

Minutes from the Innovation Board Meeting

June 30th 2021

Welcome to New Members

In Attendance: Stuart Brocklehurst, David Ralph, Chris Evans, Adrian Dawson, Cathrine Armour, Icarus Allen, Sally Basker, Ian McFadzen, Stephen Mariadas, Victoria Hatfield, Paul Coles, Layla Burrows and Andrew Dean (sec).

Mark Ratcliffe and Wayne Loschi were unavailable for the meeting.

During the course of the meeting Icarus Allen declared an interest in elements relating to Plymouth Sound and Marine.

Members of the Innovation Board introduced themselves.

Background to the Innovation Board and an opportunity for questions

There was a significant need to drive Innovation and the MIT REAP Process (Feb 2020 to Feb 2021) had helped partners in the LEP geography to identify potential new opportunities to maximise growth in Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDEs). It highlighted two major potential new outputs:

1. Technopole for R&D businesses regardless of location in LEP
2. Communicating our strength in marine and Environmental intelligence to policymakers around a definite ask from government

Therefore the Innovation Board has grown to reflect this and expanded its membership with an aim of helping deliver these specifically, plus to maximise growth of IDEs in general.

Approve minutes of the last Innovation Board

Approved and Actions completed.

The Technopole

The MIT REAP work had identified some confusion amongst IDEs as to where support and financing was available and the Technopole should help address this. The LEP is pushing ahead with the initiative and will go out to tender to identify who can develop the business case for this offer and the Innovation Board (IB) will be key to shaping the proposition. There are many organisations operating successfully in this space already, so we need to embed these and make sure that the end product is significantly more, and distinct from, its parts. Growing this area should also benefit those already operating in this space. A PID has been developed and will be shared.

ACTION SEC: Share the PID across the Innovation Board

A central challenge will be identifying the challenge/request precisely enough to identify where the real benefits will be - it has to add value and not replicate. It was envisaged that the IB would be

responsible for developing and overseeing the Technopole - perhaps ultimately via a sub-group. The LEP will commission a strategic outline Business Case and an associated pitch to Government including "What we will do, how, why and costs". Delivery will be via tender - with the initial aim of this being complete by the end of the Summer. Clearly it also needs to be positioning against the broader LEP priorities.

There will be competition across the region for Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) investments linked to Levelling Up.

ACTION All: Please read the PID and comment accordingly. Help will further be appreciated when the LEP is developing the subsequent Business Case. Deadline 14th July.

Government's Innovation Strategy

Layla provided an update on the direction of government thinking in regard to the new Innovation Strategy.

Progress Report on the Innovation Driven Enterprises/Entrepreneur Panel - request for approval of Next Steps

The IB received a large survey response as part of the MIT REAP work that allowed real depth of analysis. So it is possible to use this technique (surveys) with this audience.

The accompanying paper recommended creating a Panel of around 80 representatives from IDEs. The Board recommended the recruitment of the Panel (via Board members, TECH SW, Innovate Edge etc.) with a view to confirming its membership to a future LEP Board Meeting.

A simple Mission Statement for the IDE Panel will be developed including the methods of communication/ meeting and their frequency.

The administration of the Panel and handling of membership details would lie with the University of Exeter and the secretariat - who will confirm the GDPR position and act as Data Controller.

It was recognised that there will be a real challenge in getting people recruited to the Panel and maintaining their engagement. We need to be clear what is in it for them. Nonetheless, it would add considerable value to the IB.

We also need to reflect on all aspects of diversity given the bias in some ecosystems.

There could be future resistance to surveying. As a result of COVID survey fatigue.

We should ensure other groups are not asking the same questions and if needs be utilise different ways of gathering responses - should survey prove insufficient.

ACTIONS ADEAN: Create a Draft Mission Statement for the IDE Panel. Circulate an advert for the Panel via IB members and other stakeholders. Establish data handling procedure.

Marine and Environmental Intelligence Propositions

Adrian fed back on the Marine Paper circulated. UoP have led on this Paper which brings clarity to a crowded space. Presents a compelling picture of the regional assets.

The next stage must result in a tightly focused single ask. It could perhaps link to elements of government funding that we already know about - which seems to be a preferred route for government at the moment.

The shared Marine Paper has a number of thematic areas for investment. Of these the Maritime Test-Bed Idea was regarded as the core priority that crystallises a unique offer/solution for government. This also fits with the moves around Ocean Futures.

