

Lessons Learned From Building Successful Partnerships



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Supporting Knowledge Exchange in Scotland



Mission: To enable business-academic collaborations for economic and societal benefit

Interface's free and impartial service connects businesses to the right academic expertise for increased R&D activity leading to the creation and development of new products, services and processes.

The Interface service – How it works



INTERFACE WORK
WITH **ALL**
OF SCOTLAND'S
UNIVERSITIES AND
RESEARCH INSTITUTES



Businesses come to Interface directly, or through referrals from business support organisations throughout Scotland, looking to create and develop their ideas.

The Interface Team work to understand their goals and objectives; searching through all of Scotland's higher education, research institutions and colleges to find the right partner to address their needs.

Once a match has been made Interface remain on hand to provide continuous support until a project is agreed.

'Reverse Interface'

- Developed organically over time as we've built relationships with academic partners and responded to industry demand
- Examples include:
 - Support with identifying industry partners for large research projects (ESRC/BBSRC/EPSRC/IAA)
 - Linking in companies for University outreach events e.g AIMdays
 - Identifying industry partners for student-based projects (both under and postgraduate) across disciplines including business schools, gaming, design engineering, computing science.

Funding Opportunities Through Interface

**STANDARD
INNOVATION
VOUCHERS**



**STUDENT PLACEMENT
INNOVATION
VOUCHERS**



**ADVANCED
INNOVATION
VOUCHERS**



**THE SCOTTISH
INWARD INVESTMENT
CATALYST FUND**



 **Interface** The knowledge connection for business **SCOTLAND**
FOOD & DRINK

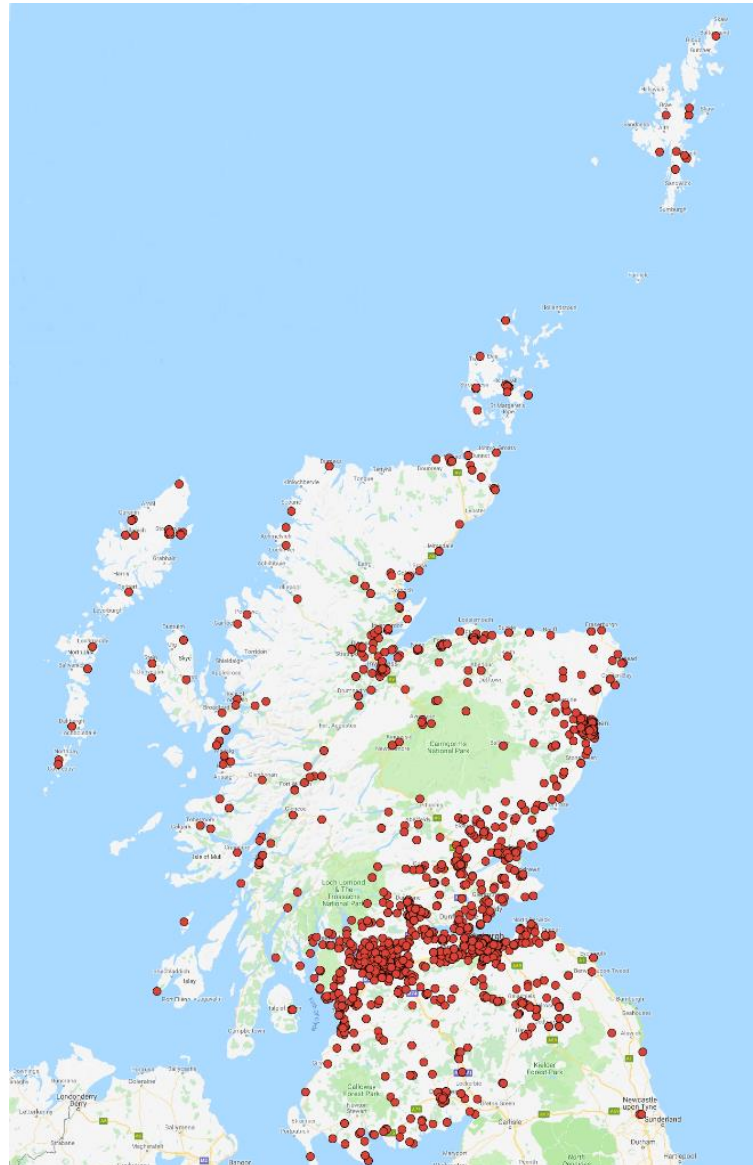
**The Net Zero
Food and Drink
Challenge Fund**

