

Project VIA – Valuing Intellectual Assets in Renewables Companies in the Highlands and Islands

Company Profile



Research Relay is an umbrella organisation for innovation in energy and marine related activities. Its key skills are in securing funding for and exploiting innovative ideas and in bringing people across communities together for greater effect and impact.

Research Relay grew out of the activities of Benesther, which was originally established on Orkney by Dennis Gowland in 1984.

There are now four organisations operating under Dennis's direction: Pontanima Lda, Fairwind Orkney Ltd, Northbay Shellfish Ltd, and Research Relay itself.

These organisations have different business models and are at different stages of development. Pontanima Lda and Fairwind Orkney are large scale renewable energy engineering development projects at planning and preplanning stages respectively, whereas Northbay Shellfish Ltd which operates independently and with the Orkney Lobster Hatchery, provides innovative marine hatchery developments involving energy and environmental recovery solutions. Northbay Shellfish and Orkney Lobster Hatchery are well established operations with production sites on Orkney. Research Relay is a consultancy operation offering EU grant proposal writing skills and project management for those projects that win grant funding.

Dennis Gowland joined Project VIA for assistance in understanding how the different intellectual assets (IA) within the businesses could be monetised. Working with the Intellectual Assets Centre (IA Centre) and the guidance of [Jackie Maguire from Coller IP Management](#), the valuable IA residing in each of the businesses became clearer.

It soon became evident that the innovations arising from the projects that Research Relay secures on behalf of its partners, provided assets in the form of nuclei for new businesses and growth. These assets were not however being protected and managed for Dennis's or Research Relay's full benefit and through a process of concentrating on a plan for each of the assets in turn, the businesses have evolved.

A new approach/process has been initiated to seek investment partners for a number of the research ideas that have been developed under the Research Relay umbrella.

The Fairwind Orkney initiative has been reactivated by securing a new Joint

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Venture partner with Future Electric. Out of that Orkney Wind Company Ltd has been now been formed and will be funded by the Joint Venture.

A boat survey business has been started and the first contract has been secured and is ongoing.

Two patent applications have been initiated to protect the early stage inventions – one has been filed and the second is in preparation.

An NDA has been signed with a potential investor for an Aqua Hive and the area has attracted interest from overseas. Research Relay has been awarded a contract for consultancy work with the Norwegian Lobster Hatchery.

A Memorandum of Understanding has also been drawn up for a Joint Venture between the UK and Brazil for Aquaculture and Fisheries (including the Aqua Hive). A bid document has been submitted via UK Government representatives to supply a package to Brazil and South Africa.

To enhance the returns on its investments and help with the costs of operations, Research Relay has continued to bid for and secure funding from the European Commission and is investigating the options for claiming UK R&D tax credits.

“Project VIA has opened my eyes for the potential for intellectual assets in my business. There were a lot of assets in the business that had not previously been identified as vehicles for profit. I have protected intellectual property and made more use of NDAs which I would not have done without the advice from Project VIA. I now have a much better understanding of the value of Intellectual Assets.” Dennis Gowland, Director, Research Relay