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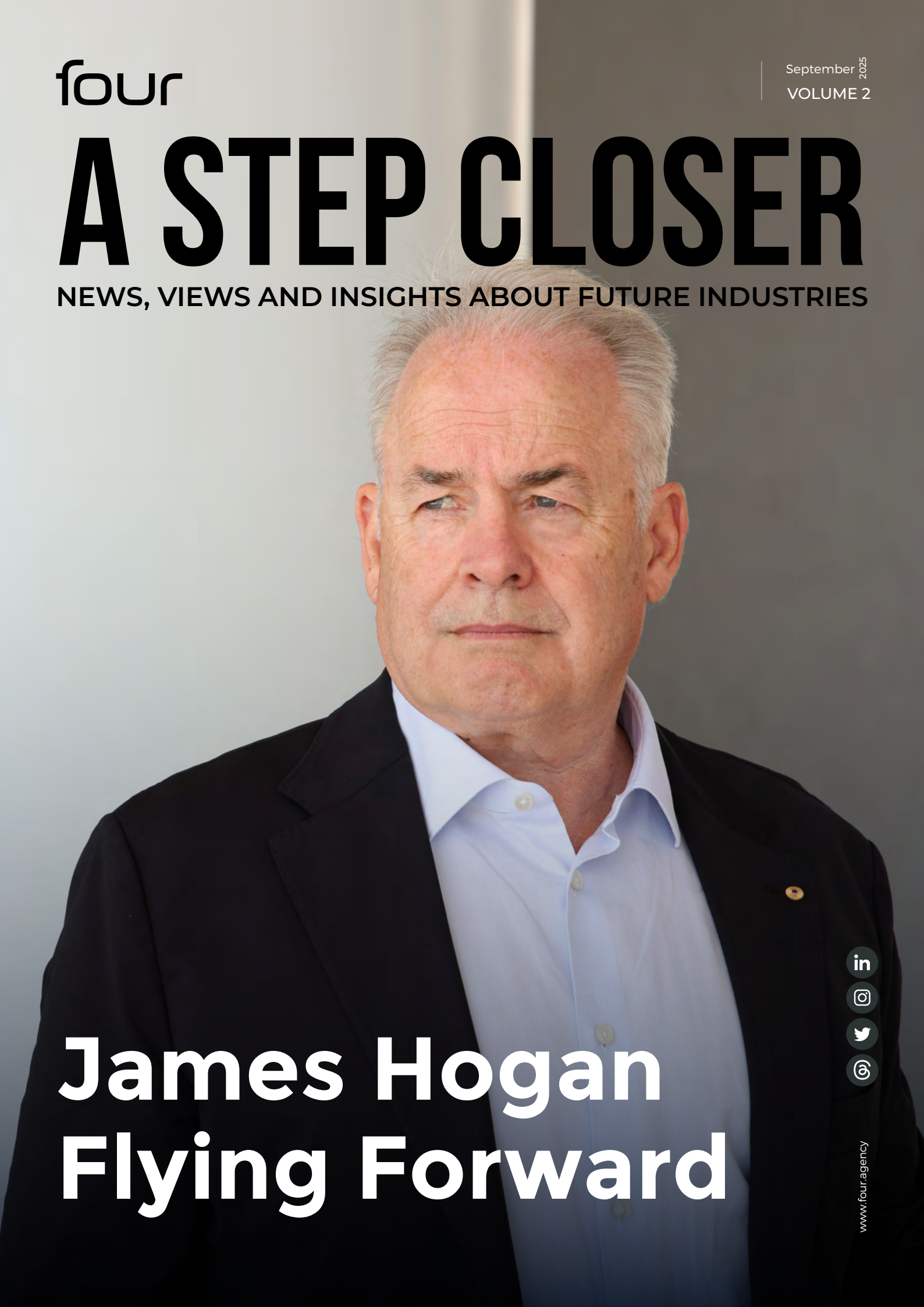
A STEP CLOSER

NEWS, VIEWS AND INSIGHTS ABOUT FUTURE INDUSTRIES



James Hogan Flying Forward

www.four.agency

THE NEXT STEP

Air travel is an industry born of innovation. From the first flight in 1903, humankind has constantly been trying to fly higher, travel further and reach new goals. In doing so, it has created a $4 trillion industry which is truly the lifeblood of global trade and tourism.

One of the industry's great innovators provides our cover story this month, in the first of a two-part interview giving his views on the state of the industry.

James Hogan has built airline brands in Europe, Australia and most famously the Middle East. As the chief executive of Etihad, he built a regional airline into a global network carrier taking on the megaconnectors of Emirates and Qatar. Along the way he introduced new models for airline partnerships, in-flight chefs, in-flight nannies and the world's first three-cabin suite in the skies, The Residence.

