
SCALE · SPECIALISM · SURVIVAL · 2026 & BEYOND

Guernsey Reimagined

The Innovation Report

Drawn from over 45 industry leaders contributing more than 40 hours of insight across every sector, age, and background - an honest and unbiased diagnosis of the island's current innovation landscape, and a forward-looking view to 2030.

• OPENING THOUGHTS

Perspectives on 2030



Throughout our history, Guernsey's strength has been our ability to innovate through pragmatism, creativity, and adaptability – and in a time of global instability, that's an advantage we should seize with intent. I've long believed that our superpower is our connectedness: the way we bring people together across sectors and perspectives to solve problems collaboratively.

This report embodies that strength, distilling honest and invaluable insights from conversations with industry leaders, entrepreneurs, regulators, and innovators. It offers both a challenge and an opportunity – a reminder that even as the world changes rapidly, Guernsey is at its best when we face that change with confidence, clarity, and collective purpose.

Deputy Lindsay de Sausmarez, Chief Minister
States of Guernsey



Across the world, small island jurisdictions are navigating the same structural pressures: technological acceleration, climate volatility, and economic transition. Often framed as vulnerable and peripheral, many small jurisdictions in practice demonstrate a level of institutional agility, social cohesion, and policy responsiveness that larger states struggle to match.

Guernsey sits within this paradox. Political stability, regulatory credibility, and a concentration of talent provide the foundations for meaningful innovation. The question is not whether change will affect the island, but how deliberately it chooses to shape it.

The global system increasingly needs places where new regulatory models, digital governance tools, and economic transition strategies can be piloted safely. Larger economies often struggle to experiment without political turbulence. Guernsey has the capacity to move faster – and to lead, not follow.

James Ellsmoor, CEO
Island Innovation



Contents

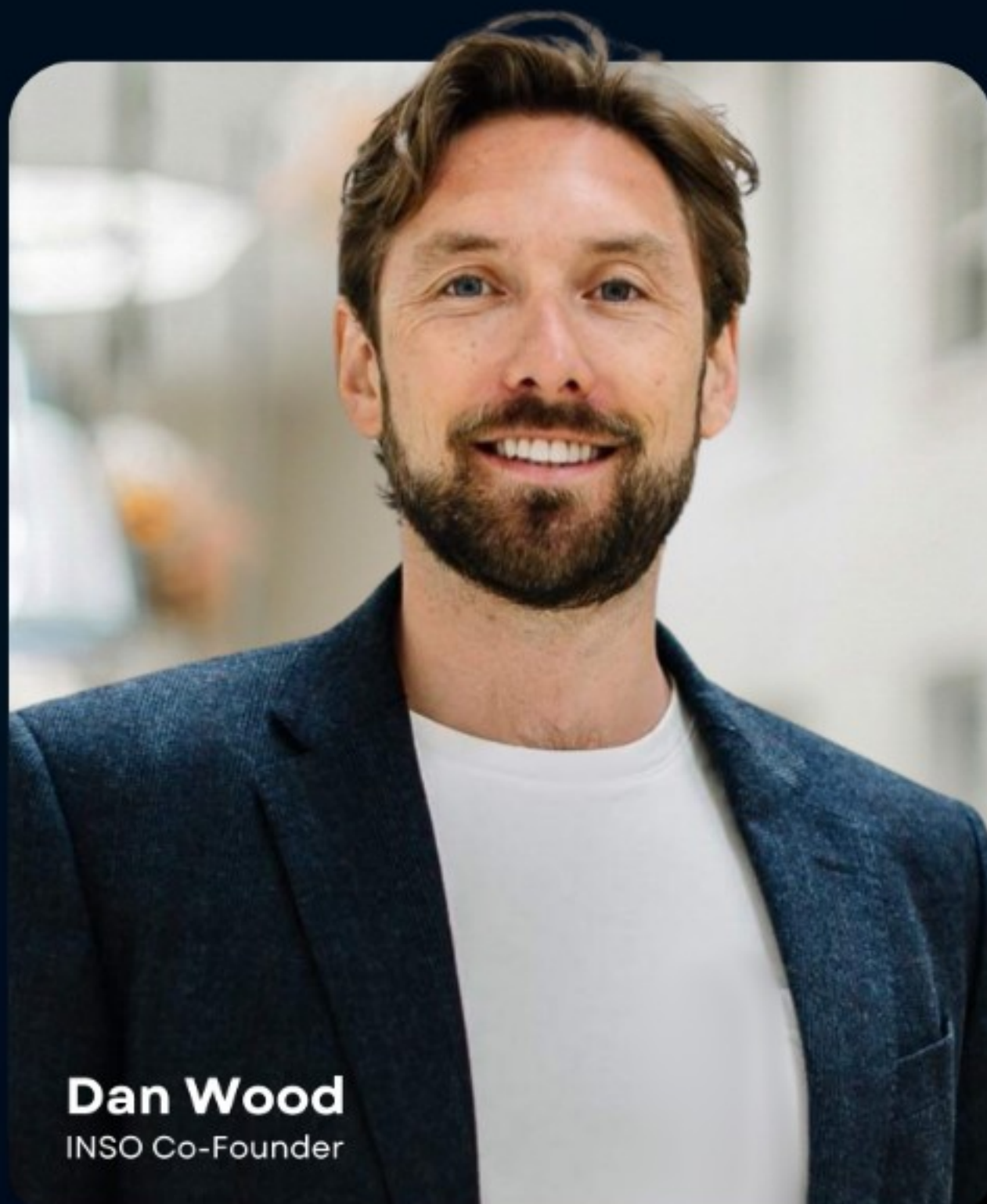
2	Forewords
5	Introduction
6	Executive Summary
7	Key Findings & Recommendations
8	Special Thanks
9	Purpose & Methodology
10	Island-Level Findings
11	The Present State & Moat
12	Vision & Risks (to 2030)
13	Sector Deep Dives
14	Financial Services & Digital Finance
15	Digital, Physical Infrastructure & Data
16	Talent, Housing & Skills
17	Government, Regulation & Ecosystem Alignment
18	Real Economy Sectors & Lifestyle Infrastructure
19	The Roadmap
20	The 2026–2030 Roadmap & Recommendations
21	Phase 2
22	Conclusion
23	Acknowledgements





Introduction & Executive Summary

- INTRODUCTION



Dan Wood
INSO Co-Founder

Introduction

This report is concise and direct. No corporate jargon. No committees writing for the sake of appearances. No empty promises.

