

## Top five early-stage tech companies from the South East announced in Tech Nation's latest 'Rising Stars' competition

- Tech Nation announces the top five South East Regional Winners of its fourth Rising Stars competition, recognising the UK's early-stage tech companies with the highest potential
- The 5 South East companies to be selected are Sevenoaks-based [Kuberno Limited](#), Woking-based [Aria Technologies](#), Farnham-based [Untap](#), Portsmouth-based [Musemio](#) and Brighton and Hove-based [Naurt](#), which span tech subsectors lawtech, cybersecurity, fintech, createch and SaaS
- The tech sector in the South East is rapidly growing; the sector has received \$4.8bn in VC investment funding this year, as of November 2021 (a 244% increase on the \$1.7bn received in 2020), and has created 144% more jobs compared to the previous year (286,632 in H1 of 2021, up from 117,709 in 2020)

**14th December 2021:** Tech Nation has today announced the 5 South East Regional Winners of its fourth Rising Stars competition, which recognises the brightest and best early-stage tech scaleups from every area of the UK. In total, 55 fast-growing tech companies from across the UK have been named this year's Regional Winners - 5 within each UK region. Previous years' Rising Stars Regional Winners have included [Selazar](#) (from Northern Ireland), [Circa5000](#) (from the North West) and [SeedLegals](#) (from London), who have received a combined £33.79mn in investment to date, demonstrating the ability of the Rising Stars Regional Winners to scale quickly, and their potential to become the UK's tech 'unicorns' (companies with valuations of \$1bn+) of the future.

These Regional Winners have been selected by a panel of over 50 judges (industry experts with extensive experience in starting and scaling tech businesses) based on their value proposition, competitive advantage, market traction, team experience and potential to scale.

This year's South East Regional Winners are, [Aria Technologies](#), [Kuberno Limited](#), [Musemio](#), [Naurt](#) and [Untap](#). These companies, which hail from Sevenoaks, Woking, Farnham, Portsmouth and Brighton and Hove, are working to transform a range of different industries, including lawtech, cybersecurity, fintech, createch and SaaS, and have an average of 6 employees.

### The South East tech sector is growing

The success of these early-stage South East companies reflects the strength and fast growth of the South East tech market overall.

According to data from Tech Nation, the South East is now home to 6 tech 'unicorns' (companies valued at over \$1bn), and has received \$4.8bn in VC investment funding this year, as of November 2021 (a 244% increase on the \$1.7bn received in 2020).

Tech job creation is also growing rapidly in the South East, rising by 144% in the past year (from 117,709 tech roles in 2020 to 286,632 in H1 of 2021).

**This year's Rising Stars Regional Winners are accelerating the tech sector across the UK**

This year's Regional Winners demonstrate that the tech sector is growing quickly across all corners of the UK.

An impressive 69% of the 55 Regional Winners are generating revenue, and 38% have at least one female founder. 27% of the Regional Finalists are Pre-Seed, 29% have no previous rounds of funding, and 36% are Seed funded. As for what's next, 49% of the Regional Finalists are looking for Seed Funding, while 34% are looking to raise Series A.

The 55 Regional Winners are a mixture of B2B and B2C and 49% have previously attended an accelerator. 73% of the Regional Winners plan to expand internationally in the next 12 months, with 58% wanting to expand into the USA.

### **Rising Stars' mission**

Going forward, these 5 promising, fast-growth South Eastern tech companies will continue to be supported by the UK tech ecosystem as they are inducted into the Tech Nation alumni network.

Recognising and empowering all of the Regional Winners of the Rising Stars competition is at the core of Tech Nation's mission to fuel the growth of tech scaleups who are helping us create a stronger economy, society and future.

### **Quotes:**

**Esme Caulfield, Competitions Lead at Tech Nation, said:** "With Tech Nation's Rising Stars competition now in its fourth year, it's amazing to see so many inspiring companies innovating to change our world for the better. This year, we reached the milestone of 1000 applications to Rising Stars (and surpassed it!). We had a record number of applications this year - 380 (nearly 400) - and we also saw our first applications - and our first Regional Winner - from the spacetech sector, (Elestial, from the Midlands) and agritech (Cropsafe, from Northern Ireland).

From revolutionising modern healthcare and disrupting the finance sector to transforming education and tackling climate change, each of these fast-growing regional early-stage tech companies is helping us improve our economy, society and quality of life. This year's Regional Winners represent the brightest and the best of UK tech and talent, and I'm excited to see what they do next."

**Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:** "These technology Rising Stars are helping us solve some of the greatest challenges of our time and creating high-quality and well-paid jobs up and down the country. Capitalising on the huge potential of tech is a crucial part of our mission to level up and we are backing businesses with pro-innovation policies and supporting people to get the skills they need to thrive."

**Nicola McNeely, Partner at Harrison Clark Rickerbys Solicitors - Cardiff and Rising Stars 4.0 Judge, said:** "It is evident from the Tech Nation's Rising Stars Regional Winners that there is a vast array of technology startups and scaleups around the UK, many of whom are operating within known Tech

clusters already. Some have chosen to specifically establish themselves there or to relocate to these areas to leverage the incubator or accelerator services within those tech clusters. The ability to operate alongside like-minded businesses equips them well to leverage contacts, connections, services and expertise from similar businesses in their area. It also positions them well to sell into primes who are interested in diversifying their customer offering and adopting new innovative tech solutions.”

**Drew Currie, Director of the Founder Institute - Birmingham and Rising Stars 4.0 Judge, said:** “Two of the Rising Star candidates which I judged were extraordinary! I have judged pitches previously, but these 2 were exceptional. I have written their names on a piece of paper, and sealed them in dated envelopes. On the back of their Tech Nation entry, I look forward in a few years time to opening those envelopes in front of them & toasting their success!”

**Niki Haggerty-James, Ecosystem Manager at Barclays Eagle Labs and Rising Stars 4.0 Judge, said:** “I was honoured to be a judge for the fourth year, for Tech Nation’s Rising Stars programme. It seems the calibre of start-up and scaling-up businesses is getting better year on year, which is reflected in the businesses we are seeing here at Barclays Eagle Labs. When times become challenging, the best entrepreneurs see it as an opportunity to innovate and adapt. I predict exciting times ahead for this year’s cohort.”

**Daniel Evans, CEO of Birmingham Enterprise Community and Rising Stars 4.0 Judge, said:** “Rising Stars aims to find the UK’s very best emerging startups and this year’s applications did not disappoint. As we look forward to the country’s recovery from COVID and the events of the past 2 years, we need our entrepreneurs more than ever. They fuel innovation and tackle the problems we face by building solutions that change the way we live, work and operate as a society. Through Rising Stars, Tech Nation is able to help showcase some of these fantastic entrepreneurs and bring attention to the work they are doing. One thing is for sure, if the quality of these businesses is anything to go by, then the entrepreneurial future of the UK is looking stronger than ever.”

**Jack Maddalena, CEO and Co-founder of Naurt, said:** “It is an honour to be selected as a regional winner for Rising Stars 4.0 as this initiative is the UK’s only truly national scaleup competition. We look forward to the opportunities this will bring to help us in our mission to empower businesses to re-imagine what is possible with true location technology. With current location technology being inadequate for the majority of its use case, we look forward to unlocking the growth these companies could make with improved location data indoors and outdoors. Brighton has a great eco-system of support, from Elizabeth from Tech Nation to Plus X and the Brite program. The talent from the local area and the universities has been great in helping us move forward quickly in our journey.”

**Olga Kravchenko, CEO of Musemio, said:** “Our core mission is to make arts and culture accessible and exciting for every child across the globe, and that’s why we developed Musemio. On this immersive learning platform, cultural institutions can publish interactive experiences based on their collections. We’re still in the early days of immersive technologies adoption, but I see 2021 as a tipping point. With a massive shift towards the digital transformation accelerated by the Covid-19 crisis, more organisations now realise the power of immersive for audience engagement, revenue

growth and increased loyalty that can be enabled through our innovative solution. After relocating from London to the South East, we have received support from local organisations and universities to develop sustainable partnerships with cultural institutions around the region.”

**Manfredi Bargioni, CEO of Untap, said:** “The Rising Stars competition is a great opportunity to showcase the most exciting and innovative start-ups across the UK, and to highlight the entrepreneurial spirit that is driving them. At Untap, we are very excited to be selected as regional winners among such tough competition and are looking forward to increasing our visibility to potential clients, partners and investors through Rising Stars. Untap is an integrated platform offering a one-stop-shop data strategy for private equity funds, bringing together financial and operational control, value creation management and ESG improvement model into one single solution. Untap is designed to streamline data and information flow from portfolio companies to investors. Our mission is to make the Private Equity value creation process more efficient, more sustainable, and more focused on positive ESG impact.”