Today, as a consultant to airlines and hospitality businesses across the world, James has a unique viewpoint of the way the industry is developing. His interview makes fascinating reading.

In our other stories this month, we look at energy.

Energy is having a moment. Not just in the headlines but in boardrooms, on farms and across factory floors. From nuclear breakthroughs to solar-powered vineyards, the race to power the future is reshaping how we live, work and communicate.

In this issue of A Step Closer we explore that shift. We look at how Rolls-Royce is leading the charge on small modular reactors and why agrivoltaics could be the next big thing in sustainable farming.

As the energy transition accelerates, so do the communications challenges. The sector is under pressure to explain complex technologies in simple terms. To build public trust in nuclear. To make the case for solar without sparking land-use battles. And to do all this while navigating political scrutiny, investor expectations and a 24/7 media cycle.

At Four, we've seen first-hand how powerful storytelling can shape the future of energy. Our clean and green energy experience spans nuclear, renewables and global initiatives to drive sustainability.

Whether it's helping a clean-tech brand find its voice or guiding a utility through a crisis, the goal is the same: clarity, credibility and connection.

Because energy isn't just about electrons. It's about momentum. And right now, the future is picking up speed.

Ray Eglington
Group managing director

FLYING FORWARD:

HOW AVIATION FUELS GLOBAL GROWTH

James Hogan has created brands, built businesses and delivered sustainable growth in a range of service sectors. In this exclusive two-part interview with A Step Closer, James shares his views on aviation, on communications and on the huge growth still to come in the Gulf.

In the last three decades, aviation has transformed from a premium mode of occasional travel into a global economic engine. Few figures embody this evolution more than James Hogan, whose leadership at Etihad Airways and across the aviation and hospitality sectors has helped shape the industry's trajectory. His perspective offers a compelling view of how air travel continues to drive trade, tourism and technological innovation.

Hogan's career began in 1975 with ANSETT in Australia. From there, he built a global portfolio across airlines, car rental and hotels, culminating in his role as Chief Executive Officer of Etihad. His approach has always been rooted in service, but with a commercial edge. "These are hard-nosed businesses," he says. "It's about the customer, but also about managing cost, revenue and capital investment."

At the heart of aviation's success is its ability to connect people and markets. Hogan points to the Gulf as a case study in how strategic investment and geographic advantage can turn a region into a global hub.

"Within three to four hours of the Gulf, you reach the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, parts of China and Africa. That's a huge market and even today, it remains underserved."

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But geography alone is not enough. Aircraft technology has been the great enabler. The introduction of long-range, fuel-efficient aircraft has allowed airlines to open new routes, reduce operating costs and improve environmental performance.

Hogan is unequivocal: "The airline industry has done more to invest in, develop and embrace new technology than almost any other. London to Australia was once a four- or five-stop journey; today most people do it with one stop – usually in the Gulf.

He dismisses the idea that ultra-long-haul flights will bypass the Gulf's mega-connectors. Instead, he sees complementary growth.

"Improvements in aircraft technology are good for everyone. They don't threaten the hub model, they enhance it.

"The Gulf is no longer just a stopover. It's a destination in its own right. People want to live, work and build businesses there. The infrastructure, the incentives, the stock markets - they all support that."

Hogan's tenure at Etihad was marked by bold moves. He built an aviation group that included not just the airline, but also airport services, cargo, catering and holidays. He pursued equity partnerships to gain market access and scale. "

Innovation was a hallmark of his leadership. Etihad introduced The Residence, a three-room suite in the sky, complete with a Savoy-trained butler. Onboard chefs, food & beverage managers, and nannies were not just branding exercises; they were operational enhancements. "It wasn't about extra cost. It was about delivering value and creating a global service brand, often while using smart thinking that others hadn't considered."

The Residence was a prime example. Hogan and his team saw unused space in the nose of the A380's upper deck and, unlike other airlines which simply partitioned it off, made it a bedroom. Add a bathroom, a sitting area and a Savoy-trained butler and – voila! – the most exclusive product in commercial air travel was born.

The butler exemplified a focus on value through service which Hogan believes sets aviation apart. "You're only as good as your people," he says. "Whether it's a captain, a cabin crew member or someone checking in bags, everyone needs to understand the vision."

That vision must be long-term. Hogan had fleet plans stretching to 2040. He held monthly business reviews with his chief officers and their teams, not just to track performance but to identify future leaders. "You need a roadmap," he says. "And you need to stick to it."

Looking ahead, Hogan sees continued growth in aviation, particularly in emerging markets. Africa, South Asia and parts of the Middle East remain underserved. As infrastructure improves and demand rises, these regions will become increasingly important. His consulting firm Knighthood Global is helping aviation and tourism leaders around the world unlock those opportunities.

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"Tourism is changing fast. There's more focus on experience, wellness and how people spend their money," he says. "Destinations need to adapt to that."

