

# The ESA BIC Harwell helps start-ups elevate their business

## The challenge

With their award-winning innovative smartphone software, the team behind TravelAi had managed to overcome the odds faced by small startups to win top-calibre clients such as the BBC and BT. Yet despite these successes, the team still turned to the ESA BIC Harwell to make a transformation into a scalable platform technology with global ambitions.

Prior to joining the ESA BIC Harwell, TravelAi began as software called CarbonDiem, which measures carbon emissions from travel on a mobile device by detecting the mode of transport and route without the user having to enter any data or interact with their phone at all. The software is popular with large organisations because it helps to calculate emissions of employees automatically, which enables them to identify areas for improvement. Yet the team identified wider opportunities for its technology and also wanted to address its dependence on a sector exposed to political and economic change. Consequently, the company decided to widen its focus from carbon to transport, thus resulting in the birth of TravelAi in 2012 and entrance to ESA BIC Harwell.

## The solution

Joining the ESA BIC Harwell meant that the start-up company received support to transition from a single product to a

platform technology. ESA BIC Harwell also provided funding for TravelAi, which gave them the headroom to focus on redeveloping their strategic business plan.

## The benefits

By joining the ESA BIC Harwell, the company benefitted from increased opportunities to attend relevant networking events, providing the ability to connect with people from related industries and investor communities. The supportive business environment inspired TravelAi to identify a flexible business strategy that enabled expansion of their software through focusing on their core asset: technology.

The team's intellectual journey was complete as they came to realise that the transformation would allow their technology to have a far greater impact on sustainability than their CarbonDiem product could have achieved alone. As a result of the changes afforded by their time at the ESA BIC Harwell, TravelAi now focuses on generating big data on how transport systems are used, helping cities, citizens and industry make smarter choices based on how people move, saving time, frustration and money.



*"It was crucial for us to be able to channel resources provided by ESA BIC to fund the step from the initial carbon product and focus on conducting market research for a new business plan. On top of that, there were events held in Harwell that allowed us to connect with the kind of people that belonged to the market we wanted to move into."*

# Travelai

## About us

The ESA Business Incubation Centre Harwell (ESA BIC Harwell) provides entrepreneurs and start-ups with access to funding, technical expertise and business support to transform space technologies and systems into vibrant non-space businesses.

To find out how you can join us:

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Part of ESA's thriving Europe-wide network of Business Incubation Centres, ESA BIC Harwell is managed by the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and draws on both organisations' outstanding track record in business incubation – providing a unique

environment perfectly engineered to accelerate innovation and unlock commercial potential. Each year we support up to 10 start-ups working in sectors including healthcare, energy, agriculture, digital technology and defence.



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