

News story: Are you a GeoTech and PropTech start-up looking for funding?

Location and property data start-ups could be in line to receive funding, business support and the strategic backing of Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry.

Start-ups using location or land and property data in their products and services can now apply to the [Geovation Programme](#) and applications to the Programme close on Monday 27 August. If selected, the start-ups will each receive up to £20,000 in funding and a range of resources and services, including access to experienced software developers, geospatial expertise from Ordnance Survey, property expertise from HM Land Registry, and mentoring to assist with business proposals and investor relationships.

[Geovation](#) has been specially designed to offer the best possible support to SMEs, start-ups and individuals that are using geospatial technology and data to create new products and services. In two years it has supported 72 new start-ups, which has created 152 new jobs and seen the companies raise £17m in investment. Those on Geovation's Programme have been using location and property data and new technologies to help transform a variety of sectors, including property, mobility and transport, infrastructure, energy, health and connectivity.

Orla Shields is the founder of [GetRentr](#), a PropTech company using artificial intelligence to track all UK property licensing regulations and consultations in real-time to ensure property portfolios are compliant. After a successful application, Orla's company was selected to join the Geovation Programme. In the twelve months that have followed, Orla and GetRentr have raised over £500,000 in funding and are currently working with letting agents and landlords via a partnership with the National Landlord Association. GetRentr is also about to launch a partnership with ARLA, the largest association of lettings agents in the UK.

Orla says of Geovation:

Geovation has been life changing. The grant money has helped us do things we couldn't have done while we were waiting to secure our investment. Free office space in Clerkenwell is a major benefit for any business – early stage or not. It's great environment, with numerous other inspiring start-ups in a similar field. Geovation's network and connections with major people in this industry and in the government is priceless to us.

The team is very pro-active, and their support and experience is really helpful and always available. One of the best benefits has been the ability to use Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry data. This gives us the option to reach out to more people who are

looking to invest and be strategic with their portfolios. It has also helped us predict where regulations will be implemented. Overall, the culture at Geovation is one of collaboration and support.

Jillian Kowalchuk, whose safety app, [Safe & The City](#), launched in March this year and already has thousands of users, was another accepted onto the Geovation Programme. Jillian says:

Geovation is filled with world-class minds and inspiring businesses. I have received a lot of support in growing my business during the Geovation programme. The resources to learn, create and test during critical stages of business. They actively promote, connect and raise their accelerator's profile to give you and your business a great head start. It is an amazing community to learn and be inspired by on a daily basis.

Head of Geovation, Alex Wrottesley, said:

We offer a founder-friendly environment, great mentors, support from Ordnance Survey and HM Land Registry, high-quality workshop content and, almost uniquely, a dedicated software development team in house, who work hand in hand with our companies to build and release their first products. This is something very few accelerators can offer and it means the businesses joining us can move faster and further than they otherwise would have been able to.

We're very much future focused and are looking forward to meeting and working with next group of Programme members and being a part of their story and then ours. We can't wait to meet them.

For further information, examples of businesses, interviews and images contact Keegan Wilson, on 02380 055332 or email keegan.wilson@os.uk.

About Geovation

Geovation is an Ordnance Survey Initiative in association with HM Land Registry, which is dedicated to supporting open innovation and collaboration using location and property data. Location is at the heart of many of the most successful digital products and services. Land and property is the foundation of our national economy. Read more on [Geovation website](#).

About HM Land Registry

HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the

world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles, which show evidence of ownership, for some 85% of the land mass in England and Wales.

For further information about HM Land Registry visit [our website](#).

Follow us on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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[Press release: G7 Foreign Ministers statement on MH17](#)

We, the G7 foreign ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in our condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, a civilian aircraft flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on July 17, 2014.