The Gulf has already responded, with family-friendly resorts, theme parks and cultural attractions that appeal to a broad demographic.

Aviation's role in global trade is equally vital. Air freight supports high-value, time-sensitive goods, while passenger travel underpins business development and investment. Hogan sees aviation as a catalyst, driving economic activity far beyond the airport.

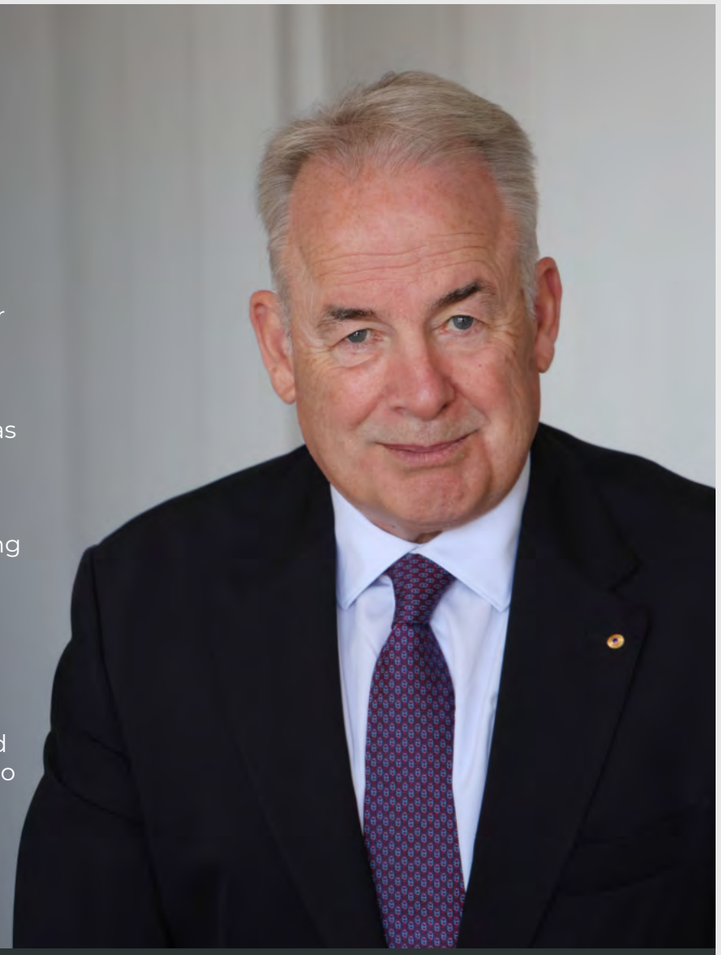
But with growth comes responsibility. Sustainability is now central to the industry's future. Hogan acknowledges the challenge but remains optimistic. "Technology will continue to improve," he says. "And the industry has shown it can adapt."

Ultimately, Hogan believes that aviation's greatest strength is its ability to bring people together. "It's about respect. Respect for your employees, your customers and the cultures you operate in. That's how you build a global business."

In a world that often feels fragmented, aviation remains a unifying force. And with leaders like James Hogan shaping its path, the industry is well placed to keep flying forward.

THREE LESSONS

for communicators from the James Hogan playbook



1.Think big!
There are hundreds of brands fighting for mindspace in every sector. The ones that grab attention are the ones with vision, with style, with ambitious goals. That's as true for employees as it is for customers as it is for investors.

2.Sweat the detail.
...but the best vision in the world is nothing if implemented poorly. Reputation often rests on the little things. The broken window theory applies to CEOs too.

3.Move fast.
News cycles have compressed to immediacy. If citizen journalists or trained ones are out there in minutes, you need to be too. Slash your approval levels when times are good – and you'll be able to move quickly when problems arise.

Read part two of this interview with James Hogan in Issue 3 of A Step Closer, in which he gives his views on the opportunities in the Gulf's next aviation powerhouse: Saudi Arabia.

10 WAYS
IN WHICH GLOBAL AVIATION IS SHAPING OUR FUTURE

01 Aviation is a $4.1 trillion engine of activity worldwide and supports 86.5 million jobs across its value chain and aviation-enabled tourism

02 Air cargo carries ~35% of world trade by value (more than US$6.4 trillion) powering fast, high-value global supply chains

03 Air cargo demand hit record levels in 2024, reinforcing e-commerce and time-critical trade on major lanes like Asia–North America.

04 Better air connectivity boosts national productivity by attracting investment, speeding knowledge exchange and improving business efficiency.

05 Liberalisation via Open Skies agreements has generated at least US$4B a year in gains for travellers by lowering fares and increasing frequencies.

06 Aviation is the backbone of international tourism, with air transport directly supporting 37.3 million tourism jobs and underpinning a sector that makes up ~9% of global GDP.

