

TECH NATION ANNOUNCES THE WINNING RISING STARS OF UK TECH

Images available on request

- 10 of the most exciting early-stage tech companies revealed as winners of Tech Nation's Rising Stars competition
- The only national early-stage scaleup competition in the UK
- Rising Stars winners are from right across the UK, including Truro, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Southampton, Glasgow, Manchester and Cardiff
- Selected by a panel of tech industry experts at the competition's Grand Final, including techUK President, Jacqueline de Rojas, PrettyLittleThing co-founder Adam Kamani, and MD of Microsoft for Startups UK Amali de Alwis

Tech Nation, the UK network for ambitious tech entrepreneurs, has today announced the 10 early-stage scaleup winners of its nationwide competition, Rising Stars.

The Rising Stars competition is the only national early-stage tech scaleup competition in the UK, and is designed to showcase the most exciting companies at Seed to pre-Series A funding from all areas of the country. Tech Nation's Rising Stars are on track to become the world leading tech companies of tomorrow - the UK is a world leader in producing successful tech companies, and is now home to 77 billion-dollar businesses, double that of Germany and almost four times as many as Israel.

The final 10 winners were revealed at the Rising Stars Grand Final in London last night which was the culmination of nationwide search that saw the 33 regional winners revealed in November, followed by the Semi-Final in Manchester last month where a panel of judges whittled the finalists down to 20 companies.

At the Grand Final, the winners were required to pitch to a panel of industry leading judges, and in front of an audience of over 200 of the top venture capitalists, founders and corporates in the UK. The judging panel included techUK President, Jacqueline de Rojas, PrettyLittleThing co-founder Adam Kamani, and MD of Microsoft for Startups UK Amali de Alwis.

In its second year, the competition received almost 400 applications in total, a 39% rise from 2018 and attracted a diverse group of founders - 30% of the original applicants have at least one female founder, and 90% of companies who entered the final are from outside of London. Applicants were required to be at Seed to pre-Series A funding or generating annual revenues up to £1.5m.

The competition's prize package has been built in response to the challenges which are faced by companies at this stage of growth, for instance, access to networks and platforms for promotion. The prize package and the competition itself aims to raise the profile of the winners nationally and internationally. It includes one-to-one support, introductions to potential partners and investors and support from the programme partners, BDO Drive, Microsoft Advertising, Soldo, Talent Works International and TLT LLP.

Previous Rising Stars winners include Tickr from Liverpool who went on to raise £1m through the Seedrs platform, SeedLegals who went on to raise Series A funding of over £3m led by SeedCamp and Kima Ventures, and Tended who raised £1.4m from Blackfinch Ventures and Minerva Angel Business Network.

Other companies that took part in Rising Stars 1.0 have gone on to join Tech Nation growth programmes, including Kani and Heliocor who joined Fintech 2.0, and People Matter Technology who joined Tech Nation's first Applied AI programme.

The Rising Stars winners:

[Shopper.com](#)

Birmingham | Ecommerce & Marketplace | [@shopperdotcom](#)

Shopper.com is a community driven global marketplace for online and offline voucher codes, covering thousands of e-commerce sites. It automatically applies the best value voucher code at checkout in one click for both mobile and desktop devices.

[Foundries.io](#)

Cambridge | Devices & IoT | [@FoundriesIO](#)

Foundries.io is addressing security and device management for IoT and Edge devices.

FoundriesFactory is a self-service cloud solution that provides turnkey services to develop, secure, deploy and maintain embedded IoT and Edge compute products. They enable secure IoT devices and provide lifetime software maintenance at a fraction of current costs.

[We Build Bots](#)

Cardiff | AI | [@wbb_ai](#)

We Build Bots delivers AI powered automation to the public sector, helping organisations deliver better, faster and cheaper citizen services. Leveraging bots, voice and conversational analytics, they help the public sector make better use of the data they collect, making it more predictive and more productive.

[Neatebox](#)

Edinburgh | Tech for Good | [@neatebox](#)

Tackling personal loneliness and communication, the Neatebox "Welcome" platform removes barriers and promotes empathetic relationships between consumers and customer service teams, promoting real societal change and heralding a new age of understanding and communication.

[Talking Medicines](#)

Glasgow | Healthtech & Biotech | [@TMedicines](#)

Talking Medicines captures the digital voice of the patient, aggregating it into patterns of behaviours and commercialising it to brand managers in pharmaceutical companies through subscription access. They put patient centricity at the core of what they do, aiming to improve outcomes of medicines.

[CoGrammar](#)

London | Tech for Good | [@hypdev](#)

CoGrammar operates the largest coding education provider in Africa – HyperionDev. Through this, they source, select, train, and integrate full-time code reviewers from top African tech talent. This allows Western companies to affordably assess developers and technical team quality, whilst creating hundreds of jobs in African countries.

[ClearGlass](#)

London | Fintech | [@ClearGlassL](#)

ClearGlass is a digital intermediary between asset managers and pension funds. It collects underlying costs and performance data from asset managers and helps pension funds decide which is the best fund to invest in for their members.

[tootoot](#)

Manchester | SaaS | [@tootootofficial](#)

tootoot is award-winning software that supports the psychological safety and wellbeing of individuals within education, sport and the workplace. tootoot provides a way for individuals to raise a concern to their organisation with complete confidentiality.

[Sparkbox](#)

Southampton | SaaS | [Sparkbox.co](#)

Working in the retail and fashion space, Sparkbox uses machine learning to reduce stock, improve profitability, and prevent over-discounting by optimising prices. Their AI helps retail teams leverage their data, understand the impact of pricing decisions and make the most of the inventory they own.

