

Five UK-based cutting-edge tech firms announced as first to join HS2 Innovation Accelerator initiative

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The company behind Britain's new high speed rail network has announced the first five cutting-edge tech firms that will join HS2 Ltd's Innovation Accelerator programme.

Focussing on HS2's innovation challenges – productivity; the environment; and the circular economy – the five, chosen from 109 applicants to the programme, will receive commercial and technical support from the Innovation Accelerator together with rent-free working space as they develop their technology to help deliver Europe's largest infrastructure project.

All five start their HS2 development work this September.

After six months of development inside the Accelerator the firms' solutions will be showcased and pitched to industry investors and HS2's supply chain, consisting of the thousands of companies ranging from the largest international engineers to specialist suppliers to the project.

Welcoming the five to the Accelerator, HS2 Ltd's head of innovation, Howard Mitchell said: "HS2 is already showcasing the very best of British skills and innovation, and the five companies shortlisted for the Innovation Accelerator today are shining examples of this."

"The size and scale of this project creates the perfect environment to encourage innovation and develop technologies that can create long-term business opportunities both in and beyond the rail and construction sectors."

HS2 has now opened the Innovation Accelerator online portal to the second round of applications and is looking for small and medium sized firms specialising in the areas of process efficiencies and passenger experience through HS2 stations.

Entrepreneurs and tech specialists are invited to apply to join the [Innovation Accelerator](#) before the portal closes on 18th September.

Five companies chosen:

Buildots - London-based, employing c.40 people

- Buildots has developed wearable camera technology that uses Artificial Intelligence and state-of-the-art computer vision to automate the tracking of build progress compared to the design and schedule, while reducing and resolving disputes.
- Buildots CEO & co-founder, Roy Danon said: "Being selected to be part of the Innovation Accelerator is a great opportunity for Buildots to take part in the impressive HS2 project. It's a perfect fit for our company as we are just starting to grow outside London and into new types of projects."

Cloudcycle - London-based, employing 10 people

- Cloudcycle has developed technology to optimise the amount of concrete needed to build HS2. Sensors fitted inside cement mixer drums form part of an "internet of things" solution that learns the properties and qualities of the concrete it is mixing. By enabling real time data management for reliable concrete delivery, on Phase One Cloudcycle's technology could reduce concrete demand by up to 420,000 tonnes; cut carbon emissions by 50million kg and water consumption by 2.6m litres.
- Cloudcycle Founder and CEO Phillip White said: "Being selected to be part of the HS2 Innovation Accelerator we have the opportunity to work on Europe's largest infrastructure projects with unprecedented access to the whole supply chain from concrete suppliers, construction companies and HS2 itself. Without this we would be unable to validate our technology or prove the value it brings to the whole supply chain and the environment."

Dendra Systems - Oxford-based, employing 30 people

- Dendra's cutting edge drone and Artificial Intelligence platform could help to both plant and monitor the 140-mile green corridor of seven million trees and shrubs HS2 will create between the West Midlands and London. The solution combines aerial and AI based technologies that will learn to identify the 46 tree species planted along the route and assess whether they are thriving or are in need of help such as improving land condition or invasive weed mitigation
- Dendra Systems CEO and Co-founder Dr Susan Graham said: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the HS2 accelerator. As a company focused on restoring native ecosystems, the HS2 Green Corridor Programme is exactly the type of work we want to focus on. We look forward to adapting our technology to this operating environment and together achieving the environmental rehabilitation goals for ambitious projects such as HS2."

NatureMetrics - Egham-based, employing 10 people

- NatureMetrics' simple biodiversity monitoring kit could help with the creation of HS2's green corridor either side of the tracks by monitoring progress of its newly created woodland habitat. The technology sequences DNA into usable ecology information that shows the distribution of species across a landscape and tracks how habitats change throughout the project lifecycle.
- NatureMetrics CEO Katie Critchlow said: "We're so excited to get onto the HS2 accelerator. We want to demonstrate how our DNA-based monitoring technology can increase the power and pace of ecological surveys in the global green transport sector. Learning how to engage major projects like HS2 will enable us to triple our revenue from UK and international customers over the next two years."

Sensat - London-based, employing 50 people

- Sensat has developed a cloud-based platform to capture, visualise and track infrastructure project data from anywhere in the world. Its 3D visualisation helps engineers collaborate remotely from any location, reducing the need for site visits and enabling progress tracking in a very visual way.
- Sensat CEO James Dean said: "HS2 is an opportunity not only to build a world class railway but a legacy for the U.K. as a world class technology-led engineering economy. I'm delighted that Sensat has the opportunity to not only partake in this but contribute to significantly helping the delivery of our most important infrastructure."

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