07 Air-traffic modernisation (e.g., FAA NextGen: Data Comm, improved surface/arrival management) is projected to deliver US$46–76B in efficiency, delay, fuel and emissions benefits by 2040.

08 Advanced carbon-fibre composites slash airframe weight, improving fuel efficiency and catalysing innovations later used in other industries.

09 Winglet technology cuts airline fuel burn by roughly 4–6% per aircraft, saving carriers money and lowering emissions.

10 The UN Humanitarian Air Service (WFP) keeps aid moving to the hardest-to-reach crises, with 21 operations, 355k+ passengers and 394 destinations, saving lives when roads and ports fail.

SMRS: POWERING BRITAIN'S FUTURE

Driving progress towards a nuclear future

The UK is going small to go big. In June 2025, Rolls-Royce was named the preferred bidder to deliver Britain's first Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), marking a pivotal moment in the country's transition to cleaner, more secure energy. This decision followed a two-year competition run by Great British Nuclear (GBN), and it positions Rolls-Royce SMR as a global leader in modular nuclear technology.

The government has committed more than £2.5 billion to the SMR programme, a bold investment in the country's energy independence and decarbonisation goals.

he first three reactors, each capable of generating around 470 megawatts, are expected to come online between 2032 and 2034. Together, they will supply enough electricity to power more than three million homes, providing a stable, low-carbon complement to intermittent renewables such as wind and solar.

This is just the beginning. The UK's Civil Nuclear Roadmap outlines an ambitious trajectory: to approve between three and seven gigawatts of new nuclear capacity every five years from 2030 to 2044. Achieving this would require dozens of SMRs alongside larger plants, fundamentally reshaping the UK's energy mix over the next two decades.

Why SMRs?

The appeal of SMRs lies in their speed, cost and flexibility. Unlike traditional nuclear plants, which can take more than a decade to build, SMRs are manufactured in factories and assembled on site. This modular approach significantly reduces construction time and the risk of delays, a persistent issue in large-scale nuclear projects.

Cost is another advantage. The modular design lowers upfront capital requirements and makes financing more accessible, especially for private investors. This is crucial in a sector where long lead times and regulatory complexity often deter investment.

Flexibility is the third pillar. SMRs can be deployed on smaller sites, including decommissioned coal and nuclear facilities. This not only reduces land-use conflicts but also helps revitalise local economies by repurposing existing infrastructure and creating new jobs.

Rolls-Royce is leading the charge, backed by Great British Energy – Nuclear, the state-owned delivery body. While other contenders, GE Hitachi, Holtec and Westinghouse did not make it through this round, they remain active in the global SMR race.

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THE STRATEGIC CASE

The strategic rationale for SMRs is compelling. They offer reliable, low-carbon baseload power that complements variable renewables. They reduce dependence on imported gas, a vulnerability exposed by recent geopolitical shocks and they support the UK's legally binding net-zero target for 2050.

There's also a significant economic upside. At its peak, the SMR programme could create up to 40,000 high-skilled jobs across engineering, manufacturing and construction. This aligns with the UK's broader industrial strategy and its ambition to become a global leader in clean energy technologies.

Still, challenges remain. Only the first three units have a clear path to investment. The rest depend on regulatory approvals, site selection and financing. The government is exploring mechanisms including Contracts-for-Difference (CfD) and the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model to make the economics more attractive to investors.

Rolls-Royce's design is currently undergoing the Generic Design Assessment (GDA), a rigorous regulatory process. Siting decisions are expected soon, with former nuclear sites at Wylfa and Oldbury among the frontrunners.

The UK has zero SMRs today but three are on the way. If the roadmap holds, many more could follow. Getting new nuclear into the energy mix is no longer distant vision; it's being built one module at a time.

THREE LESSONS
for communicators

At Four, we have more than a decade of experience in nuclear energy, communicating often complex issues to stakeholders and general populations. Lessons for communicators include:

1. Simplify, simplify, simplify
Nuclear energy is technically dense and politically sensitive. Communicators must translate complex engineering into clear, relatable narratives. This means avoiding jargon, using analogies and focusing on tangible benefits including energy security, job creation and climate action.

The UAE demystified nuclear power by focusing on its role in national progress. Campaigns highlighted how the Barakah plant would power homes, reduce emissions and support economic diversification. The result? A dramatic increase in public understanding and favourability; 83 percent of UAE residents now view nuclear energy positively.

2. Build trust through transparency
Public trust is essential for nuclear projects. That means being open about risks, timelines and trade-offs. It also means engaging early and often with communities, regulators, investors and the media.

The UAE's nuclear energy programme was open about every milestone from construction to commercial operations. By educating the public and showcasing international best practice, ENEC positioned Barakah as a global benchmark in nuclear new-builds.

