



Commercialising Scientific Innovation: British Geological Survey engaged bd3T to test market potential

The British Geological Survey (BGS), founded in 1835, is the world's longest-established national geological survey and the United Kingdom's premier centre for earth science information and expertise.

The British Geological Survey is part of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the UK's main agency for funding and managing research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. Their work covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic science.

Geologists and scientists at the BGS often develop innovations and scientific tools as part of their research, which once developed, may have commercial potential in associated industries or applications in other unrelated industries. One such example was a project to measure the energy required to crush rock.

Commercialise scientific innovation

Once developed, the Survey wanted to establish whether there was a market for the innovation and if there was a potential market, how to tap into it.

Mike Ackroyd, The British Geological Survey Commercialisation Manager says, "We needed to decide which would be the most appropriate way of exploiting this innovation either licensing the technology to a manufacturer or creating a spin-out company. Ultimately we are keen to enable others to commercialise our scientific innovations, create economic impact and generate revenue back for the taxpayer."



British Geological Survey
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

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"Patrick has given us a more pragmatic perspective on the demands of industry."

Mike Ackroyd,
British Geological Survey
Commercialisation Manager

About bd3T

bd3T identifies technology development opportunities to strengthen manufacturing organisations. bd3T are also experts in advanced manufacturing innovations, focusing on product and process improvements.

Attract partners

The BGS commissioned Patrick Eaton of bd3T to research the market and evaluate market demand, with the aim of attracting partners. The requirement was to get it in front of people so that the BGS could hear first-hand what the industry thought of the product. Mike Ackroyd says, *“It would have taken BGS a lot longer to identify potential partners, because we don’t necessarily have connections within the industry.”*

Research and evaluate market

Patrick spoke to and met with a number of his industry contacts. He researched what tools and techniques were being used to measure the energy required to crush materials, and then developed a report outlining the market potential, including potential commercial production costs. He also advised the BGS on industry requirements, where they should focus attention, and which elements were not as critical in meeting industry needs. *“Patrick gave us a more pragmatic perspective on the demands of industry.”*

Scientists deliver

Mike Ackroyd says that their challenge is that once a BGS researcher has developed something in pursuit of their science, they are generally obliged to move onto the next research project. The advantage of working with Patrick at bd3T is that he understands the nature of working with scientists as opposed to dealing with corporate engineers. *“Patrick understands how to work with our scientists and the additional pressures and time constraints they work under beyond commercialising their innovations.”*

Generating income

On Patrick’s suggestion, they looked at using the equipment to measure the energy required to crush other materials other than rock. As a result, the BGS have taken a piece of contract work for the equipment, which has generated money from the innovation. Patrick has also introduced the BGS to three industry representatives who have given useful feedback on the equipment and given them greater insight into the market potential. It has also opened the opportunity for one of the companies to take the equipment on license. *“Patrick helped us think a little differently.”*

Adding value to technological ideas

The benefit of working with bd3T says Mike Ackroyd is that Patrick has got the contacts, and has educated BGS scientists and innovators about the practicalities of taking a technological development to market. *“It has taught us to appreciate the usefulness of our ideas and that what we have is an idea – and that our idea is of value.”*

Benefits to the British Geological Survey

- Evaluate market potential of innovation
- Build relevant industry contacts
- Gain feedback from industry
- Find potential commercial partners
- Generate money from scientific innovation

About bd3T – more ...

bd3T identification of technological opportunities has a good history of strengthening manufacturing organisations. Specialising in supporting the manufacturing sector, bd3T is uniquely placed to help companies to successfully claim funds that reward effort under the R&D Tax Credit scheme, understanding the technical justification required and maximised, reasonable qualifying criteria.

Specialities: Leading the commercial success of manufacturing developments, including technical and commercial aspects for launching new products and services:

- > Engaging industry with better technologies for business strength, and helping them to utilise them.
- > Extensive experience of industry for growth and strengthening through clever technologies.
- > Devising fit-for-purpose designs, processes and proving procedures of materials and components.
- > Systematic Innovation, a problem solving technique based upon successful product and process R&D.