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### **SQW Group acquired by Management**

SQW Group, one of the UK's leading firms specialising in economic and social policy, innovation management and services to support scale-up SMEs, has been acquired by its management in a deal led by CEO David Crichton-Miller.

Comprising SQW, Oxford Innovation, Oxford Innovation Services and Oxford Investment Opportunities Network ('OION'), the Group's origins are in Britain's two ancient university cities: Oxford, through Oxford Trust founders, Martin and Audrey Wood, and Cambridge, through SQW's work in producing *The Cambridge Phenomenon*. It now employs over 250 people across regional offices in London, Oxford and Edinburgh. With sites from London to Belfast, via Oxford, Bristol, and Manchester, it is the leading innovation centre operator in the UK. It also provides business support to over 4,000 entrepreneurs and small businesses each year, raises investment capital for early stage innovative companies and is a leading provider of consultancy to local and national policy makers.

Commenting on the deal, Crichton-Miller said: "This transaction will enable the Group to continue its strong growth of recent years by driving revenues through the continued expansion of our core business and the development of new markets that build on our expertise in enabling accelerated, sustainable growth in SME's. We have a unique understanding of how to address the needs of these key drivers of the economy and remain dedicated to working with policy makers, funders and entrepreneurs, both to shape programmes and to deliver them for the benefit of the businesses and the economies they serve."

The acquisition, for an undisclosed sum, was supported by HSBC UK Bank plc, with legal and financial advice provided by Penningtons Manches LLP and Liberty Corporate Finance.

Sir Michael Lyons will remain as chairman of the new company

**ENDS**

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*Pictured above: CEO David Crichton-Miller with CFO Katharine Wright outside the Group's head office at Oxford Centre for Innovation*

#### **About SQW Group:**

SQW was established in 1983 and operates across the UK, Europe and the world. Specialising in public policy, it works with clients from the public, private and voluntary sectors to research, develop, implement and evaluate social and economic development interventions with particular expertise in the field of innovation, local and regional economic development, children and young people, and health. <http://www.sqw.co.uk>

Oxford Innovation is the UK's leading innovation centre operator, managing over 420,000 sq ft of office, meeting, lab and workshop space. It's network of 23 centres supports over 1,000 start up and growing companies with facilities and good quality business support in a variety of sectors and locations. The company has recently announced two new centres due to open in in Spring 2019; Wood Centre for Innovation in Headington, Oxfordshire and a partnership with the University of Essex for a new building on their knowledge gateway research and technology park in Colchester. <https://oxin-centres.co.uk>

Oxford Innovation Services delivers bespoke business coaching and advice, working with over 4,000 scale-ups each year. Over the last 10 years, Oxford Innovation Services has supported over 16,000 scale-ups to deliver 20,000 high quality jobs, raise £155m of early stage finance and create over £1bn of GVA uplift to local economies. <https://oxfordinnovationservices.co.uk>

Oxford Investment Opportunity Network ('OION') was established in 1994 as one of the UK's first angel investment networks. It connects qualified Investors with fast growing companies as well as investing itself via its SEIS/EIS OION fund. The past 10 years have seen OION invest, via its members and fund, in excess of £13million in over 160 companies. Since its 2014 launch, the OION fund has seen its average value increase by more than 200%. <https://www.oion.co.uk>