Drawn from over 45 industry leaders contributing more than 40 hours of insight across every sector, age, and background, the Guernsey Innovation Report offers an honest and unbiased diagnosis of the island's current innovation landscape, and a forward-looking view to 2030.

True innovation demands both reflection and imagination: understanding where we are and how we arrived here, while daring to envision what could be next and identifying the steps to bridge the two. It also requires humility, recognising that both our vision of the future and the actions required to get there, will evolve as the world shifts around us in unpredictable ways.

That's the essence of innovation: the balance between practicality and possibility, certainty and chaos, reactivity and proactivity. No system endures unchanged, which means innovation is not optional - it's the ongoing game of staying relevant. For small island states like Guernsey, it's also a matter of survival and growth.

In a world defined by accelerating AI adoption, geopolitical tension, resource competition, the race for space, a creaking financial system, changing globalisation patterns, and evolving demographics, now is not the time for complacency or rhetoric. It's the time for decisive, coordinated action - because amid all this uncertainty, two things remain certain:

2030 is closer than we think. And the world will be very different when we get there.

A Note on How to Interpret This Report

This document contains difficult findings because honest diagnosis is the prerequisite for effective action. It is important to note that this report is not meant to go into exhaustive depth on every single issue, but rather to serve as a barometer for the island's current innovation climate. The same candour that may feel uncomfortable in places is precisely what makes this report useful. These findings are not a critique of government intent - the States of Guernsey carries one of the hardest governance briefs in Europe, managing a sovereign economy with the resource base of a mid-sized town. The ask is not for government to do more, but for the system around decision-making to be redesigned so that good intent converts into faster outcomes.

For full transparency, INSO was neither paid nor commissioned to produce this report. As a Guernsey-headquartered company, we care deeply about the Island's future and are committed to playing our part in shaping it. This report reflects our belief in leading by example - taking proactive steps toward a better, more sustainable future for everyone.

We hope it inspires others to do the same.

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

The time for theoretical discovery has passed; Guernsey is now in the deployment phase. This report synthesises insights from the island's most critical decision-makers – including the GFSC, the ODPA, Barclays, Butterfield, JTC, KPMG in the Crown Dependencies, Carey Olsen, Walkers, Grant Thornton, Ocorian, Skipton, Sure, JT, Guernsey Electricity, Aurigny, FNB, Bank Aston, Resolution IT, The Quarry, and the Young Business Group.

Across every sector, the conversations converged on urgent structural realities: the rapid adoption of AI, the inevitability of blockchain and asset tokenisation, and the urgent need for infrastructure automation. The data reveals a two-speed ecosystem: global firms are innovating by absolute necessity, while much of the local economy innovates by permission, bottlenecked by legacy systems and structural decision-making processes that struggle to match private sector pace.

This report was developed independently of the Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 ("Driving Growth for Guernsey"), jointly commissioned by the States of Guernsey, the GFSC, Guernsey Finance, and GIBA with the support of Oliver Wyman. The convergence between both reports' findings – across talent constraints, digital finance, the urgency of execution, and the need to address housing as a binding economic constraint – reinforces the credibility of both diagnoses. We welcome the Growth Strategy as a vital and complementary piece of work.

Five Headlines from the Research

- **A Two-Speed Economy is Emerging:** Global brands leverage international tech stacks, while local firms struggle with legacy IT and foundational data issues.
- **From Administration to Assurance:** AI and automation are eroding margins in traditional "billable hour" administration; the future value lies in governing and assuring automated systems.
- **Data and Regulation are the New Assets:** Privacy and governance are not brakes, but "seatbelts" – the essential conditions that make high-speed digital innovation investable.
- **The Demographic Pincer:** Squeezed by housing costs, ambitious 20–35 year-olds are leaving, threatening to leave Guernsey as a place with capital and laws, but no builders.
- **Regulation as a Product:** Guernsey's light-touch, proportionate fund and fiduciary regimes are prime assets for capturing the tokenisation and stablecoin markets.

• KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The 5 Core Challenges & Suggested Actions



01

The Institutional / Entrepreneurial Gap

How might we connect institutional stability with the entrepreneurial class's drive to execute?

Maximise the Digital Sandbox: Leverage the GFSC Digital Sandbox to host global innovation projects. By creating a regulated, open-minded testbed, Guernsey can evolve from a sandbox into a global scale-up destination.

02

The Global vs Local Tension

How might we encourage the island to look beyond its borders while strengthening its local culture?

Pan-Channel Island Innovation Competition: Launch a funded competition to prototype real-world solutions sourced directly from local innovators.

03

The Youth Brain Drain

How might we motivate young people to stay in Guernsey and invest their energy in the island's future?

Innovation Education Programme: Deliver innovation based problem-solving frameworks directly into secondary schools. Equipping students with these tools fosters capability and belonging, reducing brain drain through empowerment.

04

The Culture of Complacency

How might we build a culture of healthy competition and innovation across all ages, backgrounds, and sectors?

Redefine Community Events: Move beyond traditional networking toward hands-on, outcome-focused events that connect people through shared purpose and collective progress.

05

The Jurisdictional Silos

How might we dismantle long-standing silos between sectors and islands so that ideas, capital, and talent move freely?

Pan-Island Innovation Network: Deepen collaboration across Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney and other island jurisdictions by creating a network of innovation scouts to connect the islands to broader global opportunities. Guernsey can lead this pan-island initiative and position itself at the heart of global innovation.

