

## WHAT IS A SCALE UP COMPANY?

There is growing recognition that the greatest positive impact for our economy comes not from the volume of businesses starting, but the proportion that are able to scale successfully – both nationally and internationally.

A scale-up has been defined by the OECD as a company which has grown 20% year on year for 3 years and which had 10+ employees at the start of the 3-year observation period. However, pretty much everyone working with the scale-up community applies their own definition – whether based on turnover, employee numbers, percentage growth or simply ambition and potential to scale.

## HOW CAN I FIND SCALE UP COMPANIES?

Visible scale-up companies are relatively easy to find – via the Scale-up Institute website. This dataset, powered by DueDil, lists those scale-up companies that complete full returns to companies house (i.e. turnover of £10M+ and 50+ employees). There is also a second category of ‘invisible’ scale-up companies – those that are growing quickly and either don’t yet complete full returns, or those who haven’t yet seen 3 years consistent growth (according to the definition). As Scale-up Enabler for the West of England, I believe that it’s important to consider those aspiring scale-up companies, not just those who’ve already met the (rather difficult to measure) bar.

## WHO IS ALREADY WORKING IN THIS AREA?

A wide variety of public and private sector organisations are running programmes and services and offering specific products targeted at scale-up founders and their companies.

The Scale-up Enabler, Briony Phillips, has mapped the scale-up support ecosystem here: <http://scaleupgenerator.co.uk/> and continues to champion the scale-up founder’s needs, test solutions to their challenges and signpost suitable support.

## WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING WITH SCALE-UP COMPANIES?

According to the Scale-up Institute, there are five key challenge themes for scale-up companies, those marked with a \* are frequently raised by founders in the Bristol and Bath.

1. **Leadership\*** - both professional development and engagement of advisors.
2. **Infrastructure/office space\*** - availability and affordability of space and suitable infrastructure.
3. **Access to Investment\*** - a need for greater angel and VC investment in the region; better understanding of alternative finance options.
4. **Markets** – access to both national and international customers and overcoming barriers to delivery.
5. **Talent and Skills\*** - availability of potential employees with the skills and talent, values and outlook required to work in a scale-up environment.

