

News release

YES23! The future is bright with transformative ideas from talented teams

[The Your Entrepreneurs Scheme \(YES\)](#) is a global competition implementing innovative ideas to come up with commercial solutions to some of the world's most pressing health and sustainability issues.

In its 28th year, with over 6,500 having now taken part, ideas included a personalised wearable device for administering essential hormones for fertility treatment; a throat sweet to tackle bacterial throat infections; and a mobile app to study commuters' travel patterns to suggest eco-friendly alternatives.

Throughout the autumn, participants listened to leading industry experts about the ways they go about making a business work. In teams and with the support of mentors, they were then given the task of developing a hypothetical business and invited to pitch their idea to demonstrate its viability.

The best pitches from YES23 were invited to pitch at The Royal Society in London on Wednesday 31 January for a prize fund of £10k.

"One of the highlights of my year is meeting those taking part in YES", said chair of the judging panel, **Professor Malcolm Skingle CBE**, Director of Academic Liaison at GSK. "YES offers Masters, PhD students, researchers and technicians a safe and risk free environment to develop their commercial understanding - an understanding which is essential for their personal career progression and for the success of the UK economy.

"It's hard to believe some of the pitches aren't real business plans as they're so professional. Many participants go on to create successful companies, move into business development positions and become experts in licensing and patents. For those who don't, they have a better understanding of the innovation landscape. Congratulations to all those who took part in YES23!"

Winners of YES23

Overall winners SynchroTech, representing the University of Nottingham, pitched a personalised wearable device for administering essential hormones for fertility treatment.

The SynchroTech team said: "Participating in YES has been transformative for our team. The invaluable mentorship and immersive experience allowed us to not only develop practical skills in business, marketing, and finance but also boost our confidence. YES has been a catalyst for personal growth, fostering connections, and has opened doors to unforeseen career opportunities, extending our horizons beyond academic paths."

Team members: Ieva Sapjanskaite, Mercedes Vazquez, Clare Harwood, Lauren Brown and Max Armitage

Winners of Best disruptive food and drink business plan

Dynamic duo Nikki Tuck and Charlie Bradley, representing the Universities of Aston and Brunel respectively, won the prize for Best disruptive food and drink business plan, sponsored by the Food Consortium Collaborative Training Partnership, with Minu their vitamin-enriched cordial, derived from plant-based by-products, initially focussed on alleviating the symptoms of menopause.

Nikki and Charlie said: “YES23 has allowed us to consider opportunities beyond academia. The wealth of knowledge gained from our mentors has equipped us with the resources and experience to consider business management and strategy. We feel confident in our approach, considering costings, profitability and intellectual property. We have formed some fantastic connections.”

Charlie also won the social media prize for active engagement throughout the competition.

Winners of Best engineering business plan

The University of Nottingham’s GO₂ team won the prize for Best engineering business plan. The team’s mobile app utilises smartphone sensors and machine learning to study young commuters' travel patterns suggesting eco-friendly alternatives.

The GO₂ team said: “YES23 gave us the opportunity to assemble a diverse and creative team with a shared mission to contribute to the planet's preservation, shaping our journey towards a sustainable future.”

Team members: Harriet Cameron, Simon Castle-Green, Keziah Magit, Ilayda Macit and Jorge Llamas

Winners of Best environmental business plan

A group of researchers representing the University of Nottingham won the prize for Best environmental business plan with their UV-light based technology to prolong freshness, improve nutrients and reduce transport energy usage for post-harvest herbs.

The UVresh team said: “It has been an amazing and exciting journey for all of us to be participating in YES23. We have cherished the rare and special opportunities where we were given platforms to communicate with experts from different fields. Various new forms of cooperation between science and business has not only improved our knowledge in partnership, but also prepared us to face the potential challenges we might face in our future career journey. Again, thank you to YES for providing this marvellous opportunity!”

Team members: Tu Le, Ilma Amalya Qonaah and Yifan Dong

Winners of Best healthcare business plan and the People’s Choice Award

Scan-Sorter AI, representing King's College London, won the prize for Best healthcare business plan, sponsored by GSK, and the People’s choice award, sponsored by Indigo. The team pitched a solution to hospitals and NHS trusts that automatically detects bleeds in CT head scans whilst the patient is still in the scanner.