A Special Thanks To:



• PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The Guernsey Innovation Report 2026–2030 serves as the island's first consolidated innovation roadmap. This document is designed to bridge the gap between high-level ambition and on-the-ground reality, providing both a quick-scan overview for the general reader and deep, actionable intelligence for the organisations that will shape the island's next five years.

The Reframe: What is Innovation?

To build a functional roadmap, we first needed to redefine the scope and meaning of "innovation". Too often, the term is lazily reduced to basic tech adoption or merely purchasing new software. We approach innovation differently: it is the rigorous process of asking the right questions and solving the right problems. It is an active capability that transforms companies, builds resilience, and drives economic substance.

However, good questions are meaningless without the resources to act on the answers. As one anonymous technology respondent bluntly put it:

"If innovation is a stated priority, it must be backed by appropriate public funding and long-term commitment."

Methodology

To ensure this report carries genuine weight and credibility, we avoided the trap of relying solely on generalist, high-level surveys. Instead, we grounded our findings in lived experience and deep domain expertise.

- We conducted over 40 hours of in-depth, sector-relevant interviews to capture the nuanced realities that only industry operators are qualified to provide.
- Our data reflects a wide demographic spread, gathering unfiltered insights from respondents ranging from 19 to 70+ years old.
- We deliberately synthesised qualitative narratives to uncover structural constraints – such as housing costs, skills gaps, and decision-making velocity – that pure quantitative data often misses.

By curating expert knowledge directly from the front lines of Guernsey's economy, this report delivers an honest diagnosis of the island's current trajectory. As hospitality and healthcare respondent Charlie J Sinclair-Stott accurately observed:

This roadmap is designed to shift the island from comfortable comparison into active, globally relevant competition.

"Guernsey likes to compare, but it doesn't much like to compete."

– CHARLIE J SINCLAIR-STOTT





Island-Level Findings: Sentiment, Moat & Risks

• ISLAND-LEVEL FINDINGS

The Present State: Optimistic Intent vs. Frustrated Execution

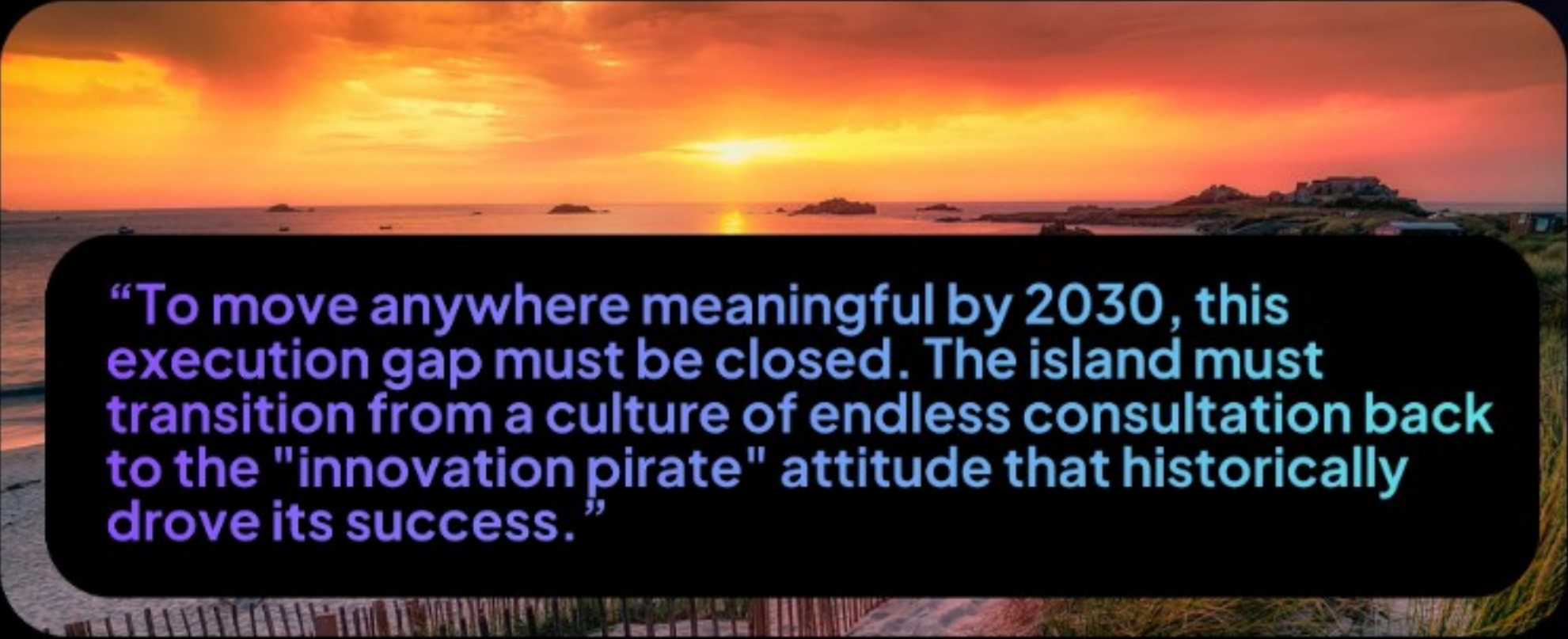
Guernsey is currently standing on a "burning platform". While past successes in the finance sector continue to provide a sense of comfort, respondents across the board indicate that the underlying economic foundations are becoming increasingly brittle. The island is currently caught in a cycle of what respondents characterise as "optimistic intent" repeatedly blocked by "frustrated execution".

When asked to rate the current innovation sentiment out of 10, the average respondent score landed solidly in the 6 to 7 range. However, this relatively positive outlook masks a far more concerning metric: when asked to rate the island's risk of complacency, scores consistently spiked to 8, 9, or even 10 out of 10.