In the UK, similar transparency will be vital. SMRs may be smaller but they still face scrutiny. Communicators must proactively address concerns about safety, waste and cost while celebrating progress and innovation.

3. Connect the dots
Energy isn't just about electrons. It's about momentum, identity and the future. The most effective campaigns connect nuclear to broader themes such as national resilience, industrial renewal and climate leadership.

At Four, we've seen how powerful storytelling can shape the energy narrative. Whether guiding a utility through a crisis or helping a clean-tech brand find its voice, the goal is the same: clarity, credibility and connection.

For SMRs, this means showing how modular nuclear fits into a bigger picture: supporting renewables, revitalising regions and securing the UK's place in the global clean energy race.

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OFFSHORE WINDS, ONSHORE WINS

The London Array, funded in part by Masdar as one of four key shareholders, is a massive offshore wind farm made up of 175 wind turbines. It is one of Masdar's largest international investments to date and demonstrates their expertise in offshore renewables.

The London Array has been producing renewable electricity for the UK since 2013. Now, it generates enough power to prevent nearly one million tonnes of CO_2 emissions each year.

Located in the outer Thames Estuary, about 20 km off the Kent and Essex coasts, its position takes advantage of strong, consistent offshore winds.

Four things we like...

FOUR THINGS WE LIKE... IN CLEAN AND GREEN ENERGY

Each month, we take a look at one future industry and give you suggestions of people and resources to follow, to find out more. This month, we look at energy

Book: The Grid by Gretchen Bakke

Topic: The US electricity grid, modernization, infrastructure, resilience

Why it's great: Bakke, a cultural anthropologist, offers a compelling and surprisingly readable dive into the challenges facing the aging electrical grid in the US. It blends engineering, economics and policy, explaining how renewables such as wind and solar are reshaping how we think about energy reliability.

Podcast: The Energy Gang (by Wood Mackenzie)

Topic: Weekly energy news, renewables, policy, business

Why it's great: Hosted by industry insiders, The Energy Gang breaks down current events across solar, wind, hydrogen, battery storage and the grid. The tone is sharp but accessible, and it's especially good at exploring the business and economic forces shaping the energy transition.

Listen on: Spotify, Apple Podcasts

Blog/Newsletter: Volts by David Roberts

Topic: Clean energy, climate policy, electrification, political economy

Why it's great: Volts is both a newsletter and a podcast. Roberts, a former Vox journalist, delivers deep analysis of emerging energy tech, climate debates and decarbonization strategies with clarity and a sharp, opinionated edge.

Read at: volts.wtf

YouTube Channel: Just Have a Think

Topic: Energy innovation, climate tech, decarbonization pathways

Why it's great: This UK-based channel breaks down complex energy topics (eg hydrogen, fusion, carbon capture, energy storage) into highly digestible 10–15 min videos. It's research-driven and visually engaging.

Find at: youtube.com/justhaveathink

CLOSER TO... THE MEDIA

Updates on journalism and communicators covering future industries. Here's the latest news about journalists, publications and influencers shaping conversations in future industries.

LANA launches to "re-invent" Arabic-language media

Backed by Emaar founder Mohamed Alabbar, LANA went live at the end of June with an editorial staff supported by generative-AI summarisation, data-driven commissioning and real-time audience analytics. The new Dubai-based platform says its goal is "built by Arabs, for Arabs," aiming to serve 400 million Arabic speakers with AI-personalised news, business, lifestyle and entertainment coverage. FAME Delivered

Premier-League newcomers Burnley offer fans a VR "seat" at Turf Moor

In partnership with VR-training specialist Rezzil, Burnley FC streamed its 9 August pre-season match against Lazio in fully immersive 8K virtual reality. Supporters wearing headsets could pick a viewpoint inside the stadium, hear natural crowd audio and follow synced commentary, an early test of how VR could augment live sports journalism and broadcasting. Reuters

Can blockchain curb deepfakes and restore trust?

Analysis looks at projects that anchor cryptographic hashes of photos, video and copy to public blockchains, creating immutable provenance records that newsrooms (and audiences) can check when viral content looks suspect. The piece walks through initiatives such as the Content Authenticity Initiative and decentralised fact-checking collectives that aim to make tampering immediately visible. London Blockchain Conference

Generative-AI search "overviews" are squeezing newsroom traffic

Writing for the Public Relations Society of America, agency CEO Matthew Caiola argues that Google's AI Overviews, and similar answerbox-style summaries, are already siphoning clicks away from publisher sites. He outlines how PR teams and editors will have to treat "Generative-Engine Optimisation" (GEO) as a new discipline if they want stories, quotes and data to surface inside AI responses. PRsay - The Voice of Public Relations

