ICURE pilot programme
United Kingdom

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Topics covered
Academic spin-offs, pilot programme, early-career researchers, impact assessment

What is the ICURE pilot programme?
- Launched in 2014, ICURE provides funding to initial spin-off activity of early-career researchers
- Pilot implemented in universities in Southern England
- Expansion of pilot to Queens University Belfast and the University of Warwick in 2018
- Funding provided by HEFCE Catalyst Fund and Innovate UK

Objectives
- Increase the probability of success of high-potential spin-offs
- Develop entrepreneurial skills & market knowledge of early career researchers
- Provide lessons on how a national rollout could be optimally implemented

Support services provided
- Orientation and start-up training (Bootcamp)
- Business plan development
- Options Roundabout presentations
- Aid for Start-Ups
- Three-month market validation exercise
- Business mentorship

Main challenges
- Increase commercial awareness and entrepreneurial skills amongst academic personnel
- Strengthen networking between academic and industrial communities
- Raise equity or other private investment for start-ups

Budget
GBR 3.2 million (pilot programme) for 2014-2017

Selection criteria of project
Each project team required participation of early career researcher, Principal Investigator, and a Technology Transfer Officer

Interaction with other policy instruments/programmes
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)
- Researcher to Innovator (R2I)
- SETsquared Business Incubator
- Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng Enterprise Fellowship)
- Enterprise Fellowship Scheme
- Private seed accelerator and incubator programmes

Impact
- Participation in the programme increased and deepened links between participating academics and industry
- 44 new spin-off companies produced
- 24 spin-offs would not have been created in the absence of the programme
- Creation of GBP 3.94 of economic benefits for every GBP 1 invested
- 18% of participants had secured a licensing agreement
- Faster development of business models among participants
- Methods used for impact assessment: Counterfactual analysis of unsuccessful teams using difference-in-difference estimation