Louis Jooste captures the root of this complacency perfectly, noting that Guernsey "sometimes risks being too comfortable with its own success". He points out a critical psychological barrier:

"There is also an unspoken tension between protecting what already works and making the harder, sometimes uncomfortable changes needed to attract talent, modernise infrastructure and support new business models."

The language of innovation is omnipresent in Guernsey, but the mechanics of change have seized up. Respondents expressed deep fatigue with a "talking shop" culture, frequently citing a "death by committee" approach to problem-solving. The gap between high-level ambition and on-the-ground delivery is widening, driven by a systemic tendency to extend consultation beyond the point of utility. As one respondent noted, "Inaction is so economically damaging" and it "stems from indecision".



"To move anywhere meaningful by 2030, this execution gap must be closed. The island must transition from a culture of endless consultation back to the "innovation pirate" attitude that historically drove its success."

The Three-Layer Moat: The "Boutique of Trust"

Guernsey's three-layer moat starts with its unique coherence – a tight-knit community where senior decision-makers are unusually accessible and trust runs deep. This controlled scale enables the kind of direct conversations that larger places can only dream of. Yet these strengths must fuel outward growth, not just comfortable self-reliance. As one anonymous technology respondent bluntly put it:

- **The Soft Moat (Community & Access):** "Guernsey operates as a controlled microcosm with manageable scale and unusually direct access to senior decision-makers". Cyrille Joffre, CTIO of Sure, highlighted that the small community fosters a high degree of trust. He drew parallels to the concept of "Blue Zones", suggesting that Guernsey's tight-knit community and sense of purpose can be leveraged as a unique lifestyle and innovation proposition.
- **The Hard Moat (Safe Scaling & Regulatory Agility):** Guernsey's most powerful asset is its credible yet approachable regulatory environment. This creates a highly attractive dynamic for "Safe Scaling."
 - ➔ **The GFSC's Pro-Growth Stance:** William Mason, Director General, emphasised that the regulator explicitly welcomes AI and rejects "the notion that there needs to be a human in the loop for every micro decision it takes".
 - ➔ **The ODPA's "Seatbelt" Philosophy:** Brent Homan frames data protection as the "seatbelts and safety laws of our info-driven era". Privacy as a core feature establishes deep trust as a competitive advantage.
- **The Counter-Moat (Isolation):** A critical vulnerability is that this moat can easily become an island of isolation. Respondents warned that Guernsey has a tendency to look inward.

- VISION & RISKS (2030)

The Small-System Testbed

The Vision: A Global Innovation Laboratory

Looking toward 2030, the progressive vision for Guernsey is to become a globally relevant "small-system innovation laboratory". Because of its condensed scale, strong institutions, and regulatory autonomy, the island is perfectly positioned to pilot solutions across finance, digital governance, and climate tech that would be too complex to test rapidly in larger nations.

The Core Risks: The Constraints on 2030

Achieving this vision, however, is severely threatened by three interconnected structural risks:

- **Housing & The Binding Constraint:** The lack of affordable housing is universally cited as the primary bottleneck to economic mobility and innovation. Susan Fouquier, CEO of Skipton International, stated clearly that "supply-and-affordability pressures impact Guernsey's ability to attract and retain talent". As one young respondent warned, "Whatever momentum is started is going to be blocked by the one key issue... young people can't afford to live here".
- **Brain Drain & Youth Disempowerment:** Sophie Bonakdar of the Young Business Group confirmed a growing shift: Young people increasingly feel limited by traditional career pathways and are seeking broader opportunities, often overseas. Addressing this challenge is crucial to retaining talent and strengthening Guernsey's long-term innovative capacity.
- **Decision Velocity & Systemic Complexity:** Even with strong industry appetite and regulatory support, the government apparatus is viewed as a massive friction point. Respondents cited a "need to inject greater commercial agility into the States Assembly." Bureaucracy remains the biggest risk to the island's future.



The 2030 Synthesis: The Collision of Vision and Reality

Ultimately, the vision of a "Small-system testbed" cannot exist in a vacuum; it is entirely dependent on whether Guernsey can fix its foundational cracks. These elements present the island with a stark and unavoidable choice.

If the current pace of decision-making continues to delay meaningful action on the housing crisis, the "brain drain" will accelerate, stripping the island of the very human capital required to operate its "Boutique of Trust." In this scenario, the island's competitive moat dries up, and the economy drifts into managed decline.

Conversely, if leadership can cut through the bureaucracy and treat housing and talent retention as core innovation metrics, Guernsey has the regulatory agility, wealth, and community trust to outmanoeuvre much larger jurisdictions. The road to 2030 will be defined by which force ultimately wins: the island's optimistic intent, or its structural friction.



Sector Deep Dives

• SECTOR DEEP DIVE

Financial Services & Digital Finance

Guernsey's financial services sector remains the undisputed engine of the island's economy, but it is currently operating in a stark "two-speed" reality. Global institutions are leveraging international tech stacks while smaller local players are increasingly constrained by legacy systems.

The Shift to Granularity: The End of the "Sticky" Fund

For decades, Guernsey's financial moat has been built on administering massive, closed-ended institutional funds. This model relied heavily on manual processing and traditional 10-year lock-in periods. According to industry leaders, this era is rapidly coming to an end. Matt Brehaut of Carey Olsen highlights that the future of funds is "granular" – driven not just by massive institutions, but by High Net Worth individuals who demand immediate liquidity, subscriptions, and redemptions.

These modern investors expect their assets to be represented as tokens in digital wallets, managed seamlessly via mobile applications. This shift demands a total reimagining of fund administration. To survive in this granular world, administration must be highly automated, meaning that blockchain integration and smart contracts will shift from being "fringe" innovations to absolute operational necessities.

Tokenisation, Stablecoins, and the Regulatory Pivot

The GFSC has decisively moved from a historically "conservative" stance on virtual assets to an actively pro-growth agenda. The launch of the Digital Finance Consultation Paper in December 2025 signalled a vital rethink, aiming to capture the institutional wave of crypto and tokenisation.

