

## The impact of business accelerators and incubators in the UK

A summary of the Nesta report, October 2019

## Context

There are an estimated 205 incubators and 163 accelerators in the UK. An estimated £20-30 million of public funding is spent on them per year.

Despite this, relatively little robust evidence exists regarding their impact.

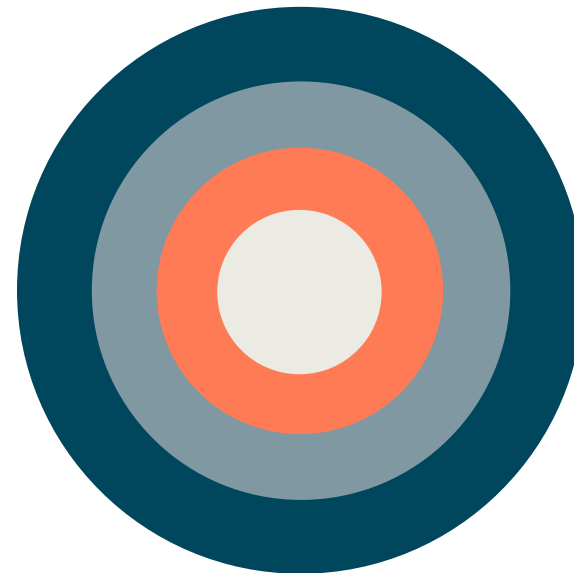
## Research aims

To explore how incubators and accelerators impact the startups they support and investigate which types of support drive this impact.

To examine how incubators and accelerators may impact the wider business ecosystems in which they belong.

## Key findings

- Most startups consider the contribution of the incubator or accelerator they attended to have been significant or even vital to their success
- Accelerator participation is positively associated with startup survival, employee growth, and funds raised
- Most types of support are positively associated with at least one outcome measure, but few interventions can be positively linked with multiple outcomes
- While some types of support appear to have a direct impact on startup outcomes, others seem to be mediated by changes in startup behaviour
- Accelerators have positive spillover effects on the wider business ecosystem.



## For public funders

- Invest in pilot programmes and further research to understand good practice, displacement effects and the longevity of the impact incubators and accelerators.
- Continue to investigate other types of intervention (eg tax credits, direct grants and network building) alongside incubators and accelerators
- Make data sharing obligatory for incubators and accelerators receiving public funding

## For incubators and accelerators

- Assess your own impact or share data with researchers to do it for you and use data-driven insights to optimise your programme design

## For Local Enterprise Partnerships

- Understand how incubators and accelerators can be part of your local industrial strategy and connect with other LEPs in order to share experiences and best practice when working with incubators and accelerators.

## Announcing our inaugural IAN annual survey

This survey aims to give an annual snapshot of the state of incubation across the UK, providing valuable public insight on the scale and impact of business incubators.

It will also allow us to improve our support and facilitate more structured introductions and exchanges between members.

The survey complements the primary recommendation of the Nesta report. It also helps us in developing a common evaluative framework for incubators, as called for by Megan (NTU), Chris (Nesta) and other attendees at the Nesta report launch.

Learn more and complete the survey:

[centreforentrepreneurs.org/incubator-survey](http://centreforentrepreneurs.org/incubator-survey)

## Contact us

- [matt@centreforentrepreneurs.org](mailto:matt@centreforentrepreneurs.org)
- +44 7551 170 102
- Centre for Entrepreneurs  
1 Mark Square,  
London EC2A 4EG
- [www.centreforentrepreneurs.org](http://www.centreforentrepreneurs.org)

## Follow us

- Twitter: [@CFEntrepreneurs](https://twitter.com/CFEntrepreneurs)
- [@CFE\\_IAN](https://twitter.com/CFE_IAN)