Source-annotation experiments and AI in the newsroom

In a Q&A, journalism lecturer (and former Wall Street Journal reporter) Amy Merrick explains why The Washington Post's pilot that lets interviewees add post-publication annotations could, alongside generative-AI assistants, mark a cultural shift toward radical transparency, yet also raises moderation and misinformation risks. greentarget.com

Radio automation 2.0: Audio.co rolls out AI voice and bulletin tools

Software firm Aiir has relaunched its RadioNewsAI platform as Audio.co, offering local stations an inexpensive subscription that auto-generates scripts, synthetic voices and production music for news, traffic and commercial spots. Executives say the service can deliver "polished, 24/7 bulletins" for as little as US$19 a month, illustrating how AI is filtering down to even the smallest newsrooms and ad-sales teams. RadioToday

Clean & green energy

BUILDING A BRAND FOR WALES' RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLUTION

Four in action

Renewable energy start-up, Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru was established by the Welsh Government to accelerate renewable energy projects across Wales' public estate. The company focuses on onshore wind as well as solar and battery technologies, putting net zero and Welsh citizens at the heart of climate change solutions.

This vanguard move required a new brand to shift public perception around renewable energy projects developed for and with the nation. The brief also demanded that local communities see tangible benefits from green energy developments in their areas.

Understanding the Welsh energy landscape

We began with audience research to understand different demographic barriers. A YouGov poll from 1 October 2023 revealed promising public attitudes in Wales. Sixty-eight per cent of Welsh people believe green energy is the future. The same percentage wouldn't mind having a wind turbine in their area. Sixty-five per cent would consider solar panels for their homes.

However, the research also highlighted pragmatic concerns. Fifty-seven per cent said they don't care if energy is green as long as it's cheap. This insight shaped our strategic approach.

We studied competitors and industry trends during market analysis and discovered many global energy companies use text-based logos, but the most memorable brands feature distinctive visual marks.

Collaborative brand building

Our strategy involved all stakeholders from the start. We hosted two virtual workshops with the Welsh Government, Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru's board of directors and wider stakeholders. These sessions collectively formed the brand's DNA including mission, vision and values.

The workshops explored brand archetypes and personality attributes. Research on visual communications revealed that specific shapes trigger emotional responses in the human brain. Angular configurations suggest threat, while curved lines create feelings of pleasantness and happiness.

Stakeholders aligned around three brand archetypes: Everyman, Caregiver and Hero. This consensus guided the creative direction for a logo that would inspire leadership while remaining approachable and community-focused.

Two creative routes

We developed two distinct logo concepts. Route one featured swirling elements symbolising wind turbine movement and sun rays, suggesting energy, momentum and continuous circularity, reflecting the brand's mission to generate value back into Wales.

Route two presented an infinity symbol representing the vibrant feedback loop of value flowing from Wales back into Wales. This design emphasised continual collaboration with local communities and partners while suggesting depth and organic movement.

In research, the majority of stakeholders preferred route two. The design team refined this concept, working on typography, capitalisation and visual relationships. Stylescapes brought the concepts alive with fonts, colour palettes and photographic styles.

Building the complete brand ecosystem

Beyond the logo, we created a comprehensive brand architecture, developing the mission, vision and values alongside positioning statements and reasons to believe. We worked with Trydan to produce the bilingual strapline "Ynni i ffynnu – Power to prosper" which encapsulates the brand's commitment to the Welsh well-being of future generations goals and economic prosperity.
The final deliverables included digital assets, printed materials, business cards, emailfooters and pop-up banner stands for the launch event. We created bilingual brand guidelines ensuring consistency across all platforms and also advised on website design, working closely with the web development team.

Accessibility checks were undertaken throughout the process. Four conducted thorough audits of renewable energy sector branding to ensure differentiation while maintaining relevance.

INDUSTRY IMPACT AND RECOGNITION

Four’s collaborative approach ensured stakeholder buy-in while creating a distinctive brand position in the crowded renewable energy sector.

Dr. Catrin Ellis Jones, head of public involvement at Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru, praised our understanding of purpose-driven missions.

Richard Evans, CEO of Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru, commended our responsiveness and understanding of project objectives. He described Four as delivering excellent work that exceeded the original brief.

The brand launch positions Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru to grow, deliver sustainable renewable energy developments across Wales, for the benefit of communities, citizens and stakeholders. Four has built a platform for Wales' energy transition and community prosperity.

This project exemplifies how specialist communications agencies are shaping the industries of tomorrow, translating complex policy objectives into engaging public-facing brands that drive real-world change.

Food Tech

DOUBLE HARVEST

How solar panels are reshaping the future of farming

At first glance, it looks like someone planted a solar farm in the middle of a vineyard. Look closer and the logic becomes clear: agrovoltaics is turning farmland into a dual-income powerhouse. This innovative approach combines agriculture and solar energy production, improving crop yields and energy efficiency simultaneously.