Chris Hutley-Hurst of Walkers notes Guernsey's greatest opportunity lies in becoming the "stablecoin capital of Europe". Stablecoins – asset-backed tokens tied to fiat currency or government paper – offer an incredibly mobile vehicle for rapid, frictionless settlement outside of traditional banking rails. Because Guernsey can draft and pass rules much faster than larger jurisdictions, its regulatory agility allows it to capture this niche before heavier, slower European frameworks are finalised.

This trajectory is further validated by the recently published Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035, which explicitly identifies tokenised securities and stablecoins as a strategic priority.



RegTech and the "Race for Scale"

The burden of compliance is heavier than ever, driving a massive "race for scale" across the fiduciary and advisory landscape. Kobus Cronje of JTC Group emphasises that small players simply cannot afford the technology and compliance costs demanded by modern regulators without aggressive consolidation. However, this challenge breeds a significant RegTech opportunity.

Guernsey is already seeing the rise of locally headquartered, technology-first financial institutions specialising in AI-enabled AML and transaction monitoring. Jay Goss of Aston captures this strategic pivot: "While Guernsey is not attempting to compete as a mass fintech hub, it is increasingly positioning itself as a high-quality testbed for institutional-grade innovation – where new models can be deployed at smaller scale, under close regulatory engagement, and then replicated internationally".

As David Alexander of KPMG in the Crown Dependencies points out, the audit and compliance functions are moving from traditional "sampling" to AI-driven "100% testing". By integrating advanced RegTech, Guernsey can automate low-value compliance tasks and elevate its workforce to focus on high-value, judgment-based advisory roles.

Ben Hill of Ocorian challenges the industry's rush to pure automation, noting that "automation is an enabler for our clients and our teams, not a replacement for judgment." Where complexity arises, it is experienced professionals who make the difference through the application of their expertise.

- **SECTOR DEEP DIVE**

Digital, Physical Infrastructure & Data

A modern innovation economy requires digital connectivity, physical capacity, and software governance working in harmony. While Guernsey's foundations are surprisingly strong, integration and public-sector adoption suffer from a distinct lag.

Digital Connectivity: The "Pipes are Strong"

Despite local complaints, Guernsey's core digital infrastructure is a massive competitive advantage. Cyrille Joffre (CTIO, Sure) notes that a recent £48 million mobile network investment gives Guernsey a higher base station density and better coverage than many UK areas. The island's 5G rollout will provide highly reliable "slices" tailored for niche industrial IoT applications.

Sara McCarthy (COO, JT Group) notes that the real constraint is organisational readiness. JT's investment in advanced, IoT-ready connectivity means "the island is technically ahead," but ageing on-prem systems slow down adoption. "The network isn't the barrier," she says. "Unlocking the value now depends on helping organisations close the readiness gap." Compared with Jersey's faster, pilot-friendly environment, Guernsey's cautious approach creates an adoption lag rather than a capability gap. Still, McCarthy sees momentum in finance, retail, and public services as regulatory pressure pushes firms toward modernisation.

Olly Duquemin (CEO, Resolution IT) warns this creates dangerous "technical debt". Legacy firms risk being outmanoeuvred by agile startups built on modern tech stacks. Yet, Guernsey's strict regulation offers a hidden advantage: it forces automation.

Energy Infrastructure: The Smart Future

Alan Bates, CEO of Guernsey Electricity, warns that electrification of transport and heating could drive peak demand from 94 MW today to 157 MW by 2050. Total annual consumption is projected to nearly double to 625 GWh. Bates frames the power grid as either a significant "enabler or bottleneck" for Guernsey's digital economy.

To prevent energy capacity from inhibiting innovation, GEL is modernising the grid toward a smart infrastructure approach - combining imported low-carbon energy with local renewables and balancing plant, behavioural changes via flexible tariffs, and most critically, securing a second interconnector to France by the early 2030s.

The additional interconnector is an absolute necessity for the island's low-carbon energy resilience. If this investment is delayed by political hesitation, decarbonisation will stall, and the grid could risk placing a hard ceiling on Guernsey's economic and technological growth.

Transport & Physical Connectivity

Philip Saunders of Aurigny points out that as Guernsey positions itself as an ideal hub for digital transformation, physical airlinks are the lifeblood of inward investment.

Physical transport is under intense pressure to modernise. Aviation and supply chain logistics must innovate rapidly to meet the island's ambitious environmental objective of a 57% reduction in carbon emissions. Furthermore, the high cost of living and the housing crisis dictate that Guernsey cannot simply import thousands of new workers; the island must bring in highly specialised expertise on a rotational or consulting basis. Ensuring that air travel is reliable, integrated with EU/UK markets (easing pricing challenges on essential goods), and environmentally progressive is just as crucial to the innovation ecosystem as laying fibre-optic cables.

Data Governance: The "Safe Scaling" Dynamic

The GFSC and the ODPA working in tandem create the ultimate "Safe Scaling" environment for institutional technology. Director General William Mason explicitly welcomes AI and has publicly rejected the notion that there needs to be a "human in the loop for every micro decision it takes".

Brent Homan of the ODPA champions rigorous data privacy as the foundation of enduring innovation. He describes data protection not as a brake, but as the "seatbelts and safety laws of our info-driven era". Just as seatbelts allowed automobiles to be mass-adopted safely, stringent data governance allows AI and digital services to scale fast without collapsing consumer trust.

Together, the GFSC's mandate for high-speed automation and the ODPA's insistence on ironclad data protection form a perfectly balanced "Boutique of Trust." Guernsey's ability to offer infrastructure that is simultaneously robust, agile, and exceptionally safe is a world-class strategic moat.

• SECTOR DEEP DIVE

Talent, Housing & Skills

Innovation is fundamentally a human endeavour. Regardless of how advanced Guernsey's digital policies become, they will fail if the island cannot house, attract, and upskill the talent required to execute them. In 2026, the local ecosystem is facing a critical human capital crisis.

