



NEWS RELEASE

King William's College team tackles plastic pollution of the oceans to reach final of Conrad Challenge

Douglas, Isle of Man – 9 April 2021

Five students from King William's College have reached the final of the annual Conrad Challenge after designing a rubbish bin which could reduce the amount of plastic polluting the oceans.

Year 12 students Christina Adcock, Catherine Atkinson, Anna Cregeen, Ruairi McNally and Ava Treutler took up the challenge in August last year as part of the global competition for young people aged 13-18 - founded by Nancy Conrad to honour the legacy of her husband, Apollo 12 astronaut Pete Conrad.

Each year the ManSat group sponsors Isle of Man teams to enter the Conrad Challenge by covering their entry fees and travel costs should a team reach the final, which usually takes place at the Kennedy Space Center.

This year there were seven categories to enter, with the KWC team – called Catalysing Solutions – entering 'Oceans: The Plastic Problem'.

The team's product is DigestEZ – a rubbish bin that uses plastic-eating enzymes to break down certain types of plastics.

Team CEO, Ava, explained that they drew inspiration from their time helping Isle of Man charity Beach Buddies: "The aim of the product is to stop more plastics from ending up in the oceans and reduce the overall levels of plastic polluting the planet as a home digester for everyday plastic waste.

"Some of us recalled our times with Beach Buddies and seeing all of the amazing conservation work taking place on our Island – a UNESCO Biosphere. The thought of trying to solve the plastic pollution problem just felt right. There may also be an opportunity to implement the product on the Isle of Man if we are successful."

Because of Covid-19, this year's finals will take place online via the 2021 Conrad Virtual Innovation Summit. But missing out on a trip to the Kennedy Space Center in Houston, Texas, has not dampened the enthusiasm of the team.



Ava said: “Over the next month, our team must create a video pitch. This is a replacement for the physical pitch that we would give to the judges outlining our product and the details surrounding it. The next major target is to apply for and receive an approved patent. This is a massive step for our team as we can really see the process of starting a business materialising. This patent will be registered in the Isle of Man and each of our team members will be considered co-inventors, which is pretty cool!

“We must present an executive summary for the judges to provide an overview of our innovation, accompanied by our logo. Finally, we must ensure that all team members are confident with all aspects of our product and the operations of our business when we join a live Q&A judging panel. The judges can ask us any questions and we must be quick-thinking and present our product in a professional way.

“We cannot wait to participate in the Summit. Since progressing to the final round, we have been invited to participate in the Conrad Cohorts that are led by Conrad Alumni. We will be partnered with selected teams from across the globe to compete in a mini-challenge that solves a real-world problem.”

Niall Howell Evans, Head of Science at KWC, said: “Ava, Anna, Christina, Catherine and Ruairi have worked incredibly hard on their product and we are delighted that their efforts have been rewarded. The Conrad Challenge is a superb competition, challenging students to consider how science and technology can be used to solve problems, while also teaching them how to be entrepreneurs. Our thanks go to ManSat for continuing to provide these wonderful opportunities to Isle of Man students.”

Jennifer Stone, Chief Technical Officer at the ManSat Group, said: “Isle of Man teams have enjoyed considerable success in the Conrad Challenge, but this is the first team to reach the final for several years, and we are thrilled for the students. It is an inspiring competition, offering young people the opportunity to create innovative products and solutions by applying their science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills to develop the products of tomorrow.”

For more information about the Conrad Challenge, visit:

<https://www.conradchallenge.org/conrad-challenge>



The Conrad Challenge is just one of the opportunities the ManSat Group offers to Isle of Man students each year. The company also offers scholarships to the NASA United Space School in Houston and has sponsored Island high schools to participate in the UK Rocketry Challenge. In addition, the company awards an annual ManSat Fellowship grant for Manx students seeking to further their studies in space, and scholarships to programs run by the International Space University in Strasbourg.

ENDS

(758 words)

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ManSat Limited

ManSat provides bespoke Consultancy services, supporting its clients in spectrum regulatory matters. ManSat carries out satellite filings for Iceland and the Isle of Man under contract. Satellite filings are made to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Geneva via the national administration.

Established in May 1998, ManSat Limited is a Manx-registered and Manx-owned private limited company headquartered in Douglas in the Isle of Man, with offices and representation in the United Kingdom and the United States.

For further information:

Jennifer Stone, ManSat CTO
jstone@mansat.com

Tel: UK +44 7490 167520

Issued by:

James Davis, Isle of Man Advertising & PR

Tel: UK +44 01624 620440