Across Europe, Asia and the US, farmers are installing solar panels above crops not just to generate electricity but to improve yields and climate resilience. In Italy, wine producer Caviro has built the country's largest advanced agrivoltaic system on a vineyard, integrating solar panels with grape cultivation to optimise both energy and agricultural output. In France, dynamic-tilt "solar louvres" helped push Chardonnay yields up 60 percent during the scorching 2024 harvest.

The financial case is strong. More than US $6.3 billion worth of agrivoltaic hardware was shipped globally last year and capacity is expected to grow at more than five percent annually through to 2034. In Japan, a six-year trial by the University of Tokyo showed that combining rice cultivation with solar power delivered returns 14 times higher than rice alone.

Why does it work?

The science is simple. Shade from solar panels reduces plant stress and water loss, which means less irrigation and better growth. Crops benefit from more stable temperatures and reduced evaporation, while cooler solar panels run more effectively, boosting energy output.

This synergy is particularly valuable in regions facing extreme heat or water scarcity. In Arizona trials, lettuces grown under solar panels required less water and still outperformed open-field planting. In Germany, vertical double-sided solar panels capture dawn and dusk light, smoothing out power supply and enhancing grid integration.

Three types of solar panels are being used in agrovolataics:

- **Dynamic-tilt louvres:** These adjust to sunlight and crop needs, offering precision control and optimised shading.
- **Vertical bifacial fences:** Installed in east-west orientations, they capture low-angle light and support peak-time energy generation.
- **Raised fixed-tilt rows:** These allow tractors to pass underneath, keeping farms fully operational.

Policy and economics

The technology is becoming a focus for policymakers.

France has written agrivoltaics into law via Décret 2024-318, capping ground coverage at 40 percent and requiring proof that crop output doesn't fall by more than 10 percent.

Italy is investing €1.7 billion in advanced Agri-PV, with grants covering up to 40 percent of capital expenditure and offering 20-year feed-in tariffs.

While upfront costs are 10–25 percent higher than standard solar panel installations, dual income streams and agri-incentives can push returns above eight percent in Europe, even before factoring in carbon credits.

In the US, water savings of up to 20 percent have been recorded and vertical arrays can earn up to 10 percent more revenue in markets with peak pricing.

The UK opportunity

Agrovoltaics is still in its early stages in the UK but there is a massive opportunity in this country. With more than 70 percent of the country's land already used for farming, there is limited space for large-scale standalone solar installations. Agrovoltaics offers a smart workaround, allowing farmers to generate clean energy without giving up productive land.

Pilot projects are beginning to show promise. Studies suggest that combining solar panels with crops could make land use up to 186 percent more efficient than using it for farming or energy alone.

While the UK hasn't yet matched the scale of projects seen in Italy or France, the potential is clear. With the right policy support and investment, agrovoltaics could become a key part of the UK's clean energy and food security strategy.

As one researcher put it: "Think of it as crop insurance that pays your power bill."

THREE LESSONS
for communicators

1. Make the invisible visible
Agrovoltaics is a hidden hero, often tucked into rural landscapes, quietly solving two global problems. Communicators can bring it to life with vivid imagery and relatable narratives.

Four's work with Masdar, the UAE's clean energy champion, has shown how visual storytelling can elevate technical projects. From the floating solar plant in Indonesia to the Al Dhafra PV site in Abu Dhabi, great use of visual images in social media campaigns helped Masdar turn infrastructure into inspiration.

For agrovoltaics, this means showcasing photogenic vineyards, tractor-friendly solar rows and farmers who are also energy producers. It's about turning kilowatts into characters.

2. Connect policy to people
Policy support is essential but often invisible. Communicators should bridge the gap between legislation and lived experience. France's agrivoltaic law, for example, is a promise to farmers that clean energy won't come at the cost of crops.

By highlighting how incentives, tariffs and carbon credits benefit real communities, communicators can make the case for agrovoltaics as a tool for rural resilience.

In the UK, this means showing how the technology can support food security, reduce water use and create new income streams for farmers navigating climate uncertainty.

3. Tell a bigger story
Agrovoltaics isn't just about farming or energy; it's about the future. Communicators should frame it as part of a broader narrative: climate adaptation, land efficiency and the circular economy.

Four's work across renewables, smart cities, and future industries has shown the power of integrated storytelling. Whether it's solar panels in rice paddies or AI-driven grid optimisation, the goal is to position innovation within a larger arc of progress.

For agrovoltaics, this means linking local projects to global goals such as the EU's 42.5% renewable energy target by 2030. It means showing how a vineyard in Emilia-Romagna or a lettuce field in Arizona is part of a planetary shift.