Housing: The Binding Constraint

In almost every deep-dive interview, housing emerged not just as a social issue, but as the absolute "binding constraint" to the island's economic innovation. Susan Fouquier of Skipton International emphasised that supply-and-affordability pressures directly undermine the island's ability to attract and retain the next generation of talent. High property prices and exorbitant rental costs mean that ambitious young professionals are effectively priced out of building a long-term life on the island.

This creates a severe "brain drain". Sophie Bonakdar of the Young Business Group notes: Housing affordability remains a critical barrier for young professionals. Many feel compelled to explore opportunities overseas.

This lack of entrepreneurial infrastructure severely damages the island's brand for fresh enterprise.

Warren Mauger of The Quarry points out that high costs for talent and office space are compounded by a complete lack of grants or incentives for startups: "I don't really see anything on island that encourages innovation when you look at what can be done elsewhere."

As one respondent starkly warned, without addressing these foundational issues, any innovation strategy is simply **"built on a foundation of sand."**



The Skills Shift: From Administration to AI

The skills required to run Guernsey's economy are undergoing a rapid shift. As routine administrative and compliance tasks become fully automated, the demand for traditional clerical roles will plummet. Cyril Swale of Grant Thornton notes that instead of needing armies of traditional accountants and auditors, the island will rapidly need highly trained data scientists and AI-literate professionals who can challenge algorithmic outputs.

This requires an immediate pivot in both the education sector and corporate training budgets. The workforce must be trained not just to use software, but to apply "professional scepticism" and ethical judgment to AI-generated models.

Domain	Today's Skill Profile	2030 Innovation Profile
Finance & Audit	Manual Compliance, Sample-based Auditing, Traditional Accounting	Data Science, AI Systems Assurance, 100% Anomaly Detection
Technology	On-Premise IT Support, Basic Network Maintenance	Cloud Architecture, AI Prompt Engineering, IoT Integration
Leadership	Risk-Averse Consensus Building, Policy Drafting	Entrepreneurial "Sandbox" Mindset, Rapid Prototyping
Legal & Wealth	10-Year Trust Fund Administration, Paper-based KYC	Smart Contract Law, Tokenised Asset Management, RegTech

Note: This represents a workforce transition, not a direct replacement. Reskilling and empowering our existing local talent pool is just as critical as attracting new global builders.

- **SECTOR DEEP DIVE**

Government, Regulation & Ecosystem Alignment

In any jurisdiction, there is a natural variance in the operating pace of private enterprise, focused regulators, and the broader political system. In Guernsey, bridging the gap between these different operating speeds represents one of the most significant opportunities to accelerate the island's innovation agenda.

The Split View: Regulatory Agility and Systemic Complexity

The island's regulators, specifically the GFSC and ODPa, operate with highly focused mandates, allowing them to be remarkably agile. They actively engage with industry through sandboxes, roundtables, and rapid consultation papers.

By contrast, the political system carries a much broader mandate. However, industry leaders note that the structural weight of bureaucracy can sometimes delay necessary decisions. The consensus from the entrepreneurial class is not a lack of faith in the government's intent, but rather a strong desire for the public sector to transition alongside them from 'discovery mode' into faster 'execution mode.'

Justine Gaudion of Barclays highlights that the inability to perform automated credit checks because of unresolved postcode and credit-scoring integrations is a major barrier. "If we really want to move forward in a banking world, credit scoring is critical," Gaudion notes. "Every banking process is automated. If you can't do an automated credit score, you're not going to get access to global products and services." A critical need is to have this moved further up the agenda, as Guernsey is tracking behind its peer group islands in terms of delivery.

Cobus Bezuidenhout of FNB Channel Islands advocates for shared digital infrastructure – such as digital ID frameworks and coordinated data bureaus across the Crown Dependencies – as a force multiplier.

Ed Prow of TEKEX argues that Guernsey's "Micro Nation status means agility if compass steered to brave innovation", but warns: "Pace too slow, and we will fall behind". Marc Winn of Innovate Guernsey notes that "there is incredible talent in Guernsey but it succeeds despite the prevalent culture rather than because of it."

As James Ellsmoor, CEO of Island Innovation, points out: "Innovation in small jurisdictions is inherently political, and avoiding that reality often slows progress more than any technical or financial constraint."

The Reality Check: The Government Work Plan

The 2026–2029 GWP Super Priorities are exactly the right civic goals for this moment. Tax reform, Leale's Yard, healthcare, early years, and harbour infrastructure are the foundations everything else is built on. The opportunity is to explicitly position digital innovation as the delivery engine for each of these priorities.

As Richard Saunders of Butterfield emphasises, true success requires aligning: "development of the local operating environment with development of our financial service capabilities."

Ecosystem Alignment: Steps in the Right Direction

Initiatives driven by the Digital Greenhouse (DGH) and the Young Business Group (YBG) are providing vital platforms to support the next generation of entrepreneurial talent. Events like the 2025 DGH Guernsey Innovation Summit – which INSO had the privilege of opening – serve as crucial rallying points, moving the conversation from theoretical ambition to practical execution. Furthermore, the recent formation of the Guernsey Innovation Board is a highly positive step toward dismantling silos, helping to bring diverse talent together and establish a more cohesive, island-wide strategy.

Recommendation: A Generalised Innovation Drive

Implementing a generalised, time-boxed innovation framework – designed to empower employees across all public departments to test ideas rapidly – can act as a powerful catalyst for modernisation.

The goal is not necessarily to launch the perfect public service on the first try, but to equip the civil service with the tools for proactive problem-solving and rapid testing. Paired with a public "Entrepreneur Day" to celebrate learning and cross-sector collaboration, this initiative complements the government's broader civic goals.

