



## 5G - Growth is Digital

## Project Summary

The intention of the 5G – Growth is Digital project was to contribute to securing an economy that could compete with the best internationally. Brighton already had a competitive advantage in the Creative Digital and IT (CDIT) sector with strong links through the region. The sector would however, need further development and support to remain at the leading edge of advances, including the need to access international class digital infrastructure.

An independent report regarding the opportunities that may arise from 5G technology, suggested that key sectors in Brighton have the capacity, capability and motivation to generate significant benefits by engaging with a 5G Testbed. Evidence also suggested that SMEs had a good degree of readiness to engage with a 5G Testbed for research and development purposes including the ability to bring to market new innovative products



The ambition to develop 5G technologies would be achieved by investing in 5G Testbed infrastructure at two locations in Brighton. Here, SMEs could take part in a Testbed Accelerator Programme where they would interact with the 5G Testbed, receive expert guidance and support, and have opportunities to produce, test and market new products.

## Project Achievements



In collaboration with the delivery body (Digital Catapult), the 5G Research Centre at Surrey University, the University of Brighton and Wired Sussex, invested in a 5G infrastructure Testbed at the Digital Catapult Centre in Brighton. The Testbed was launched in September 2018 at an event which was attended by more than 65 guests and had 5 SMEs demonstrate 5G-enabled solutions to showcase the potential of 5G. The second Testbed was located within the Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival Ltd Founders Room and Foyer area. This second launch took place in November 2018 and was attended by 80 guests.

Interested SMEs were invited to take part in a 5G Testbed Accelerator Programme. There were 3 cohorts in total each taking roughly 6 months between October 2018 and July 2020 to complete the programme. Over the 3 cohorts, 27 SMEs, all of which were start-ups and scale up businesses, engaged with the 5G Testbed.

The Testbed Accelerator Programme consisted of expert technical advice and support whilst engaging with the Testbed. Each programme ended with a showcase event where businesses would demonstrate their product or service to peers, interested parties and potential investors or buyers. The events also allowed SMEs interested in the programme to see real life demonstrations and learn about the capabilities of 5G. All events were recorded which has given the businesses a useful marketing tool for reaching a wider audience.

In addition to the programmes, 127 businesses were engaged with to increase their knowledge of 5G capabilities and a further 8 were offered a 5G Business Readiness Programme which would prepare them for full technical engagement with 5G in the future.



## 127 businesses engaged

Total match funding for this project, including in kind contributions, was £621,053.77 which was a 45% increase to the expected contribution. This additional funding covered the costs associated with time spent by technical experts in supporting the cohorts to develop their products and market them. Any equipment that was provided by the programme was returned to be used by the next cohort. Since completion, the delivery body continue this work by launching a fourth cohort with at least 10 SME's.



### Project Benefits

This project was the first in the UK to build a 5G Testbed and to deliver a dedicated SME-focused innovation programme using the technology. As such, the successful working example and lessons learned will benefit other programmes offered in the region and the country. Previously, 5G testbed's have often only been available for large corporations and educational institutes. Providing access to SME's has provided a unique opportunity for innovative businesses to gain fairer access to the marketplace, increasing their opportunities to grow as a business.

Many businesses taking part have also been able to reinvest due to increases in profit, take part in bids that would otherwise have not been possible and receive multi-million-pound investment opportunities. This includes investment, partnership and selling products and services internationally which contributes to one of the projects key goals of competing with the best internationally.

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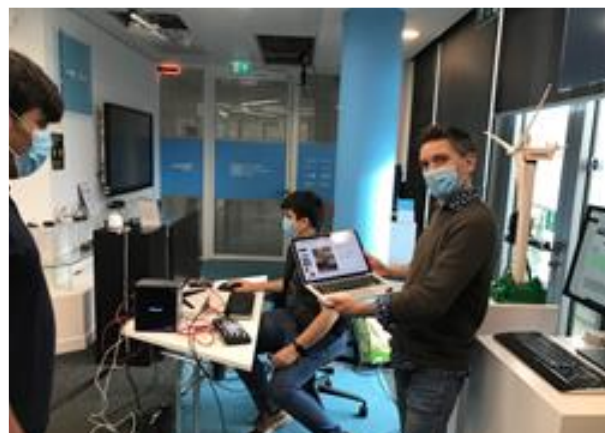


This project proved a success by simply providing the technical expertise and support to interact with the 5G Testbed. A new Digital Catapult project called Creative XR allows SMEs to bid for a £20,000 grant that is usually used to cover costs of technical expertise. This project had a huge demand of over 100 SMEs applying for up to 20 available grants.



In August 2020 Digital Catapult had successfully won a bid to fund further R&D projects that utilise 5G technologies as part of the Governments 5G create, £30million funding pot. This new project will see an investment of over £5.5 million and exemplifies the ability of Brighton to create and develop new technologies using 5G. This additional investment in an area will create opportunities for local businesses and local jobs.

**£1,200,000 awarded**



The £1,200,000 Local Growth Fund awarded was instrumental to the viability of the project and without it, Brighton will not have benefited from one of the most advanced 5G technology Testbed's in the country. Local Growth Funding was intended to support businesses, local people and the environment, and 5G by its nature supports the environment and this project, has over achieved set targets for supporting businesses and created opportunities for future funding.