETS Quantum Security – also a spin-out from the University of Bristol, developing hardware to protect data from a new generation of cyberattacks that could use quantum computers to break through all existing encryption protections. It [raised £3.1m in August](#).
- QLM Technology – a start-up on a mission to help organisations reach net-zero emissions. Its quantum-inspired technology can detect large areas of emissions of methane and other key greenhouse gases from a safe distance. It raised £3.1m in April.

Dr Xiao Ai, chief technology officer and co-founder of QLM Technology, said: “We need specialised lab space, infrastructure, access to experienced professionals such as engineering contractors with specific expertise, and access to talent and collaborators from universities and research institutions. Science Creates has provided for all these critical needs.”

Last year a report by Tech Nation found Bristol’s burgeoning technology sector continued to attract [huge levels of investment](#) despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the city ranked the third-highest city in the UK for VC investment valuing over \$400m, with much of that pouring into deep-tech companies such as Graphcore and [Vertical Aerospace](#).

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The city attracted more VC money than many of its European counterparts including Tallinn, Barcelona, Oslo, Madrid and Bucharest. Bristol is expecting similar success in 2021 too. According to data from Tech Nation, after London, the city has attracted the most VC funding in the UK so far this year.

Professor Philip Taylor, pro vice-chancellor of research and enterprise at the University of Bristol, said the new incubator was a “tremendous boost” for the region.

He added: “It is also testament to the remarkable mix of scientific talent, technological innovation and entrepreneurial growth we have in the city, underpinned by our Science Creates partners.

“As we face an unprecedented amount of global health and environmental challenges, it brings into sharp focus the importance of deep-tech incubators that can accelerate progress in the lab to deliver solutions to problems which have the potential to affect us all.”

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