[Codices Interactive](#)

Truro | Digital Entertainment | [@quizkit](#)

Codices Interactive provides viewers with a live interactive video platform, enabling any broadcaster to create interactive shows. Its first product is now the most used gameshow creation tool on the Twitch platform, with 1,000+ monthly active broadcasters and 300,000 unique monthly viewers.

The judging panel:

- Amali de Alwis, MD, Microsoft for Startups UK
- Adam Kamani, CEO KM Capital, Kamani Property Group and Co-Founder of PrettyLittleThing
- Ed Prior, Tech Investment Banker, GP Bullhound
- Jacqueline de Rojas, President, techUK
- Denise Xifara, Co-Founder, GMG Ventures
- Michael Stothard, Editor, Sifted

The prize package:

- Business plan diagnostic, delivered by accounting and business advisory firm, BDO
- Pitch training and coaching by Sunderland Software City
- Opportunity to pitch your business in front of over 200 investors, accelerators, entrepreneurs and corporate leaders
- Induction into the Rising Stars alumni network
- Speaking opportunities, thought leadership and press through the Tech Nation network
- Complimentary TLT Legalsifter subscription with onboarding
- Microsoft Advertising coupon worth £200 and Azure credits of \$1500
- Complimentary annual subscription to Soldo and Xero
- Recruitment process analysis, reporting and recommendations by Talent Works International

Digital Minister Matt Warman said: "It's great to see such a diverse group of entrepreneurs from all over the UK involved in this competition and I'm excited to find out what's next for these world-leading tech firms of tomorrow."

"This government is committed to making sure the UK is the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business. We've worked hard to develop a business friendly environment, a reputation for innovation and the ability to attract the best talent from across the globe."

Mike Jackson, Entrepreneur Success Director, Tech Nation, commented: "The Rising Stars announced today are great examples of the strength of the UK tech ecosystem. The winners highlight that innovation, determination and ambition in this fast growing sector can be found right across the UK. What the Rising Stars competition, and indeed Tech Nation, does is provide a platform to showcase these exciting and innovative companies."

Esme Caulfield, Competitions Lead, Tech Nation, commented: "It's incredibly exciting to see how the Tech Nation Rising Stars competition has grown in the last year. The standard of companies from all parts of the UK has been impressive at every stage. I'm looking forward to following the winners' future successes and continuing to support them in their growth journey."

Jacqueline de Rojas, President, techUK, commented: "As we face explosive shifts in technology, platforms and fast moving markets, we must look outwards not inwards towards those who embrace the dynamic shifts in the way we embrace our digital future. What we have seen today changes the definition of what flexibility and being quick to change means. I'm excited and optimistic about the contribution they can make to what comes next... #TechMatters."

Amali de Alwis, MD, Microsoft for Startups UK, commented: "It's fantastic to see so many incredible companies among this year's Rising Stars. They are an incredible representation of the innovation and talent we have here in the UK, and delighted that we at Microsoft are able to join them in celebrating their success."

Adam Kamani, Partner, KM Capital, commented: "At KM Capital, we're always looking out for the country's great, new emerging tech start-ups, so it's been a great honour to be on the judging panel of the Tech Nation Rising Stars awards tonight. The high calibre and out-of-the-box approach shown by the nominees has been really inspiring to see and I wish them all well in their journeys and development over the next year."

Ritesh Singhania, CEO, ClearGlass, commented: "We are growing at a pace faster than we thought we would in our start-up journey and recognition from Tech Nation is definitely a strong endorsement."

Tim Edwards, CEO, Codices, commented: "We are delighted to represent the South West and Cornwall in the final with it's rapidly growing tech start-up scene. The timing is great as we are just closing our latest investment round."

Riaz Moola, CEO, CoGrammar commented: "We are proud to represent our model of scaling African tech talent to the world as a British tech startup with the support of Tech Nation."

George Grey, CEO, Foundries.io, commented: “We are delighted that Foundries.io has been recognized as a winner at the 2020 Rising Stars Final event, and we look forward to bringing our secure IoT software platform to more customers as we grow over the coming years.”

Gavin Neate, CEO & Founder, neatebox, commented: “Neatebox winning TechNations Rising Stars underlines the changing face of society and its willingness to look at the growing need for high growth companies addressing societies greatest challenges. As our company grows we will most certainly see this win as a milestone in our journey and look forward to increased interest in our company and its solutions.”

Sonu Bubna, Co-founder & CEO, Shopper.com, commented: “We’re delighted to be a winner of Tech Nation's Rising Star Competition. As we just kickstarted our fundraising, it will certainly give a boost to our profile among the investor community.”

Lindsay Fisher, Co-founder, Sparkbox, commented: “The Sparkbox team is thrilled to have been considered one of the most promising startups among such an impressive group of finalists. We’re grateful for this opportunity to showcase our product and our progress just as we turn our attention to scaling. We’re particularly proud to have represented the exciting new technology emerging in the retail sector in this year’s competition.”

Jo Halliday, CEO, Talking Medicines, commented: “We are totally delighted to have won this prize, thank you to Tech Nation & well done to our hard working team. Having the opportunity to tell our story at this event is a huge opportunity as we enter our new funding round. We look forward to the rest of 2020.”

Michael Brennan, CO-founder & CEO, tootoot, commented: “We are delighted to be putting the North on the map! We are on a mission to make organisations happier and safer places around the world and having just secured our first VC seed investment, we are excited to launch our new SaaS platform for Enterprise and SME.”

Georgia Darzins, Marketing & Sales Executive, We Build Bots, commented: “We're thrilled to be one of the companies to represent digital innovation in Wales, a beautiful country that deserves a bigger place on the Global stage. So far, we have made great strides in public sector digital transformation, and we're headed into 2020 determined to leverage AI to transform the way in which public services are delivered.”