- SECTOR DEEP DIVE

Real Economy Sectors & Lifestyle Infrastructure

While digital finance naturally commands the lion's share of the innovation dialogue, Guernsey's real economy – the human services, lifestyle infrastructure, and physical systems that keep the island running – is equally ripe for transformation. Applying the "small-system testbed" concept to these sectors offers vital secondary avenues for economic resilience. With core energy and physical transport networks already being realigned to support digital growth, the innovation focus must now expand to the sectors that directly impact daily life, talent retention, and social stability.

Healthcare: The Care Economy and Missed Opportunities

The demographic reality of an ageing population is forcing a radical rethink of the "Care Economy." A senior figure in Guernsey's health and social care sector notes that healthcare is forecast as a rapidly growing cost to the States of Guernsey, with insufficient evidence that either government or the private sector is committed to building a new system of supply to meet the ageing demographic's needs.

The 2026–2029 Government Work Plan rightly identifies the delivery of a sustainable health and care model as a super priority. However, the execution of healthcare innovation has historically struggled to move from concept to reality. Respondents repeatedly pointed to the health service pilot in Alderney – recently shelved, but ripe for revival – as a glaring missed opportunity to utilise the Bailiwick's unique scale.

Guernsey possesses the ideal, self-contained environment to test predictive health AI, telemedicine, automated care logistics, and localised health-tech infrastructure. However, unlocking this potential requires a fundamental shift in perspective: the government must be willing to treat the health service as an active innovation partner and a testbed for exportable efficiency models, rather than viewing it exclusively as a mounting public cost centre.

Tourism, Sustainability & Lifestyle: The "Blue Zone" Proposition

Cyrille Joffre introduced the compelling concept of the "Blue Zone" – regions like Sardinia, Costa Rica, or Okinawa that are globally renowned for exceptionally high life expectancy, deep community trust, and a strong sense of collective purpose.

By integrating eco-tourism, outdoor lifestyle tech, and longevity-focused health initiatives, alongside a broader island-wide push toward a carbon-neutral and circular economy, the island can market itself not just as a tax-efficient financial centre, but as a holistic, high-trust sanctuary – the ultimate counter-balance to the pressures of high-speed digital innovation, attracting global entrepreneurs looking to escape the instability and burnout of major metropolitan hubs.

Education & The Future Workforce: Nurturing the "Innovation Pirate"

Currently, there is a risk that the island's educational culture is not aligning with its economic ambitions. A leading survey respondent warns of an "increasingly discouraged and disempowered youth without a shared positive vision for the future". They note that natural innovative and entrepreneurial streaks are often "crushed pretty swiftly in mainstream education," heavily favouring academic compliance over creative risk-taking.

Educational leaders highlighted a culture of "risk aversion and complacency/inertia meaning that we default to the risk of doing nothing rather than the risk of action".

To build a sustainable real economy, Guernsey must reimagine its educational frameworks – potentially drawing inspiration from Scandinavian or Netherlands models – to arm students with practical entrepreneurial skills. Empowering the youth to prototype, build, and embrace the island's historic "innovation pirate" attitude is the only way to ensure the local workforce is prepared and deeply incentivised to lead the island's digital and physical transformation.

"Being involved in the what, the why, and the how is the only way to truly create solutions people believe in and are committed to delivering."



The Roadmap

- THE 2026–2030 ROADMAP

Phase 1: Now–2027 ("Repair the Foundations")

The data and sentiment gathered in this report point to a singular conclusion: Guernsey has exhausted the utility of "Discovery Mode." The island knows its strengths, it understands its structural weaknesses, and it recognises the global macro-trends threatening its traditional economic pillars. The next four years must be defined by decisive, coordinated execution.



01 Tie Housing Action Directly to Innovation Capacity

The housing crisis is no longer just a social or civic issue; it is the island's primary economic and innovation bottleneck.

The Action: The States of Guernsey must formally classify targeted housing developments as "Critical Economic Infrastructure." The government should expedite planning permissions for high-density, modern living spaces - potentially linking these to the Leale's Yard super-priority.

The Metric: A reduction in the "brain drain" of the 18–30 demographic and a measurable increase in short-term, highly skilled employment permits tied to new tech-focused roles.

02 Establish Clear Digital Finance Rules

Capital moves at the speed of regulatory clarity. The global market will not wait for perfection.

The Action: Move rapidly from consultation to legislation. Guernsey must pass definitive, agile frameworks governing the issuance of stablecoins, the tokenisation of real-world assets (RWAs), and the use of blockchain for fund registry. By providing absolute legal certainty before larger jurisdictions finalise their heavier frameworks, Guernsey can capture the first-mover advantage among institutional investors. The Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 independently reinforces this urgency, and both reports converge on the same conclusion: regulatory clarity must precede market capture, and the window is narrowing.

The Metric: The successful licensing and domiciling of three tier-one digital asset or stablecoin issuers by the end of 2027.

03 Launch AI & Automation Pilots in the Public Sector

The government must demonstrate willingness to adopt the same technological efficiencies it expects from the private sector.

The Action: Initiate 2–3 highly visible, time-boxed AI/automation pilot programs within the civil service. Rather than overhauling massive legacy systems, these pilots should target high-friction, routine administrative bottlenecks (e.g., automating initial planning application checks or streamlining corporate registry filings). This complements the "generalised innovation drive" and begins the vital cultural shift from risk-avoidance to proactive experimentation.

The Metric: A publicised reduction in processing times for specific public services, proving the concept of "Safe Scaling" within the government itself.

• THE ROADMAP (CONTINUED)

Phase 2: 2027–2030 ("Scale the Niches")

With the foundations repaired, talent pipelines stabilised, and regulatory frameworks set, Guernsey can pivot to scaling its unique competitive advantages. This phase is about deploying the "Small-system testbed" concept on a global stage.



01 Establish the Stablecoin and Tokenisation Hub

As the global financial system fully embraces instantaneous settlement, Guernsey must cement its position as the premier "Boutique of Trust" for digital assets.

