



Government Office for
Technology Transfer

The UK's Approach to Commercialising Public Sector Innovation

The Government Office for Technology Transfer

Dr Maggie McGowan – Deputy Director
Knowledge Asset Commercialisation

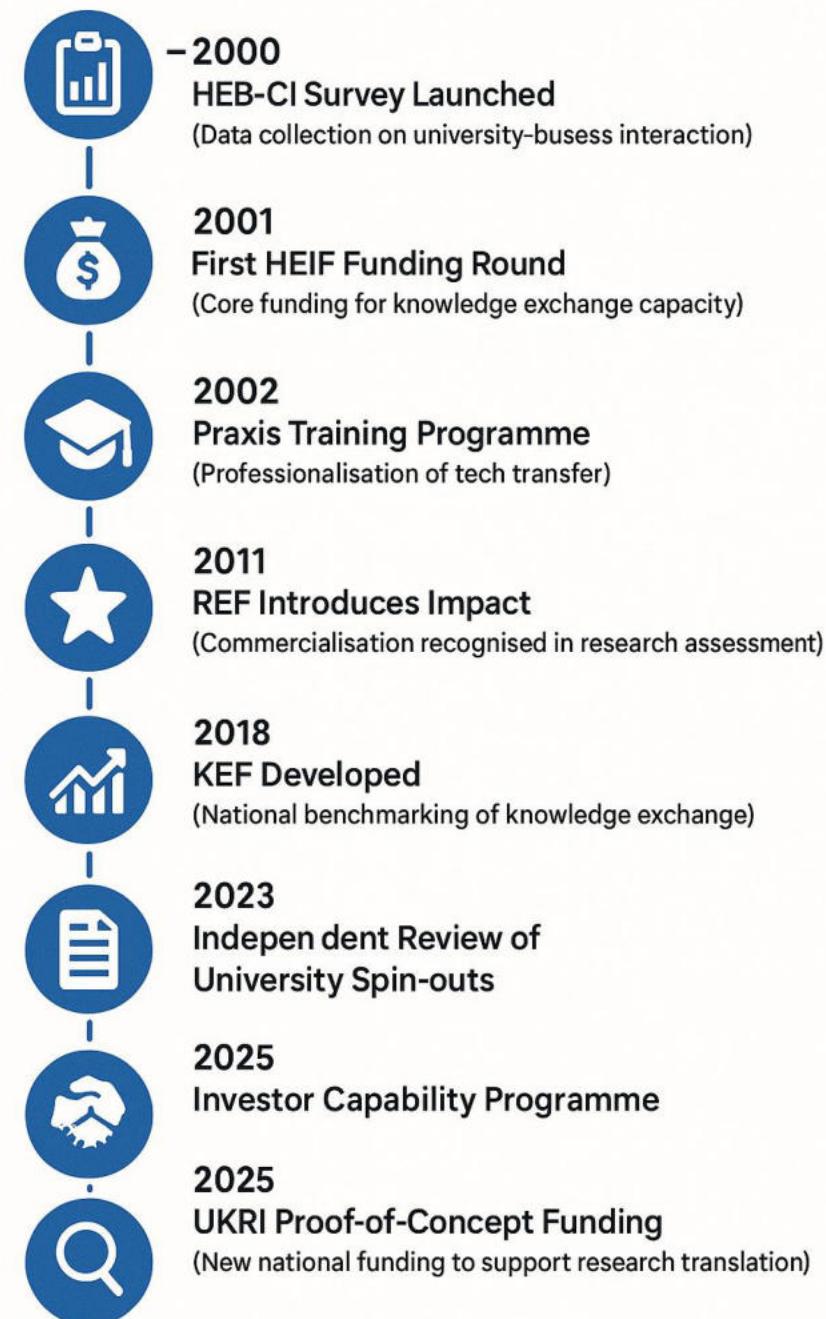
Talk Outline

1. Background to the emergence of a technology transfer ecosystem in the UK university sector
2. Key components of an effective tech transfer ecosystem
3. The creation and set up of the Government Office for Technology Transfer
 - Origins of GOTT
 - Design and creation of the service
 - Early impact
4. Conclusions and key takeaways

