TECH TALENT VISA SEES 48% INCREASE IN APPLICATIONS OVER ONE YEAR AS GLOBAL FOUNDERS LOOK TO THE UK

- The Tech Nation Global Talent Visa sees applications increase significantly over the past two years, with 45% and 48% increases respectively
- Demand is expected to increase from 2021 as, from January, the Tech Nation Visa will be opening up applications to exceptional tech talent from the EU
- 52% of those endorsed since 2014 are now employed at leading UK tech firms, while 28% are tech founders
- App & software development, AI & machine learning, and fintech are the most common sectors for visa holders. Most endorsed applications come from India, the US and Nigeria
- 41% of Global Talent Visa applicants chose to reside outside of London to work in the UK's strong regional tech hubs

Thursday 19th November: Today, Tech Nation, the growth platform for tech companies and leaders, launches a new report, which reveals insights into the international talent landscape and an update on the Global Talent Visa for Digital Technology.

The Tech Nation Global Talent Visa

As the race for global tech talent heats up, many countries have been making their pitch to attract the best and brightest tech talent to grow their tech industries and create jobs. The Global Talent Visa plays a key role in enabling international tech talent to contribute to the UK economy and to the growth of high priority sectors such as AI and Cyber.

The visa has seen applications increase significantly over the past two years, with 45% and 48% increases respectively. Since November 2018, the Tech Nation Global Talent Visa has received 1,975 applications and endorsed 920 visas from over 50 countries worldwide[1]. Demand is expected to increase in 2021 with the EU coming into the route.

52% of those endorsed last year are now employed at leading UK tech firms, helping to fill existing talent gaps, while 28% are tech founders, bringing ideas, talent and capital into the UK's fast growing tech sector[2]. In 2020, the visa enabled 421 founders to set up business in the UK, up from 400 in 2019.

This global talent is distributed right across the UK. 41% of endorsed applicants for the visa are based outside of London, working in the UK's strong regional tech hubs. App & software development, AI & machine learning, and fintech are the most popular destinations for visa holders, reflecting growth in those tech sub-sectors. India, the US, and Nigeria are the top three countries from which exceptional talent has come into the UK with the Tech Nation visa.

Minister for Digital and Culture Caroline Dinenage said:_"It's no surprise the UK's world-beating technology sector appeals to international talent. Our dynamic companies reflect the UK's long-standing reputation for innovation and are renowned on the global stage._

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[1] November 2018 to November 2020
[2] November 2014 to November 2020

"We are open to the brightest and the best talent, and this visa scheme makes it easier for companies across the country to recruit the talent they need to grow."

Trecilla Lobo, SVP, People at BenevolentAI and Tech Nation Board Director, said: *"The UK tech ecosystem continues to contribute to the creation of jobs and to innovative products and services. The Tech Nation Visa enables the UK tech sector to maintain its competitive advantage by attracting the best talent in specialist skills in tech, research and AI and a more globally diverse perspective to help us innovate and create amazing products and services."*

"As an immigrant to the UK in my late teens, the UK visa scheme has enabled me to bring my experience, expertise and contribute to the people agenda for tech scale-ups in the UK, and helped me build a successful career in tech. I am really excited that the Tech Nation Visa will open opportunities and streamline the visa process for future global tech talent."

Hao Zheng, Co-founder & CEO at RoboK, based in Cambridge and Newcastle, said: *"I decided to work in UK tech because of the well-established ecosystem, world-class research and innovation and the high-level of experience that is extremely valuable for startup technology companies."*

Congcong Wang, Head of Operations at TusPark, based in Cambridge, said: *"The UK is a world leading innovation hub, particularly in the fields of AI and Healthcare. Its environment fosters young talent, breeds disruptive innovation and creates amazing companies. Also, the culture of the UK is nurturing and tolerant for innovation, as it is considered a "safe place" for those inspired to take on the more risky route of entrepreneurship."*

Sumit Janmejai, Data-Driven Cybersecurity Professional at Capgemini, based in London said: *"Having studied in the UK and worked with UK professionals, I could appreciate the fact that the UK is fast becoming the center of innovation, research and development in the Tech Industry. Besides that, the country offers an excellent life, welcoming culture, and a safe environment. It was an easy choice."*

A surge in demand and interest

Labour markets around the world and in the UK have undergone profound shifts in 2020. New data released today, shows that there has been a 200% increase in the volume of users in the UK searching online for terms explicitly related to 'UK tech visas' between April and September 2020[1]. This surge in interest to work in the UK's digital tech sector is reflected globally too, with a 100% increase in users internationally searching for these terms in countries like the US and India.