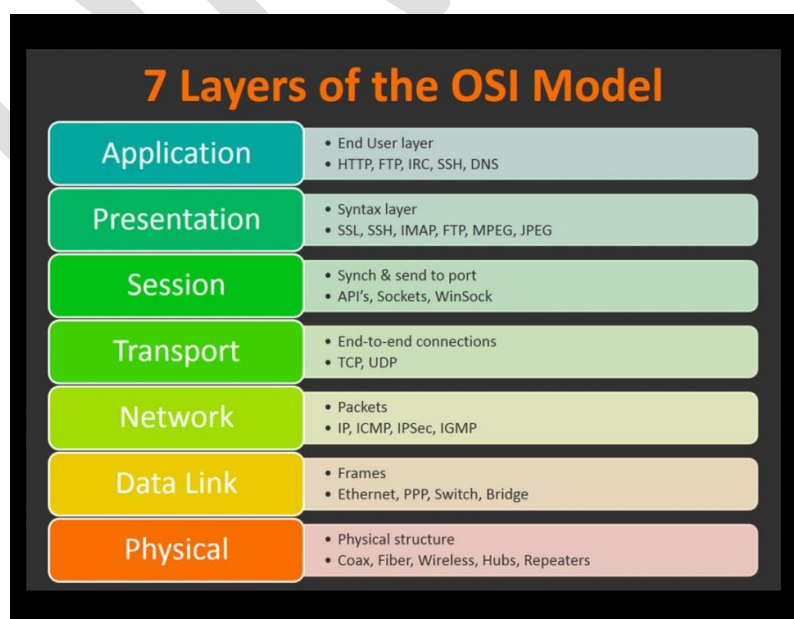
Embedded within this would be ideas such as 'Smart Ports' that could even link to other drivers including Net Zero and Freeport activity. These topics also form part of Geo-spatial Committee's priorities. The Integrated Spending Review also highlighted this area and its importance to Trade. Lord Zach Goldsmith and Rebecca Powell MP are potential conduits to take this forward and a collaboration with the Freeport in Cornwall could be sought.

Innovations around sustainable fishing and associated technologies could be linked to Smart Ports - given the major fishing ports in the Peninsula. We also have major research institutes exploring sustainable aquaculture and similar topics.

It will be important to have discussions with both the Offshore Catapult and the High Value Manufacturing Catapult.

Ultimately it must be clearly differentiated from other offers and deliver for the regional economy.

A potential model was shared subsequent to the meeting by Sally Basker and that to convey the various aspects of our R&D propositions we might use an equivalent of the OSI 7 layer model (pictured below). This could be an interesting to describe the connections between physical assets, data, applications etc.



Chris fed back on the Environmental Intelligence paper circulated which UoE have led on.

Again our work here must involve a really tightly focused single ask that a minister will feel ownership of. It will be more of a challenge to gain governmental acknowledgement of our undoubted globally relevant strength in this field given it is less about visible infrastructure. Therefore we need to commence raising the profile of what we can do in this region and hone this into a specific ask. Without political traction we will struggle to sell our bids and ideas. So we need to better sell our assets which include the two HEIs, PML, UKHO, Met Office etc.

Themes include climate emergency and natural capital - as a resource to support decision making - and this has potentially huge possibilities. There is already worth around £100bn globally. Further innovations are emerging around a Joint Centre for Excellence in Environmental Intelligence between the UoE and the Met Office linked to the Financial Services sector. Strength in Places may be a logical route for this - perhaps establishing a net zero innovation zone as a testbed for products and services in the region. Potentially located in Greater Exeter. There is overlap (also found with the Marine Paper) to current and planned new skills and apprenticeships programmes. The Western Gateway Accelerator has also involved in discussions.

Both of the Papers could involve the creation of Digital Twins. This has a lot of potential across both sectors. The two papers are certainly not discrete concepts in themselves.

ACTION ADRIAN DAWSON and CHRIS EVANS: Lead on taking these ideas forward to CSR with an emphasis on what is distinctive and gives a real sense of place. Evidence the investments that have already taken place and concentrate on the Maritime Testbed idea initially. Themes like Smart Ports would sit on top of the Maritime Testbed concept alongside sustainable fishing and logistics. This could then if successful be expanded to embrace related themes over time.

Update on Geoffrey Cox meeting

The Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, plus the Innovation Board Chair recently met with Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Cox QC MP. The meeting was positive and Sir Geoffrey was supportive of the expressed collaborative aims and ambitions of the HEIs and the IB.

AOB and new opportunities

None.

Date of Next Meeting

22nd September 11:00 - 13:00. Via TEAMS.