UK Tech-Transfer ecosystem emerged organically over 20+ years

- Policy interventions – incentives, performance metrics and benchmarking
- Funding schemes
- Training and professionalisation
- Reviews

Timeline



UK Tech-Transfer ecosystem emerged organically over 20+ years

- Lambert Review of Business–University Collaboration (2003)
- Sainsbury Review “The Race to the Top” (2007)
- Wilson Review of Business–University Collaboration (2012)
- Witty Review “Encouraging a British Invention Revolution” (2013)
- Dowling Review of Business–University Research Collaborations (2015)
- McMillan Group Report on Technology Transfer (2016) –
- Independent Review of University Spin-Out Companies (2023)
- Hickson Review “Deepening University–Investor Links” (2026)

Timeline



What have we learned about the key components of a thriving tech-transfer ecosystem?



Proof of Concept
funding



Strong national
policy
environment



Incentives for
organisations and
individuals



Capability, training
and guidance



Engaged industry
& investor
community

Tony Hickson Review on University-Investor Links:

“There is no silver bullet... a suite of actions is required.”

The UK excels at university research and creating spin-outs, but growth is held back by funding gaps, weak investor links, and uneven university practices. The review calls for better funding, clearer policies, and stronger university-investor collaboration to turn research into successful companies.

<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/RE-280126-DeepeningUni-InvReport.pdf>

Evolved, not engineered - but Delivering Results

Record investment in university spin-outs

£2.6–£3.35bn raised by UK university spin-outs in 2024, the strongest year on record and ~40% higher than 2023.

The UK is leading in Europe in spin-out investment and ranks second globally after the US.

Strong economic impact

Spin-outs from Russell Group universities alone support 80,000+ jobs and generate ~£18bn in annual economic activity.

High return on public funding

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) delivers ~£12–£15 of economic return for every £1 invested.

Large-scale licensing of university IP

UK universities granted ~25,700 licences to companies in a single year, a 40% increase year-on-year, enabling industry to commercialise academic discoveries.

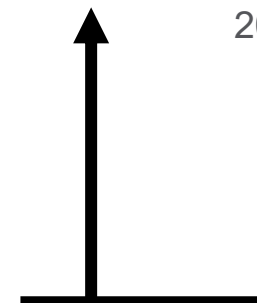
Scaling global companies from UK research

Companies such as Oxford Nanopore Technologies, Autolus Therapeutics, and Bicycle Therapeutics demonstrate the ability of UK universities to translate world-class research into globally funded firms.

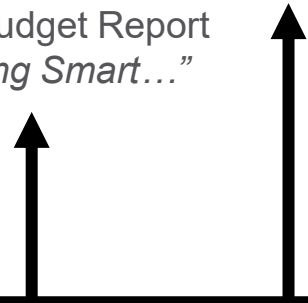
Government Office for Technology Transfer – our evolution



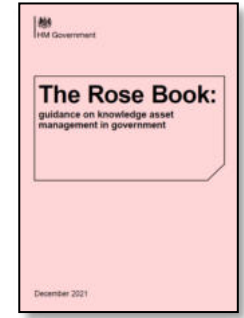
2017 Balance Sheet Review



2018 Budget Report
"Getting Smart..."



2021 Mackintosh Report
"Getting Smarter..."



2021 The Rose Book



September 2021
Launch of Grant Fund



July 2022
Managed Fund launch



July 2022
Second round of Grant Fund



October 2022
Launch of GOTT



The Government Office for Technology Transfer (GOTT)

-  GOTT has been established to accelerate **public sector innovations towards the market, to impact growth and deliver new products** and services for citizens
-  GOTT is a **cross-government, multi-disciplinary delivery team**, based in DSIT, headquartered in **Salford** with staff in **Cardiff** and **London**
-  We have expertise in **policy, L&D, analysis, marketing & communications** and **technology transfer**
-  Our client organisations include government departments and their public sector bodies. While we support the wider public sector, our **targeted support** is focused on **public sector research organisations**

This is a new and exciting area, which requires culture change & significant capability building across government. It's a long-term endeavour

What are 'knowledge assets'?