The Scan-Sorter AI team said: “We entered to gain the skills that aren’t usually part of our daily life and were interested in the entrepreneurial journey. It was a great opportunity to learn new skills. We learnt so much and by going through the process we had some positive feedback from

colleagues in the department and people who have gone through entrepreneurial schemes themselves to try and launch their meta-products. Just talking and developing our product to getting some feedback from other people is immensely useful.”

Team members: David Drobny, Alysha Chelliah, Siddharth Agarwal and Ben Jackson

Winners of Best sustainable agriculture business

The University of Reading team, TropiCultivar, won the prize for Best sustainable agriculture business plan, sponsored by Syngenta, with their vertical farming system for tree crops to produce fruit with improved characteristics and availability.

The TropiCultivar team said: “YES has given us the opportunity to explore the business world, gaining so much knowledge and experience through the process. We are truly grateful for the network we have built from this journey.”

Team members: Al Khatib, Iris Kabelo, Supasan Loketsatian, Kongkidakorn Thaweepanyaporn and Emily Parkes

Winners of Best consideration of financial planning strategy

A group of researchers from the NLD BBSRC DTP, LYXIR won the prize for Best consideration of financial planning strategy, sponsored by James Cowper Kreston, with their throat sweet containing bacteriophage-derived endolysins which tackles the symptoms and cause of bacterial throat infections without drug resistance worries.

The LYXIR team said: “YES allowed us to explore various aspects of business modelling. We also benefitted from being granted the freedom to be creative in product design, enhancing our team work and communication skills leading up to the final.”

Team members: Alex Faulkner, Utsav Das, Jennifer Readshaw and Niall Wilson

Winners of Best consideration of IP strategy

Imperial College London’s Flavio team won the prize for Best consideration of IP strategy, sponsored by Potter Clarkson. The team pitched an innovative plug-in syrup mimicking device that can fit to any drinkware, aiming to reduce sugar consumption in beverages.

The Flavio team said: “We found the ‘hypothetical’ concept of YES super smart. It pushed us to think beyond where we were originally at and consider different options, scenarios for a successful pitch. We have gained an in-depth understanding on many components of a business – including technology protection strategies, marketing, financial projections – with the insider opinions from weekly mentor sessions being extremely helpful to cement our know-how.”

Team members: Nicole Fitikides, Suchaya Mahuttanatan, Xiaotong Lin and Nicole Christou,

Winners of Best executive summary

PhyscoBio, representing the University of Oxford, won the prize for Best executive summary, sponsored by Reacta Healthcare. The team pitched their pioneering eco-conscious laundry solutions by harnessing genetically enhanced moss to create sustainable, DIY detergent at home.

The PhyscoBio team said: “YES has provided a highly collaborative and supported environment in which to creatively explore entrepreneurship.”

Team members: Laura Bailey, Konstantina Beritza, Joy Lyu and Emma Watts

Judging panel member, **Dr Anji Miller**, a Senior Business Manager at LifeArc said “It’s been fantastic to be involved in YES again The high-level buzz at The Royal Society was a true indicator that five months after starting their entrepreneurial journey, the cohort’s enthusiasm to expand their know-how, skills and network will continue way beyond YES23. I would encourage tech transfer professionals to get involved - share your experiences - you can truly make a difference to others pursuing this career path.”

Chair of YES, **Professor Simon Mosey**, Director of the Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Nottingham University Business School, said: “Congratulations to all those who took part in YES23! It’s been another incredibly impressive year with such a diverse cohort. Studies have shown that diversity of background leads to innovation and we’ve been privileged to witness the benefits of diversity through the breakthrough ideas showcased today.

“Thanks to our continued partnership with MI-TALENT, we welcomed another 16 technicians to take part – a hidden community but hugely valuable in the knowledge exchange process – they have brought a wealth of experience and new ideas giving different perspectives to the pitches.

“We were delighted to add food and drink to our list of challenges this year through the support of the Food Consortium CTP – they have huge ambitions to transform the food system, which mirrors the YES mission. The future looks bright for YES24!”

YES24

If you’re interested in participating or getting involved in YES24, [register here](#).

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