MH17 was carrying 298 crew and passengers, nationals of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Vietnam, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

We fully support the work of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), an independent criminal investigation led by the Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Malaysia and Ukraine. The JIT's findings on Russia's role in the downing of MH17 are compelling, significant and deeply disturbing. The G7 recalls that UN Security Council Resolution 2166 demands that all states cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability. We are united in our support of Australia and the Netherlands as they call on Russia to account for its role in this incident and to cooperate fully with the process to establish the truth and achieve justice for the victims of MH17 and their next of kin.

In a rules-based international order, those responsible for unacceptable actions, such as the firing or launching of the BUK missile of Russian origin, which intercepted and downed a civilian aircraft, must be held accountable. To this end, we call on Russia to immediately engage with Australia and the Netherlands in good faith to explain and to address all relevant questions regarding any potential breaches of international law.

We express once again our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of MH17. We stand together against the impunity of those who engage in aggressive actions that threaten the rules-based international order, anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances.

Press release: Operation Stack listening exercise enters final week

This aim of the [exercise](#) has been to invite feedback on ways to manage lorries when there is extraordinary cross-Channel disruption. The solution could be on or off-road, at one site or a number of sites. No sites or solutions have been chosen yet. Views are also welcomed on the possible provision of cross-channel border facilities for lorries and 24-hour lorry parking facilities for everyday use by lorry drivers, which could help with lorry parking problems in Kent.

Seven public information exhibitions have been held across Kent over the last five weeks, in Maidstone, Dover, Ashford, Canterbury and Folkestone. This week, members of the project team are visiting motorway service areas and truck stops in Kent to meet the public. People wanting to have their say can also do so on the website, or via the questionnaire, which can be picked up at over 30 locations across Kent.

Highways England project director John Kerner said:

The response to the listening exercise has been very positive, and we have spoken to many people with lots of interesting ideas. It is important to note that no sites or locations have yet been decided, and this exercise has enabled us to take a completely fresh look at what a permanent solution to Operation Stack could be. With less than one week to go, I encourage anyone with an interest to get involved.

The next step when the listening exercise has finished is for Highways England to analyse responses. If a scheme is progressed, Highways England will consult on more detailed options and proposals this winter. Any scheme that is taken forward will involve extensive public consultation and will require a full environmental impact assessments.

When extraordinary levels of disruption occur, Operation Stack is activated to queue lorries on the M20 until they can catch their ferry or train. In summer 2015, Operation Stack was in place for over 30 days. As a result, the Government asked Highways England to investigate options for management and handling of lorries caught up heading to Dover.

Without action, existing and likely future issues will continue to put pressure on the roads and motorways in Kent. With traffic levels due to increase, this would likely mean Operation Stack being activated more frequently.

The listening exercise started on 11 June and runs until 22 July 2018. While drop in sessions have now finished, information will be available at 30 locations countywide until 22 July.

Anyone interested in the scheme can sign up to receive updates via the project page on the [Highways England website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Lord Ahmad publishes Annual Human Rights Report 2017

Today (16 July) Lord Ahmad, the Minister for Human Rights Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, publishes the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 2017 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report.

The report is a barometer for the global human rights picture with particular emphasis on the FC0's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries*. The report also focuses on how the UK is working to protect and promote human rights across the world.

It covers the period from January to December 2017.

The Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, said:

50 years ago the UK played a vital role in drafting the seminal text that remains the cornerstone for human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, the ongoing repression of people's rights reminds us that our work to defend them is as pressing and urgent as ever.

This report is vital in documenting the serious concerns we have

about the human rights situations in a range of countries.

Standing up for human rights is not only the right thing; it helps to create a stable more prosperous world.

The report also focuses on how the UK is working to protect and promote human rights across the world.

Read the [Human Rights and Democracy 2017 report](#).

*Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Further information

Press release: Chief Executive Officer of the Single Financial Guidance Body appointed

Mr Govett is vastly experienced, having worked in leadership roles across the public, private and charitable sectors including as Group Chief Executive at Ixion Holdings, a not-for-profit skills and employment group of companies, Managing Director of Surrey County Council, Shaw Trust Charity Board Executive and P&O Ferries Commercial Board Director. He has a strong track record of driving transformational change, delivering outstanding services and leading successful growth.

