

Sure Ventures PLC:

UK Government AI Plan and Enterprise Capital Fund (ECF) Update

Sure Ventures is a London listed venture capital fund which invests in early-stage software companies in the rapidly growing technology areas of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality ('AR'), Virtual Reality ('VR') and the Internet of Things ('IoT').

The UK Government has now released its AI Opportunities Action Plan. This was presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the 13th of January 2025.

The action plan was clear and sets out to secure the UK's future with homegrown AI. It also highlighted how quickly AI has advanced, in such a short space of time. A small number of companies at the frontier of AI are set to have a disproportionate amount of global influence. The statement went on to say that the UK has a window of opportunity to secure and strengthen the Countries global leadership in AI. This will help protect economic security and help us be a part of the exponential growth of global AI.

The government is committed to building a cutting-edge, secure, and sustainable AI infrastructure. It wants to take forward the recommendations to expand its sovereign compute capacity. Computing needs could grow by at least 20x by 2030. This expansion is critical if the UK is to keep pace.

To seize this opportunity, the government will launch a new function with the mandate to strengthen the UK's sovereign AI capabilities by supporting national champions at the frontier of AI. The function will operate with agility and draw on wider government functions to partner with AI companies. Methods will include:-

- Leveraging AI Growth Zones to support partnered companies and ensuring that new compute capacity is utilised strategically.
- Exploring making available high-potential data sets for partnered companies, in coordination with the National Data Library.
- Supporting top AI talent to relocate to the UK to work with UK-based partnered companies.
- Helping to build relationships between partnered AI companies and the UK's national security community.

As the Action Plan sets out, the UK must maximise opportunities to crowd in private sector investment and facilitate close government-industry collaboration. The government will create AI Growth Zones (AIGZs), areas with enhanced access to power and support for planning approvals, to accelerate the build out of AI infrastructure on UK soil.

We believe that our Investment in the Sure Valley Ventures Enterprise Fund (ECF), founded by Barry Downes and Brian Kinane, which is a British Business Bank backed fund, sits right in the "sweet spot" of the Governments plan and we would like to highlight several portfolio companies that can assist the adoption and transformation of the UK's technological AI infrastructure:

Stylus (Learncycle Ltd)

Stylus delivers an AI-powered marking solution aimed at reducing teacher workload and addressing the recruitment and retention crisis in education. By automating the marking of paper-based assessments, Stylus significantly cuts down the time teachers spend on grading. The platform provides detailed, personalized feedback for students, enhancing their learning experience. Teachers can easily scan completed assessments, which are then processed by Stylus's AI to provide immediate feedback and follow-up questions, streamlining the evaluation process and helping to alleviate teacher burnout. This will provide much needed assistance and efficiency in a major UK Government spending area.

Purple Transform Limited

Purple Transform provides a cutting-edge SaaS platform, SiYtE™, designed to address data overload and enhance safety and security in large infrastructures like rail networks. By leveraging advanced AI and machine vision, the platform transforms existing cameras into smart sensors, delivering real-time alerts and predictive analytics. It seamlessly integrates with current IoT sensors and camera systems, optimizing operational efficiency and reducing costs for organizations managing extensive sensor networks. This technology has the potential to use AI to help revolutionise maintenance and drive efficiency across the UK's ageing infrastructure.

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Phinx Robotics Ltd

Phinx provides a decentralized edge computing software solution to automate warehouses by enabling real-time synchronization between robots from various OEMs, significantly enhancing automation efficiency. With 90% of warehouses still manual due to the high costs and complexity of current robotic options, Phinx addresses this by offering a cloud platform that allows 10x simpler robotic deployments with zero upfront costs. Their robot-agnostic system ensures seamless integration and operation of diverse robots without on-premise IT infrastructure, making it adaptable and affordable. Amidst labour shortages and rising e-commerce demand, Phinx enables autonomous robot operation with high flexibility, allowing easy swapping of different robot makes without software changes. For the UK Government's plan to work, its technology like Phinx Robotics that use advanced AI technologies, to allow robots to communicate with each other, to revolutionise and drive efficiency throughout both public and private sectors.

Director Gareth Burchell commented:

"The UK Government's AI Opportunities Action plan is a very positive development for a number of the Investments made by Barry Downes and Brian Kinane as founders of Sure Valley Ventures. AI technology is set to revolutionise most Industries throughout the world and the UK is one of the world's leaders in this space. The foundations laid and the support shown by the UK Government today, will resonate and assist innovators and founders across the nation for decades to come.

Stylus has the AI technology to assist with administration/marketing and allow teachers to focus on personalised teaching for their pupils, whilst also driving the cost savings and efficiencies the UK education system desperately needs. Purple transform can assist the rail, ports and general transport infrastructure across the UK to enhance safety, drive down costs and improve its services. AI technology will be vital in the evolution of industries such as robotics and Phinx is a great example of that. The UK Government's action plan is welcomed and provides support at a critical time in this new industry which is growing at a ferocious pace. The help can make a significant difference to the economic relevance of the country for years to come.

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