

OXFORD INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY NETWORK (OION)

Press Release – 15 July 2009

OION Investment Network wins BBAA Angel Network of Year Award

Oxford Investment Opportunity Network Ltd (OION), Europe's leading technology business angel network, is celebrating after being named Angel Network of the Year at the prestigious British Business Angels Association (BBAA) Awards held at the world famous Belfry Golf Course Hotel near Birmingham.

The BBAA Awards showcase talent within the early stage investment community and the Awards Ceremony is a highlight of the business calendar, attracting senior representatives from business angel networks and early stage venture capital firms across Europe.

The OION Network, which is headquartered in Oxford but assists technology companies from across the UK to secure funding of up to £2 million, was chosen to win the Award from a shortlist that included Advantage Business Angels, Angels Den, Investors LLP, Central England Business Angels, Octopus Investor Group, South East Capital Alliance and Xénos.

Nominations focused on networks that had recruited new investors and increased awareness of angel investment in their region. The Judging Panel also looked for evidence that the Award winner had completed deals despite the current economic climate and used innovative methods to drive angel investing in its locality.

The OION Network was singled out as having achieved a record number of deals over the past year and for its unique co-investment programme with a major institution which attracted new investors to join the Network and raised awareness of angel investing in the press.

OION also launched a series of initiatives in support of early stage investment, which included training workshops to link new angel investors with experienced investors as well as special interest investment meetings. A Green Technology investment event brought together investors, global businesses and emerging companies developing green technology products and services, while a UK-China Showcase investment meeting provided a forum to develop Anglo-Chinese relationships.

The Angel Network of the Year Award was presented to Eileen Modral, OION Network Manager, by Nelson Grey of LINC Scotland, who sponsored the Award.

Ms Modral said: “We are absolutely delighted to have won this prestigious Award against strong competition from other business angel networks. We have enjoyed an excellent year of matching investors with high quality, innovative companies. Despite tough economic conditions, 21 companies raised £4.5 million from our investor members and this direct investment enabled them to leverage an additional £10 million from other sources.”

As the UK’s association promoting the importance of business angel and early stage venture finance, the BBAA, with the backing of the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, has recently launched a nationwide awareness raising campaign with the goal of increasing the pool of angel investors in the UK.

Anthony Clarke, BBAA Chair, said: “We congratulate the OION network for their achievement. These Awards provide an opportunity for us to recognise investors, networks and funds who have significantly contributed to the development of the angel and early stage investment market and to the successful growth of early stage businesses over the past year. We are especially delighted at the level of activity shown in the early stage market place in view of the considerable economic challenges experienced by the investment community this past year.”

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Editors Notes

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Photo available on request

Nelson Grey of LINC Scotland presents the BBAA Angel Network of the Year Award to Eileen Modral, Manager of Oxford Investment Opportunity Network (OION).

About Oxford Investment Opportunity Network (OION)

Oxford Investment Opportunity Network (OION) is Europe’s most successful technology business angel network that links investors with entrepreneurs seeking business development funds of up to £2 million.

OION holds monthly meetings where selected companies from across the UK pitch their proposals to OION’s members, which include over 150 active business angels, VCTs and fund representatives.

Many of these companies are university spin-outs and OION has strong links with universities with a reputation for spinning out high quality technology companies such as: Warwick, Oxford, Bristol, University College London and Imperial College London.

OION has two successful sister networks. Thames Valley Investment Network links investors in the Reading and Thames Valley area with companies in the general technology, media and green tech sectors seeking funding from £150,000 to £750,000. Oxford Early Investments helps very early stage companies raise funding from £25,000 to £150,000.

OION won the Best Angel Investor Award in the Spear's Wealth Management Awards 2008.

OION is managed by Oxford Innovation Ltd (www.oxin.co.uk), the UK's leading operator of innovation centre premises for growing companies, and sponsored by Laytons, Frank B Dehn & Co and NESTA. For more information: www.oion.co.uk

About the British Business Angels Association (BBAA)

The BBAA is the only trade association dedicated to promoting angel investing and supporting early stage investment in the UK. Each year private investors account for between £800 million and £1 billion of early stage investment in the UK: the single largest source of early stage capital in the country.

The BBAA works to create an eco-system to promote and support the early stage investment market, providing a forum for these groups to integrate and share good practice on new developments and trends in early stage investing, development of new services and tools to support the investment process. BBAA also acts as a voice to Government, stakeholders, business and the media to promote the interests and needs of the angel and early stage investment industry.

About the BBAA Awards

The BBAA Awards Ceremony was hosted by Stuart Rock, co-founder and editorial director at Caspian Publishing which publishes Real Deals, Europe's leading publication for the private equity industry, and Real Business. The Guest Speaker was Doug Richard, a former BBC Dragon and CEO of School for Start-ups, a provider of business training for entrepreneurs.

The Judging Panel included:

- Ken Cooper, who is responsible for Capital for Enterprise Ltd's equity investment programmes, including Enterprise Capital Funds.
- Justin Hill, Head of IP Prosecution and Opposition Practices at McDermott, Will & Emery.
- Colin Mason, Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Strathclyde and one of the leading international authorities on business angel investing.
- Dr Derek Pedley of the Environmental Knowledge Transfer Network.
- Roger Wood, Fund Principal of the Advantage Growth Fund and a director of Midven, a specialist venture capital company providing investment to fast growing SMEs with a focus on early stage and technology opportunities.

The BBAA Awards were sponsored by: Finance South East; Midven; Capital for Enterprise; LINC Scotland; Natural Environment Research Council and GLE Growth Capital.

For more information: www.bbaa.org.uk