

# Scaleup Taskforce

Sahar Hashemi



Every three months since March 2017, the Scaleup Taskforce has come together to support and push for the development of policies that will foster growth and productivity in the UK economy. Our members come from global financial institutions such as the London Stock Exchange, banks and private equity houses, entrepreneurs, academics and LEPs. The Scaleup Taskforce doesn't only comprise a brilliant breadth of institutions, it is also a group of passionate, highly informed individuals who can provide government with a unique perspective on the growth challenges facing the UK.



When I was first invited to co-chair the Scaleup Taskforce, I was particularly struck by one statistic: that the UK ranked third in the OECD for startups but 13th for scaleups.

Yet our 35,000 scaleups are the gems in our economy. They are amazing businesses that should be celebrated and supported for their huge contribution to creating wealth and jobs, both locally and nationally.

We are getting better at identifying scaleups. This is one issue which we are very focused on. A great amount of work has already been conducted by HMRC on VAT and NI records to identify and understand better the patterns of scaling businesses in the UK. This is essential – scaleups can't be provided with the support that they need unless we know who they are.

This is not just a question of data science; local teams need to be able to use these insights to spot scaleups and companies aspiring to scale. It will be crucial part of the ongoing work of the Scaleup Taskforce to ensure that the use of this data can continue to highlight and better target interventions to businesses as they scale.

Support for scaleups has to be targeted. A general, broad-brush approach that tries to help all small businesses does not yield results. There is a real power that comes from focusing on scaleups and helping them get to the top. This is not just about helping young companies to grow exponentially. Scaleups are found in all sectors and are of all ages. To continue their growth, they may need to increase their exports, win more contracts, develop succession plans, or hire the right people. That means providing them with the



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right tools and a great level of service. Get this right, and we will create a climate of aspiration – one where more companies aspire to scale.

The delivery of targeted help to scaleups is an attainable goal that will deliver fast, fruitful results to the UK economy. These are businesses who are already on their way and who just need tiny nudges to achieve their full potential. The dividend of enabling scaleups is evident; a one per cent increase in their number creates a hugely disproportionate yield.

Delivering a consistent, high quality service for scaleups across the country is achievable so long as it is carried out at a local level to provide ownership and focus. The LEP and regional structures do help to make this manageable – there are, several hundred scaleups per local area. It's great to see how far some local areas have already gone in their provision of scaleup support. The work that the ScaleUp Institute has done through the Driving Economic Growth (DEG) course<sup>1</sup>, enabling local areas and Growth Hubs to share and learn the latest thinking about scaleups, has been exciting to see.

When I first started out in business, the label of entrepreneur was attached to just one or two people such as Richard Branson and Anita Roddick. Now, the idea that we are a nation of entrepreneurs has taken hold and many people call themselves entrepreneurs. The same needs to happen with scaleups. As 2019 is the year in which we can start Scaleup Week, we are creating that momentum.

<sup>1</sup> Supported by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK, Innovate UK and in 2018, the British Business Bank.