**Zoe Bucknell, Co-founder of Kuberno, said:** “Our mission is to beat bureaucracy and give governance a good name. We are tackling this by rethinking how technology can deliver future fit governance globally and by disrupting a stagnant and overlooked technology niche. We are delighted to be a Rising Stars Regional Winner just at the time our business is accelerating, so that we can leverage access to the Tech Nation network and insights, as well as tapping into the pool of knowledge and experience of our fellow semi-finalists. While our team is predominantly based in the South East, we are location agnostic - our first employee hailing from Bolton!”

**Sagar Javkhedkar, Director of Aria Technologies Limited, said:** “We are absolutely thrilled to be short-listed as a Rising Stars 4.0 South East Regional Winner! It goes without saying, but a big shout out to the AriaTech team whose passion, client centricity, thought leadership, and dedication have enabled us to deliver impactful and insightful capability for our clients in the Cyber risk space. Grateful to the Tech Nation team including the judges, organisers and the support staff for this opportunity and professionally organised competition. And heartiest congratulations to other regional Winners. Looking forward to catching up on ideas, products and people over the finals. Best of luck!”

**End**

**Notes to the editor:**

**About the South East Regional Winners:**

[Kuberno](#) - Sevenoaks - Lawtech

Kuberno's mission is to beat bureaucracy and give governance a good name. The company uses its practical experience from start-ups to FTSE30 Banks, via the odd IPO, to act as your pilot in navigating complex governance. With Kuberno you will achieve transformational governance to support your boards and build both agile and sustainable businesses.

### [Aria Technologies](#) - Woking - Cybersecurity

Aria aims to provide value added services in the Risk Management field. With more than 35 years collective knowledge from the founding members across audit, consulting, and industry domains, AriaTech believes in adding value through automation with their industry acclaimed tools and products to enable clients to increase their productivity and manage their risks better.

### [Untap](#) - Farnham - Fintech

Untap helps Private Equity funds consolidate financial results, value creation planning and execution and ESG metrics to achieve: Increased confidence of delivering the value growth set in the investment thesis. Increased confidence of providing sustainable returns to investors Improved data control and automated production of reports to investors Untap is the only truly integrated Portfolio Management solution for the PE sector.

### [Musemio](#) - Portsmouth - Createch/VR

Musemio is a digital destination for children to enjoy and understand culture, the arts and history via a mobile 3D and VR environment where they can play and join gamified mobile VR quests while learning. The immersive platform integrates content from global cultural partners to create the experience that children enjoy the most: interactive games.

### [Naurt](#) - Brighton and Hove - SaaS

Naurt is a location optimisation software that provides hyper-precise location data - improving your accuracy by 40% to 90%. As it's software-based, think of it as a plug-and-play software toolkit that works anywhere in the world both indoors and outdoors in all conditions, unaffected by weather or terrain.

### **Company photos:**

Please find images of the companies' logos and founders [here](#), and of their teams [here](#).

### **About the Rising Stars competition:**

Rising Stars 4.0 is the UK's only truly national scaleup competition, designed to be accessible to the best early-stage tech companies from all areas of the country. Entrants are supported throughout the application process, and given training and support at each stage of the competition to enable them to compete to their best ability and deliver the perfect pitch. The competition culminates in the top 20 companies being showcased and promoted to a highly curated audience of investors, corporates, influencers and the wider tech ecosystem. The judging panel then deliberate over the final 20, selecting 10 companies to be named as this year's Rising Stars, who will feature in a high-profile celebration event on 24 March 2022.

### **Eligibility criteria for the Rising Stars competition:**

- Seed to pre-Series A funding stage OR if revenue focused, generating annual revenues below £1.5mn
- A digital tech business with a product or service to sell

- At least one active client or pilot
- Able to demonstrate market traction
- HQ'd in UK
- Company incorporated between 1-3 years
- Able to commit to key dates in the Rising Stars calendar

**About Tech Nation:**

Tech Nation is the leading growth platform for UK tech scaleups. 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 30 cohorts and 900 companies have successfully graduated from Tech Nation's growth programmes. Alumni include Skyscanner, Darktrace, and Monzo, as well as 3 of the UK's 7 new 'decacorns'; Revolut, Wise, and Farfetch.