The Action: Leverage the legislation passed in Phase 1 to actively court institutional wealth managers and family offices looking to tokenise their portfolios. Market the unique combination of ODPA-enforced data security and GFSC-enabled automation as the safest jurisdiction in Europe.

02 Position Guernsey as a Cross-Sector Testbed

The island's contained geography, independent grid, and single health authority make it the ultimate laboratory for real-world technology deployment.

The Action: Open the island to global tech firms looking to test scalable solutions in a controlled environment.

- Energy: Partner with green-tech startups to pilot smart-grid load balancing and decentralised solar networks alongside Guernsey Electricity's infrastructure upgrades.
- Health: Revive and expand the Alderney health-tech pilot. Use the Bailiwick's scale to test predictive healthcare AI, remote diagnostics, and automated care logistics.



03 Implement Talent & Skills Compacts

To ensure longevity, the island must hardwire its education system to its future economic needs.

The Action: Form binding "Skills Compacts" between the States of Guernsey, educational institutions, and major private sector employers. These compacts should guarantee apprenticeships, funding, and fast-tracked career paths for local students who choose to specialise in data science, AI ethics, smart contract law, and digital infrastructure.

The Metric: The establishment of a recognised "Guernsey Tech & Finance Academy" pathway, drastically shifting the local skills mix from manual compliance and administration toward AI systems assurance and data architecture.

• CONCLUSION

The Road to 2030

5 Bold but Realistic Bets for Guernsey

- **The "Blue Zone" Visa:** Guernsey launches a specialised residency track aimed at top-tier global technologists and digital entrepreneurs, marketing the island's unparalleled safety, health, and lifestyle as the ultimate antidote to metropolitan burnout.
- **The Pan-Island Syndicate:** Guernsey, Jersey, and other islands formalise a joint "Crown Dependency Innovation Sandbox," pooling capital, talent, and shared regulatory frameworks to test cross-border digital identity and payment rails.
- **100% Automated Corporate Onboarding:** By 2029, Guernsey becomes the first tier-one jurisdiction to fully automate baseline corporate registry and KYC onboarding using ODPa-approved, zero-knowledge proof technology.
- **The Alderney Energy/Health Export:** Alderney successfully pilots a fully integrated smart-health and micro-grid model, which the Bailiwick subsequently patents and licences to rural communities across the UK and Europe.
- **The Entrepreneur in Residence:** The States of Guernsey appoints a rotating, private-sector "Entrepreneur in Residence" with direct reporting lines to the top of government, tasked with identifying structural friction points and co-designing faster delivery pathways with civil service teams.



Three Plausible Scenarios

Scenario A: Progressive Diversification ("Innovation Pirate" Path)

The island stops comparing itself to its past and begins aggressively competing for its future. The GFSC and ODPa's "Safe Scaling" dynamic attracts billions in tokenised assets. Guernsey thrives as a wealthy, dynamic, and demographically balanced micro-state.

Scenario B: Incremental Progress ("Slow Burn" Path)

Guernsey makes meaningful but uneven progress – advancing digital finance frameworks while housing reform stalls. The island remains competitive, but the window for transformational change narrows considerably.

Scenario C: Stagnation & Managed Decline ("Complacency" Path)

The island defaults to the risk of doing nothing. Endless consultation paralyses legislative action. Guernsey settles into a comfortable, but ultimately brittle, managed decline.

The Verdict: The resources, the capital, and the intent exist to achieve Scenario A. But intent without execution defaults to Scenario B — and Scenario B, left unchecked, has a well-worn path toward Scenario C. The only variable left to test is the island's courage to execute.



Disclaimer and Legal Notice

This Guernsey Innovation Report 2026–2030 (the "Report") is published by INSO Limited. It compiles qualitative insights from over 40 hours of interviews with industry leaders across finance, technology, regulation, and other sectors.

The Report includes forward-looking statements, opinions, and analyses reflecting views as of March 2026. These are subject to uncertainties, market changes, regulatory developments, and other risks; actual results may differ substantially.

This Report does not constitute financial, legal, investment, tax, regulatory, or professional advice. Readers must consult qualified independent advisors before making decisions. INSO Limited and all contributors disclaim any liability for losses, damages, or costs arising from reliance on or use of this Report.

Neither the inclusion of logos nor references to organisations (e.g., GFSC, ODPA, Sure, Guernsey Electricity) implies endorsement or approval of the contents.

All rights reserved. No part of this Report may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted without prior written permission from INSO Limited. © 2026 INSO Limited.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Paulo Caetano (<https://www.pcpphotography.shop/>) for generously providing images; the cover organisations for logo permissions;

INSO Limited gratefully acknowledges the invaluable contributions of over 45 industry experts who provided more than 40 hours of in-depth interviews, enabling an honest assessment of Guernsey's innovation landscape.

Key participants include leaders from: Guernsey Financial Services Commission (GFSC), Office of the Data Protection Authority (ODPA), Sure, Guernsey Electricity, Aurigny, JTC Group, JT Group, Skipton International, Carey Olsen, KPMG in the Crown Dependencies, Ocorian, Walkers, Young Business Group (YBG), Butterfield, Barclays, Grant Thornton, FNB Channel Islands, Bank Aston, Bailiwick Express, The Guernsey Press, Island Innovation, Innovate Guernsey, TEKEX, Resolution IT, The Quarry, the Digital Greenhouse, Pottingshed, and many others who preferred to not be publicly mentioned.

INSO Limited
Registration Number: 75395
6 Highclere House, Kings Mews, Kings Road
St Peter Port, GY1 1QB, Guernsey
www.inso.gg



Where **innovation** meets **solution.**

[www.*inso*.gg](http://www.inso.gg)

The diagnosis in this report reflects how we work with every client: honest questions first, then structured action. If your organisation is navigating the same forces this report describes - AI disruption, talent pressure, strategic misalignment - we'd welcome a conversation. Reach us at **info@inso.gg**