



empowering innovators®

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

### EnviroSAR Ltd

**“Managing Wildfire Disturbance in Moorlands and Heathlands”**

Founded by Dr Gail Millin-Chalabi and Dr Ioanna Tantanasi

Academic Staff in Environment, Education and Development, Faculty of Humanities

Funding Received: £5,000 UMIP Innovation Optimiser

£5,000 Business Support from Satellite Applications Catapult

€10,000 worth of satellite Earth Observation data from the European Commission

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**Three words to describe your journey so far...** Exciting, Challenging, Enlightening!



Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Enterprise and your journey so far. EnviroSAR is a targeted service for peat moorland and heathland restoration and management using Copernicus Earth observation (EO) satellite data to deliver burned-area products. It aims to be the first national mapping and monitoring tool for UK wildfires and the EnviroSAR geoportal will understand patterns of wildfire occurrence, help mitigate their risks, target land management and reseeded, and reduce water discolouration and the associated costs. In October 2016, the team won the Copernicus Masters Sustainable Living Challenge, a prestigious European Earth Observation competition funded by the European Commission and its commercial partners. We incorporated in March 2017 and over the past 10 months, EnviroSAR has participated in the first Copernicus Accelerator Programme, obtaining training in customer validation and stakeholder engagement provided by the Satellite Applications Catapult at Harwell and TechStars training delivered at Daresbury Science Park. Top: Dr Gail Millin-Chalabi | Bottom: Dr Ioanna Tantanasi

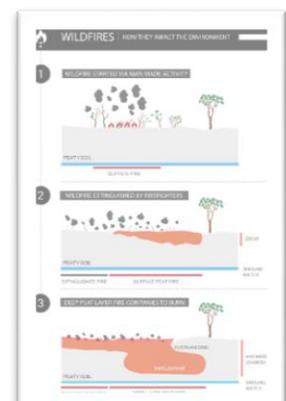


**How was your idea conceived?** The idea was conceived from Gail's PhD titled '*Radar Multi-Temporal and Multi-Sensor Approach to Characterise Peat Moorland Burn Scars and Assess Burn Scar Persistence in the Landscape*'. The key stakeholders and potential customers have been identified through Ioanna's PhD titled '*Adaptive Governance for Carbon Management: The case of the Dark Peak in the Peak District National Park*'. We both graduated as a Doctor's of Philosophy in Human Geography in July 2016.

**What is your company mission?** We save customers time and money by providing bespoke solutions for managing peat moorlands and heathlands using Synthetic Aperture Radar data and other Earth Observation data products.

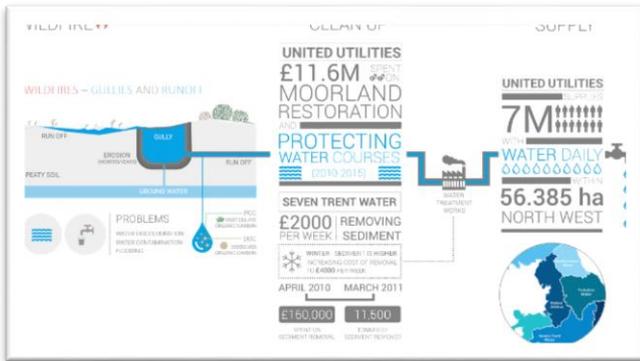
**At what point, did you realise that the idea had commercial potential?** We knew this had potential when we won the

Copernicus Masters Sustainable Living Challenge in October 2016. We also pitched our idea to judges at the Satellite Applications Catapult in Harwell and came close to winning the whole Copernicus Masters competition after pitching to judges in Berlin via a conference call. This success provided us with confirmation that the idea is of commercial value.



### What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea?

Our research results inspired us to take the first step and participate in the Innovation Optimiser Roadmap sessions. The proposal to the Copernicus Master competition during the summer of 2016 really helped to develop the idea. It made us think about the technical requirements, the type of data we'd need to use, the potential competition we'd face by comparing what was already available in the market, and the resource required including equipment and manpower to get the idea going.



### How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser?

We contacted Daniel Syder at UMIP with an Intellectual Property enquiry and he put the team in touch with Ellie Buckley and Laura Etchells who run the Innovation Optimiser. The Roadmap Sessions were delivered by Ian Brookes who was a very engaging and inspiring trainer.

**How did this engagement help you?** The Roadmap sessions and Innovation Optimiser helped us prepare to submit to the Copernicus Masters Competition. It allowed us to produce an engaging pitch and convince a panel of experts that our idea was worth supporting. There was also training on balancing academia and entrepreneurship, how to build entrepreneurial skills, turning your idea into a viable commercial proposition and how to launch a startup. All this training helped us work through the different stages to convert our idea into a business. It gave us confidence and practical techniques on how to present ourselves to customers and investors.

**Were there any standout moments from the Innovation Optimiser that helped propel your idea forward?** The session on developing a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) really made sense to our team. We realised it wasn't about developing a service separate from our customers and then convincing them to buy it. In our case the co-production and co-development is essential to our success moving forward. This is something that we're currently working on.

### What have been your major milestones and achievements so far?

We've had several milestones so far, the first being the completion of the Innovation Optimiser Roadmap Series in 2016. Following that, I went on to secure my PhD on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016 which was an amazing moment. We submitted our application to the Sustainable Living Challenge Copernicus Masters Competition on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and were invited to pitch to the Satellite Applications Catapult judging panel on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016. We won this which was great, as we went to Madrid to collect our award in October. An exciting moment was incorporating EnviroSAR in March 2017, closely followed by EnviroSAR featuring as Copernicus Masters start-up of the month. We've completed the Copernicus Accelerator Programme now and we're excited to move forward into the Momentum phase of the Innovation Optimiser.

**How has being involved with Entrepreneurial activity benefitted you?** It's provided the team with new perspectives to obtain funding other than using traditional research council routes, plus it's provided us with practical skills on developing a business. Entrepreneurial activity has allowed us to practice pitching EnviroSAR to a range of organisations and at high profile events such as; Satellite Masters Conference (October 2016), Innovate UK Conference (November 2016), Satuccino (December 2016) and UK Space Conference (May 2017).

**What future support are you looking for to progress your business?** The next steps for EnviroSAR are to increase our customer engagement and validate the service. We will continue with our product development and look to obtain further funding and investment. We are aiming to obtain future funding support from the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre or via funding sources from Innovate UK. The aim is to now develop our products and technical platform in co-development with our potential customers.

**Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser?** I'd highly recommend the Innovation Optimiser and Roadmap sessions. They give you all the essentials to get started as an academic entrepreneur. This was the first experience I had at becoming an academic entrepreneur and it has taken me on an interesting and unexpected journey after graduating from my PhD in July 2016. The UMIP team are very supportive and understanding as well as being approachable, and always willing to help and offer advice.