

INTERFACE POLYMERS

Changing the face of Polyolefins. Forever.



Key Facts

Start date: 2016

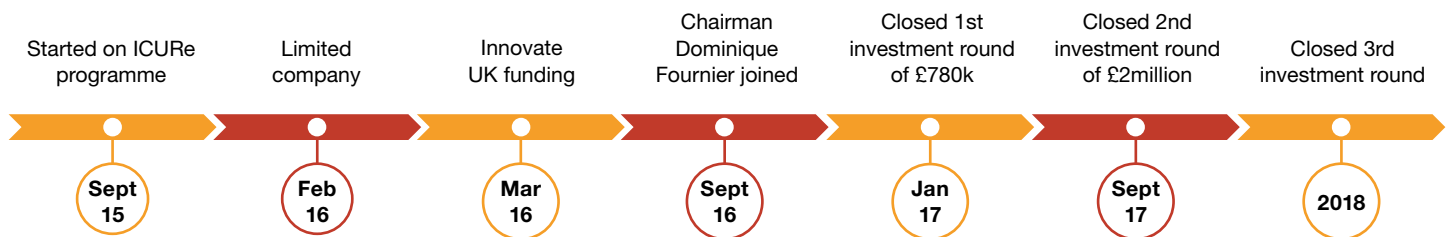
Location: Loughborough

Employees: 9 FTE, plus consultants from industry

SETsquared programme: ICURe

SETsquared support received: ICURe grant, events, market research, networking

Timeline of success



Interface Polymers is a spin-out from the University of Warwick. Its unique Polarfin® additive technology is able to modify the properties of common plastics to enable them to stick to and mix with other materials.

It's set to transform the performance and cost competitiveness of polyolefin-based materials across a wide range of market applications. There is great potential to add value across a diverse range of applications in the packaging, construction, agriculture and automotive sectors.

"The ICURe funding enabled me to undertake an intense period of market validation. I spoke to over 100 industrial contacts, that I hadn't previously known, a significant proportion of whom were very positive about our solutions."

"Up until that point I had been a junior researcher, inventing and developing Polarfins® in the university lab. ICURe was a big enabler in helping me to take

the invention beyond the four walls of the university and to start building a business to commercialise the proposition. It also allowed me to gain a better understanding of how my invention could be developed to satisfy unmet needs in the market."

"We went through the Options Roundabout in December 2015, with a very positive outcome. We were invited to submit a long-term business plan that forecast a turnover of £100m per annum after 7-8 years. Based on this, we were awarded the Initial Innovate UK grant – which was the key turning point. As a start-up, being first to market is absolutely vital. The grant was paid in advance quarterly over a 12-month period which meant we could move quickly, capitalising on the interest and momentum I had generated in the market validation phase."

"In 2017, we secured two significant private investment rounds. We used the funds to scale-up production to an industrial pilot level and to start determining where the additives work most effectively in lab and customer trials. In collaboration with the Universities of Loughborough and Warwick, we also won a second Innovate UK Grant under the Materials and Manufacturing initiative. The

aim of this project was to develop a new product variant and production process that will improve the performance of crop protection coverings. We named this project Polarfin® Green for obvious reasons".

"In 2018 we closed our third investment round, took on an additional two hires and won another significant Innovate UK grant to develop additives that allow higher value recycling of mixed plastic waste. We took the material from our first pilot production to customers across a wide range of applications and at that point we chose the five that we wanted to focus on. We then refined that down to the three that we're focussing on now; agricultural film applications, recycling of mixed plastics waste and new ways of making our materials more efficiently. The ICURe bootcamp described exactly this process of broadening, refining and repeating this process with the "double diamond" diagram. I still think about this now and it's heartening to see how this prediction from then has come true for us now".

Dr Christopher Kay
Chief Scientific Officer, Interface Polymers Ltd



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