



Press release

4 March 2016

Industry needs to collaborate more to attract the people it needs to deliver future built assets

Tideway CEO welcomes SkillsPlanner project tackling the skills gap, but industry needs to improve its data capabilities to make this happen

Andy Mitchell, CEO of Tideway, has welcomed the launch of an Innovate UK and partner-funded project intended to help businesses and training providers reconcile future construction skills supply and demand. Formally launched at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London, the EthosVO-led SkillsPlanner platform will use Open Linked Data to give greater transparency of future employment needs.

Tideway is the lead construction client partner on SkillsPlanner. In his launch keynote Mitchell described the challenges of delivering a mega-project under London that will require contributions from 20,000 workers during its design, construction and commissioning.

Need to collaborate

With research suggesting 44% of firms struggling to recruit people with the right skills, he said industry needs to collaborate more in order to attract the people it needs to deliver future built assets, describing SkillsPlanner as:

“a bold and ambitious two-year pilot ... with the potential to link employer demands for skills qualifications and behaviours to a responsive education and training sector who can train the individuals who can, and will, be the future of our industry”

Current data limitations

The other launch keynote was given by Sir Nigel Shadbolt, founding partner of SkillsPlanner technology partner Seme4 and co-founder of the Open Data Institute. He described how using Open Linked Data will give greater transparency on industry skills supply and demand, using the Tideway project and London boroughs as examples. But he identified limitations in much current data:

"The challenges will not be technical. Ultimately, they will turn out to be human, about how far we can persuade collaborators to actually provide data - data that is fit for purpose and that we can move from a very siloed world."

SkillsPlanner programme director Rebecca Lovelace said:

“It was an amazing evening. There was a real sense in the room of people truly understanding the potential of SkillsPlanner and fully agreeing with the principle of open collaboration. ... The number of organisations engaged with the project is a reflection of our belief that SkillsPlanner must be built collaboratively with its future users.”

SkillsPlanner was awarded £827k development funding from Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency. The data platform will allow stakeholders to share current and future employment needs, facilitating collaborative planning, training and brokerage to meet industry's requirements. Ethos and project partners will invest a total of £1.3m in the initial development phase.

– Ends –

Editor's notes

The [SkillsPlanner](#) project partners are: Association of Colleges, Camden Council, Ethos, Good People, Islington Council, Seme4, Tideway, Plymouth University, and Westminster Council. ([Partners overview](#)).

[Ethos](#) creates sustainable solutions to society's complex challenges. Ethos draws together social entrepreneurs, specialists, innovators and thought leaders to collaborate on projects that create positive social, environmental and economic outcomes.

[Innovate UK](#) is the UK's innovation agency. It works with people, companies and partner organisations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy.

Content from the launch event is available on the Skillsplanner website [here](#). Videos from the launch event are also available on the SkillsPlanner YouTube Channel:

- [The launch video](#)
- [Sir Nigel Shadbolt talking about SkillsPlanner and Open Linked Data](#)

A [podcast of Andy Mitchell's remarks](#) at the launch is available on Soundcloud.

SkillsPlanner is an inclusive and collaborative project. To find out more and get involved go to [skillsplanner.net](#).

For further information

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