Apply for funding awards of
between £5,000 and £10,000



Facts & Figures - October 2022

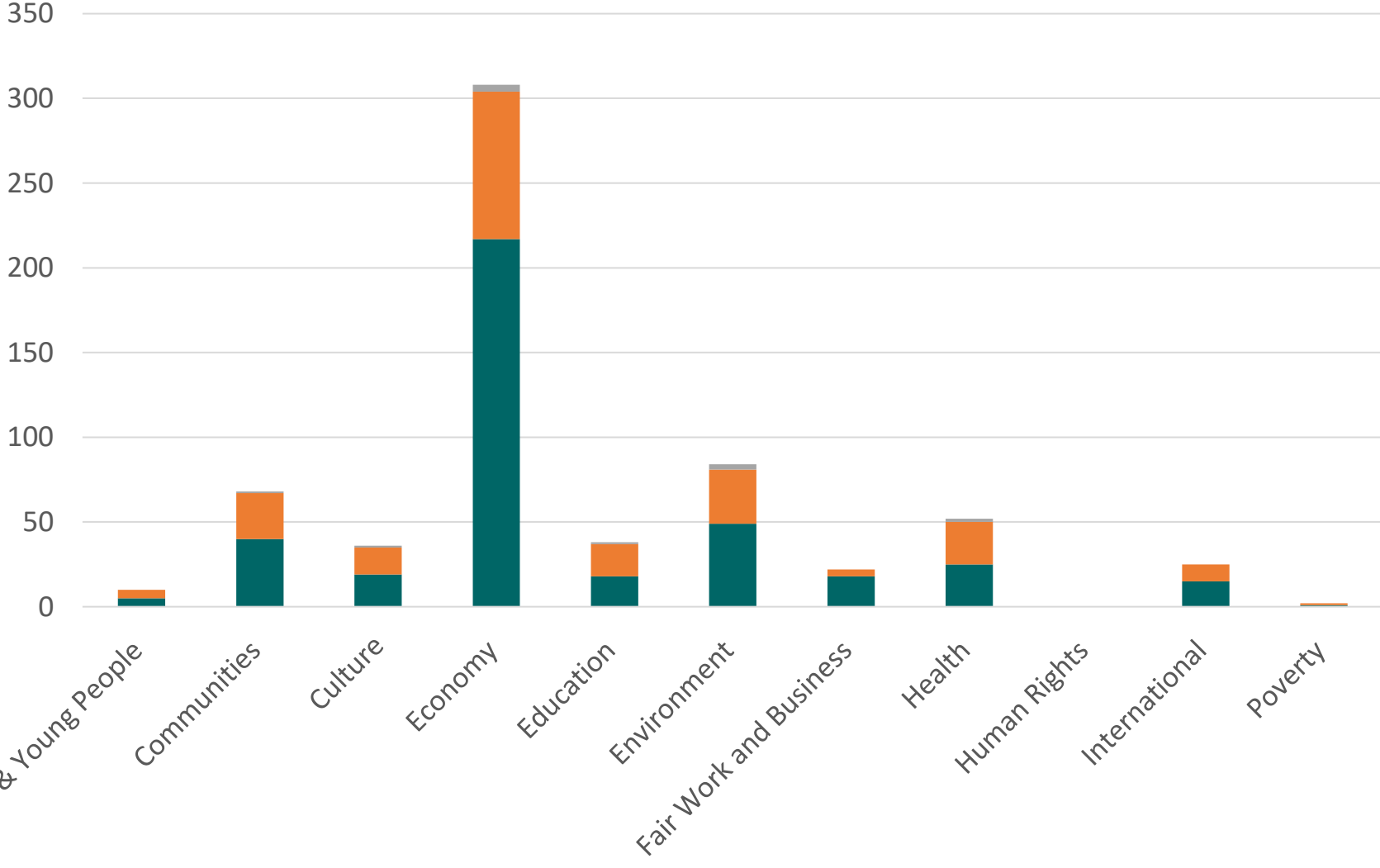
- ❖ **3186** company and university collaborative projects initiated
- ❖ **94%** of expertise searches identified capability and capacity within academic institutions for consideration by the companies
- ❖ **71%** of first-time company/university collaborations involved companies seeking expertise in a discipline different to their own business sector



- ❖ **97%** of businesses said that their project would either not have happened or taken longer without support from Interface
- ❖ **39%** of organisations continued to work with their academic partner after the initial project
- ❖ **83%** of businesses recorded reduced operating costs, increased productivity, profits, export, turnover and new or safeguarded employment
- ❖ **88%** of projects in AY 2021/22 demonstrated environmental and/or societal impacts supporting the Scottish Government's top priorities of a green recovery, a well-being economy and a just transition to net zero emissions.

Delivering Environmental and Societal Outcomes

National Performance Framework Outcomes by Interface Projects 2020/21



What does good KE look like for an SME?



Crover Ltd has developed the world's first robotic device The CROVER that can monitor the condition of grains, such as wheat and barley, that are stored in sheds and silos for long periods of time.

- This break-through technology is revolutionizing the agri-food sector helping identify early onset of spoilage from infestation by insects and moulds, thus reducing food waste, improving grain management, and saving money.
- Interface has connected Crover Ltd to a wide range of Scottish academic partners to support their business growth, various projects include:
 - Quantifying monetary benefit through risk reduction for users' insurance premiums
 - Enhancing product design through investigating; cable suspension design, water-proofing design, design of a remote charging station and investigating manufacturing improvements of the CROVER.
 - Enhancing product capabilities through improved accuracy of device location and detection
- Since inception in 2019, Crover Ltd has grown from 2 employees to over 20 employees, has raised significant investment and secured over £600K in innovation prizes and funding.

“As a small start-up with little resource, working with Interface was like having my own R&D team, they regularly sent on funding opportunities, opportunities to undertake further engagement with universities, sought connections into other commercial applications for our tech and overall widened our networks both academically and commercially.” Lorenzo Conti, Co-founder, Crover Ltd

What does good KE look like for an SME?

Hints and Tips

Be flexible in approach

- Understand regional differences - urban vs rural
- Be open to alternative routes to building partnerships

Maximise the opportunity

- Build academic interest in industry engagement
- Understand your USPs as an institution – what is the experience you can offer?
- Look beyond the initial business challenge and be aware of other opportunities within your institution and beyond
- Measure what you're doing – economic, environmental and societal impacts and build an evidence base

Clear Communication

- Tell stories that resonate <https://interface-online.org.uk/case-studies/>
- Speak the language of business (drop the jargon!)
- Manage expectations and explain the road ahead
- Recognise and reward successful collaborations – Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards <https://interface-online.org.uk/scottish-knowledge-exchange-awards-2023/>
- It's all about relationships....



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