“Knowledge assets” describes the different types of intellectual property that underpin new and improved technology, products and services e.g. software or know-how



Information (e.g. datasets)



Innovation
(e.g. R&D outcomes, inventions)



Creative work
(e.g. design, software or code)



Brand reputation

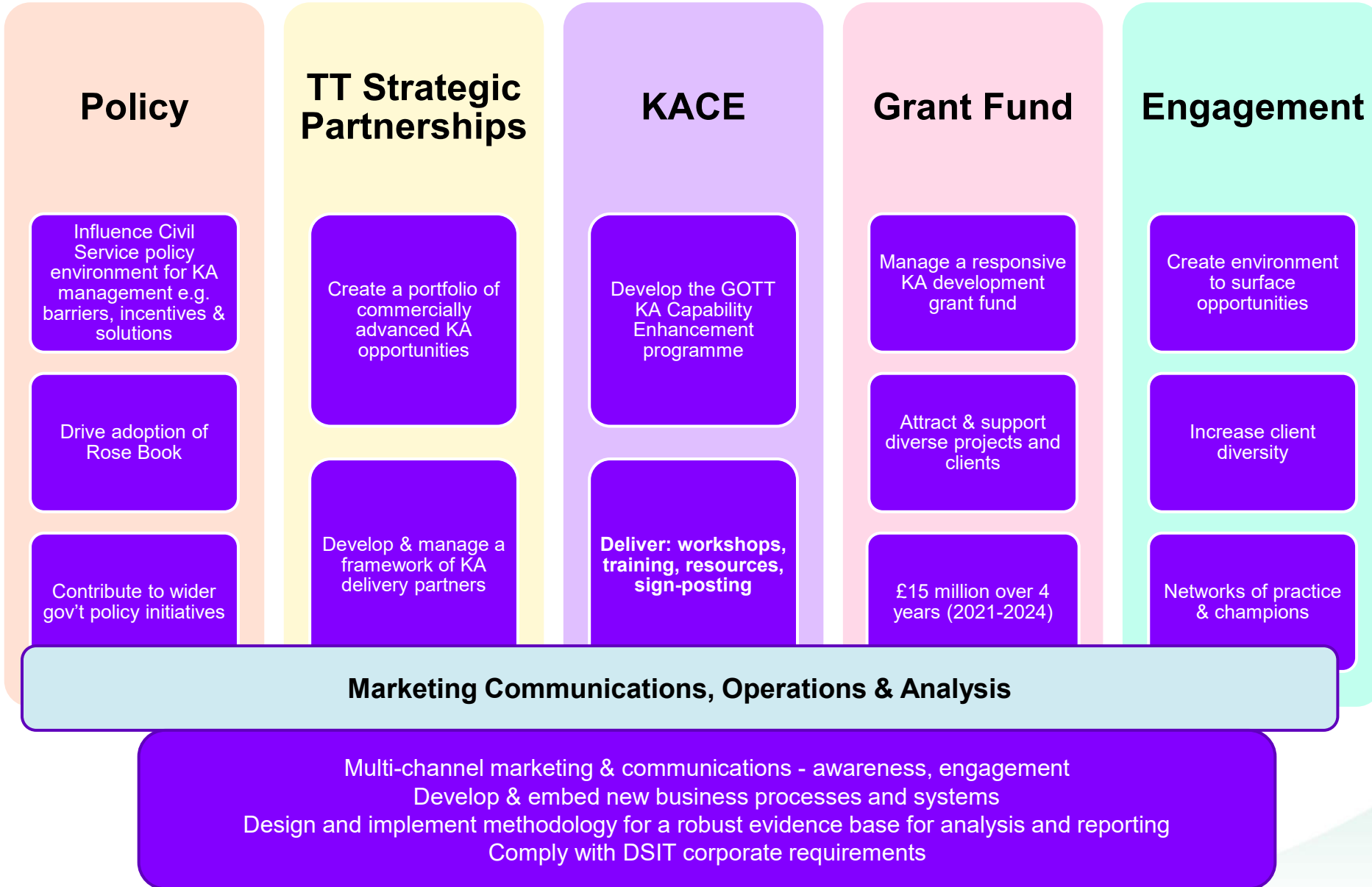


Knowledge and expertise

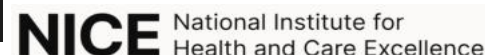
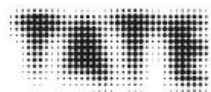
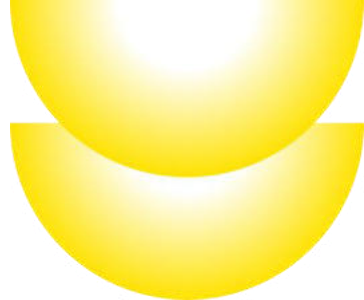


Business processes

GOTT team



Who we work with



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY





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Technology Transfer



The Knowledge Asset Commercialisation Guide

May 2025



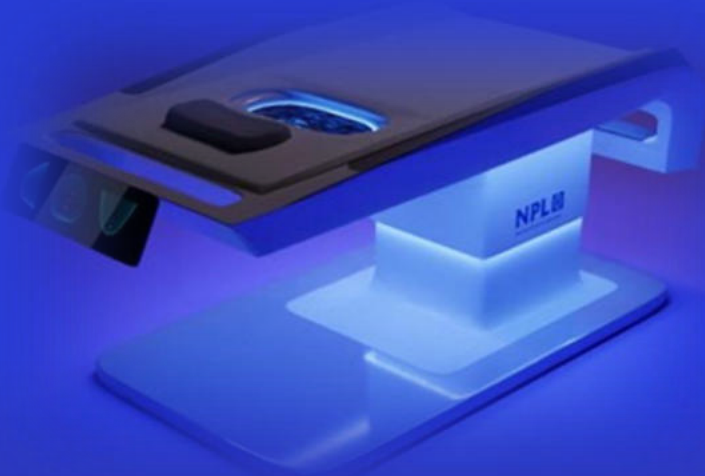
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The Knowledge Asset Spinouts Guide

May 2025





SONA Breast Density Assessment Device

- Helps clinicians assess breast cancer risk and decide on care.
- Measures breast density less invasively and more accurately than current methods.
- Does not need specially trained imaging staff.
- Designed to be used in GP surgeries, saving NHS costs and improving patient outcomes.

Status

- SONA will launch as a spinout company.
- Management team is in place.
- Secured £200k pre-seed funding for product development and clinical trials.

Our role: We have supported SONA's development through grant funding and commercialisation support to advance the technology to a market-ready stage

**SONA device to
deliver better
breast cancer
diagnosis**

Keeping the country safe from cyber attacks

Government Mission: To build strong foundations (National Security).

DSIT objective: Ensure new and existing technologies are safely developed and deployed across Britain, with benefits more widely shared.

Synopsis: GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre developed Wired Glass, a low-cost device that prevents digital video connections being used to launch cyber-attacks on devices.

Our role: We helped GCHQ to find new markets and government applications for the tech and shape the licensing strategy for the IP. We have provided funding and mentoring for a local Knowledge Asset manager to help build local commercialisation awareness and capability.

Status: A global IP licence has been signed with a UK-based company following an open competition. The company plans to sell Wired Glass in 2026/27.



Summary – Components of a Successful Technology Transfer Ecosystem

- **Multiple support elements in place** - Success requires more than one thing. You need funding, policies, skilled people, industry and investor engagement, and a strong strategic framework.
- **People and culture are paramount** - innovation is driven by people – researchers, entrepreneurs, and those who support them.
- **Keep learning and adapting** - try something, measure it (we love our metrics!), get feedback, and adjust.
- **Long-term commitment** - Building an ecosystem doesn't happen overnight. It took decades for universities to reach their current level of tech transfer maturity. For the public sector, we're at the beginning of that journey with GOTT.



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