Average monthly searches for 'UK tech visa' Jan 2018 - Sep 2020
(Source: Tech Nation, SEMrush, 2020)

Stephen Kelly, Chair of Tech Nation, comments: *"The UK is a global talent magnet for Tech founders. The UK provides rich opportunities for entrepreneurs to set up, flourish and scale a business. The Global Talent Visa is crucial to making this process easy and accessible."*

"Tech Nation's Visa Report shows that, despite the pandemic, international interest to work in the UK tech sector has never been higher. Attracting tomorrow's tech leaders to the UK is crucial to the continued growth of the sector, The UK's place in the world, and driving the nation through recovery to growth in the digital age."

Digital tech roles remain in high demand in the UK. Cyber skills are becoming increasingly important within the UK, particularly in regions such as Wales and the East and West Midlands where there has been a huge increase in demand between 2017 and 2019 (351%, 140%, and 86% respectively). Demand for AI skills has increased by 111% from 2017 to 2019, with Northern Ireland and Wales seeing the greatest increases in demand - 418% and 200% respectively.

Chris Ganje, CEO, AMPLYFI, Cardiff said: *"For AMPLYFI, access to world-leading talent is our number one priority and seeing these statistics, driven by the support of special talent visas, confirms to me that we are based in a talent hotspot, not just in the UK, but globally."*

"We work with firms seeking to scale AI capabilities across their operations, a trend that will only be boosted by digital transformation of customers, supply chains and industries. A trend AMPLYFI is in a prime position to support, thanks to the infrastructure provided in the UK."

The full Tech Nation Visa Report 2020 can be found here:
https://technation.io/tech-nation-visa-report-2020/

Tech Nation will be presenting the findings of the report in a virtual event on the 19th November
https://hopin.com/events/tn-visa-report-event

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Notes to the Editor

About the Tech Nation Visa:

Tech Nation is the official Home Office designated endorsing body authorised to assess endorsement applications from individuals with expertise in digital technology and who want to come to the UK under the Global Talent visa.

The Tech Nation Visa is for founders and employees with technical or business backgrounds, including all tech sub-sectors like fintech, AI, cyber, and games. The visa is valid for up to 5 years, enabling you to work, change employers, or be self-employed, without the need for further authorisation. The Tech Nation Visa can be extended to your immediate family members and after the initial visa period, you can either apply for an extension or permanent settlement in the UK.

The visa has two distinct pathways, Exceptional Talent and Exceptional Promise, to accommodate applicants of varying levels of experience. While Exceptional Talent welcomes applicants with several years of career experience, Exceptional Promise enables those individuals who may be earlier in their

technology careers, or graduates with outstanding academic achievement, such as having earned a PhD and had research published in the field of digital technology.

Tech Nation is one of six endorsing bodies for the Global Talent Visa, other endorsing bodies being the Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Society, British Academy, UKRI, and the Arts Council, collectively covering sectors such as science, engineering and the arts. Demand for the Digital Technology pathway is notably high, with Tech Nation processing 36% of all Global Talent applications since the route was re-launched in February 2020 (previously being operated as the Tier 1 Exceptional Talent route).

About Tech Nation

Tech Nation is the growth platform for tech companies and leaders. Tech Nation fuels the growth of game-changing founders, leaders, and scaling companies so they can positively transform societies and economies. We provide them with the coaching, content, and community they need for their journey in designing the future. Tech Nation has years of experience facilitating and helping UK tech companies scale, both at home and abroad. Over 25 cohorts and 700 companies have successfully graduated from Tech Nation's growth programmes. Alumni include Skyscanner, Darktrace, and Monzo.