A deputy chairman of Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, he will take up his new post in October 2018. His appointment, for a four-and-a-half year term, follows an open and competitive recruitment process overseen by the Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments.

The government is bringing together 3 well known and respected organisations, the Money Advice Service, Pension Wise and the Pensions Advisory Service to create a new Single Financial Guidance Body offering UK-wide guidance on pensions and money, and debt advice in England.

SFGB is a fantastic opportunity to improve provision of free and impartial money and pensions guidance and debt advice so that people can make informed

choices about their finances. This is a challenging but rewarding opportunity to lead on improving financial capability in the UK.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey, said:

I'm delighted to welcome John Govett as the first Chief Executive Officer of the Single Financial Guidance Body.

John has extensive experience and knowledge from across a range of public and private organisations which make him the ideal candidate to establish this crucial new body, heralding a new era of excellence for financial guidance and debt advice in the UK. I look forward to working with John.

John Govett said:

I am honoured to be appointed the Chief Executive of the Single Financial Guidance Body. The new organisation will become a leader in its field, where we will strive to equip those in need of help with the money and pensions guidance and debt advice that they need to engage confidently with financial services. The key for the SFGB will be to focus on those services our customers need, with a joined-up partnership approach with the wider industry.

I very much look forward to this exciting new combined service offer for the public and our staff.

The Chair of the Single Financial Guidance Body, Sir Hector Sants, said:

The new organisation has a clear mission to help everyone manage their personal finances as well as their circumstances allow. My vision is of an organisation which is seen as transparent, accountable, effective and above all respected by all.

I am delighted that John is joining us and I look forward to supporting him over the coming years.

John's most recent role was as Group CEO of Ixion Holdings. His career has been in transformational change, partnership working, delivering outstanding services and leading successful growth. John has worked in the public, private and charitable sectors, with previous posts including Managing Director at Surrey County Council, Shaw Trust Charity Board Executive and P&O Ferries Commercial Board Director. John is also Deputy Chairman/Non-Executive Director of an NHS Foundation Trust acute hospital.

The department announced Sir Hector Sants as the new Chair of the SFGB in May 2018. Sir Hector spent his executive career in financial services and regulation, including as the Chief Executive of the Financial Services

Authority, European CEO of Credit Suisse and a partner of stockbrokers Phillips & Drew. Since retiring from full time work, his focus has been helping people manage their money, and promoting a fairer financial system. Sir Hector is a trustee of Just Finance, a charity which collaborates with the Church of England to promote a fairer financial system, and a member of the UK's Financial Capability Board. He is also Chairman of StepChange Debt Charity, the UK's biggest debt advice charity, but will step down before joining the SFGB.

The SFGB will replace the 3 existing providers of government-sponsored financial guidance – the Money Advice Service, the Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise – bringing together the provision of debt advice, money guidance and pensions guidance for the first time. A new, single body provides an opportunity to deliver a more streamlined service to members of the public providing easier access to the information and guidance people need to help them make effective financial decisions throughout their lives.

We expect the SFGB to be established as a legal entity in October 2018 and start preparing for its official launch in January 2019 when the body takes on its delivery functions and staff will transfer to the new organisation. It will have 5 core functions:

- the pensions guidance function – to provide information and guidance to the public on matters relating to occupational and personal pensions
- the money guidance function – to provide information and guidance designed to enhance people's understanding and knowledge of financial matters and their ability to manage their own financial affairs
- the debt advice function – to provide members of the public in England with information and advice on debt
- the consumer protection function – enabling the SFGB to work with government and the Financial Conduct Authority in protecting consumers from detriment
- the strategic function – to work with others in the financial services industry, the devolved authorities, and the public and voluntary sectors to develop a national strategy to improve the financial capability of members of the public, the ability of members of the public to manage debt, and the provision of financial education to children and young people

The body will also provide advice to the Secretary of State on establishment of a debt respite scheme.

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