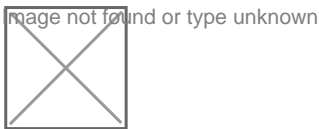


## West of England secures £3m for innovative 5G trial to boost business

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The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) has secured over £3m from the Government to test how the country can seize the full benefits of 5G and help businesses harness the power of modern technology.

WECA's 5G Logistics project programme will develop 5G products and services to support operations at Bristol Port and Gravity Smart Campus and demonstrate a smart and dynamic port environment. The project will focus on security, traceability, and real-time tracking of goods within and across extendable virtual boundaries – and between public and private networks.



It will demonstrate how 5G private network capabilities can offer efficiency and productivity improvements to the logistics sector and more widely, allowing real-time location tracking of individual items, improvements to road traffic management and replacing low value, manually-intensive processes with 5G enabled autonomous systems. The project offers the potential for such advances in technology to be implemented industry-wide; including at other ports in the UK, Enterprise Zones or other business parks.

The Government has backed the project with £3m as part of its 5G Create competition – which supports innovators exploring new uses for 5G to help improve people's lives and boost businesses.

West of England Mayor Tim Bowles said: "5G has the potential to revolutionise whole industries and economies, creating exciting new jobs and opportunities. I want the West of England to be at the forefront of this revolution.

"We have already led one successful trial and I'm thrilled that our plan to demonstrate how a smart and secure port could operate using the Internet of Things has been approved for funding by the Government. Backing innovation and the jobs of the future and bringing new

investment to the region by securing a Freeport are key parts of our plan for economic recovery, so this is a big vote of confidence in the West of England.”

WECA is leading a consortium of partners on the £5.2m 5G Logistics project – one of nine projects to receive government funding – which includes companies ADVA, Airspan, AttoCore, Bristol Port, Cellnex UK, Gravity, Maritime, Unmanned Life, Bristol City Council, Bristol University and Cardiff University. 5G is the type of cutting-edge technical innovation that the West of England is looking to embrace with its forthcoming Freeport bid.

The Government wants technology to form part of its wider strategy for the border. It aims to establish resilient ‘ports of the future’ at border crossing points to make the experience smoother and more secure for travellers and traders, while better protecting the public and environment.

Technology can play an important role in making freeports as accessible as possible for traders. The Government consulted publicly on the UK’s future border strategy last summer, seeking views on how it can make the UK’s border the most effective in the world. The opportunities presented by a technology-enabled border was a major theme of the responses.

Matt Warman, Minister for Digital Infrastructure said: “This trailblazing project – funded through our £200 million 5G trials programme – will explore how revolutionary new 5G connectivity could make our ports more efficient and secure as we attract major investment from across the globe post-Brexit. I look forward to seeing it in action.”

Steve West, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “Testing new ways of delivering services and harnessing this new technology could hold the key to a more connected, more advanced and sustainable future for the West of England.

“Super-fast and ultra-reliable 5G is expected to offer an increased level of connectivity and new opportunities for businesses, including better remote working, and is likely to bring significant business growth opportunities for our region’s tech sector.”

John Chaplin, Director of External Affairs and Special Projects at the Port said "The Bristol Port Company is proud to be a part of the team participating in this essential and exciting innovation project.”

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