10 WAYS THE FUTURE BECAME A STEP CLOSER THIS MONTH

1. UK enacts world-first framework enabling hospitals to manufacture personalized advanced therapies on-site
The UK's MHRA introduced the Human Medicines (Amendment) (Modular Manufacture and Point of Care) Regulations 2025, allowing cell, gene, tissue-engineered, 3D-printed treatments, blood products and medicinal gases to be produced at hospitals, clinics or even via mobile units, slashing delivery times from months to days.

Read more

2. UK's Teesside airport to trial world's first driverless passenger shuttles and baggage vehicles
Teesside International Airport signed a £1 million deal with Aurrigo to pilot autonomous AutoShuttle, for passengers, from October 2025 and AutoDollyTug for baggage and cargo, in January 2026 at its new Connected Autonomous Mobility Test Centre. It will be the only airport in the world operating both systems in tandem.

Read more

3. UAE delivers first low-carbon aluminium powered by nuclear energy
Emirates Global Aluminium and ENEC produced the UAE's first aluminium using clean, carbon-free electricity from the Barakah nuclear plant, branded MinimAL, marking a major leap in heavyindustry decarbonisation.

Read more

4. Robotics: police trial a weapondetecting robodog
Nottinghamshire Police began a three month trial of a remotely operated robot dog with thermal/AI-assisted detection to scout high-risk incidents; findings go to the Home Office. The dog will be equipped with cameras to detect weapons and people as well as a loudspeaker to communicate with suspects remotely.

Read more

5. Oman pushes space infrastructure with Etlaq Spaceport framework
Oman is advancing its "new space economy" by building regulatory pathways, fostering public/private collaboration and offering innovation-friendly policies, positioning its planned Etlaq Spaceport as a regional hub.

Read more

6. Skyrora becomes first UK company licensed for vertical rocket launches from British soil
The UK Civil Aviation Authority granted Skyrora a Spaceflight Operator Licence permitting sub-orbital Skylark L launches from SaxaVord.

Read more

7. UK fast-tracks fusion with a dedicated National Policy Statement (EN-8)
Government confirmed a first-of-its-kind fusion planning framework to streamline siting and approvals for projects (e.g., STEP), published in July and framed to speed deployment of fusion infrastructure.

Read more

8. UAE's National Space Academy launches 10-week space mission & satellite engineering programme with EDGE
A hands-on pipeline (delivered with EDGE entities FADA and BEACON RED) to train Emiratis from mission design through operations, building sovereign space-mission capability.

Read more

9. Battery-free IoT? UCL's record-breaking indoor solar cells
A UCL-led team unveiled photovoltaic cells that can absorb indoor light. The cells converted a record 37.6% of indoor light at 1000 lux, equivalent to bright office lighting.

Read more

10. Saudi Arabia hosts in-kingdom deployment of newly released open-source AI models, powered by Groq
PIF-backed HUMAIN announced high-speed AI platform centres in Saudi Arabia. Using Groq hardware, this positions local developers and public services to run models without data leaving the country.

Read more

IT'S AT WHERE

FinTech LIVE London

Dates: 7-8 October
Location: QEII Centre, Westminster, London
Website: fintechmagazine.com

Why attend?
This premier fintech event brings together global leaders and startups alike to explore the future of financial technology. With keynotes, panels and networking sessions, it's a hub for innovation in finance. Attendees will gain insights into emerging trends and connect with decision-makers shaping the fintech landscape.

HETT Show 2025 (Healthcare Excellence Through Technology)

Dates: 7–8 October
Location: ExCeL London
Website: HETT Show

Why attend?
HETT is the UK's leading digital health tech event, bringing together NHS professionals, MedTech innovators and digital transformation experts. The show features hands-on demos and keynote sessions, ideal for those looking to explore the future of healthcare delivery and patient engagement

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Energy Landscape UK 2025

Dates: 15-16 October
Location: The Hurlingham Club, London
Website: energiselandscape.co.uk

Why attend?
This two-day conference brings together leaders in renewables and energy security to shape the UK's net-zero future. Attendees will gain insights into cutting-edge technologies and workforce strategies driving the energy transition. It's a prime opportunity to network with policymakers, innovators and investors across the energy sector.

Data Decoded MCR

Dates: 21-22 October
Location: Manchester Central, Manchester
Website: Data Decoded MCR 2025 | Manchester Digital

Why attend?
A two-day festival where data and AI meet real-world impact. It's a hub for learning and networking through workshops, expert talks and hands-on sessions. This free event is built for data professionals across the North-West and beyond.

Digital Healthcare World Congress

Dates: 24-25 November
Location: Kensington Conference and Events Centre, London
Website: Digital Healthcare World Congress

Why attend?
This summit is a must-attend for investors and operators in the healthcare and MedTech sectors. It offers high-level panels, roundtables and networking tailored to strategic decision-makers. Attendees will gain insights into funding trends, regulatory updates and innovation pathways.

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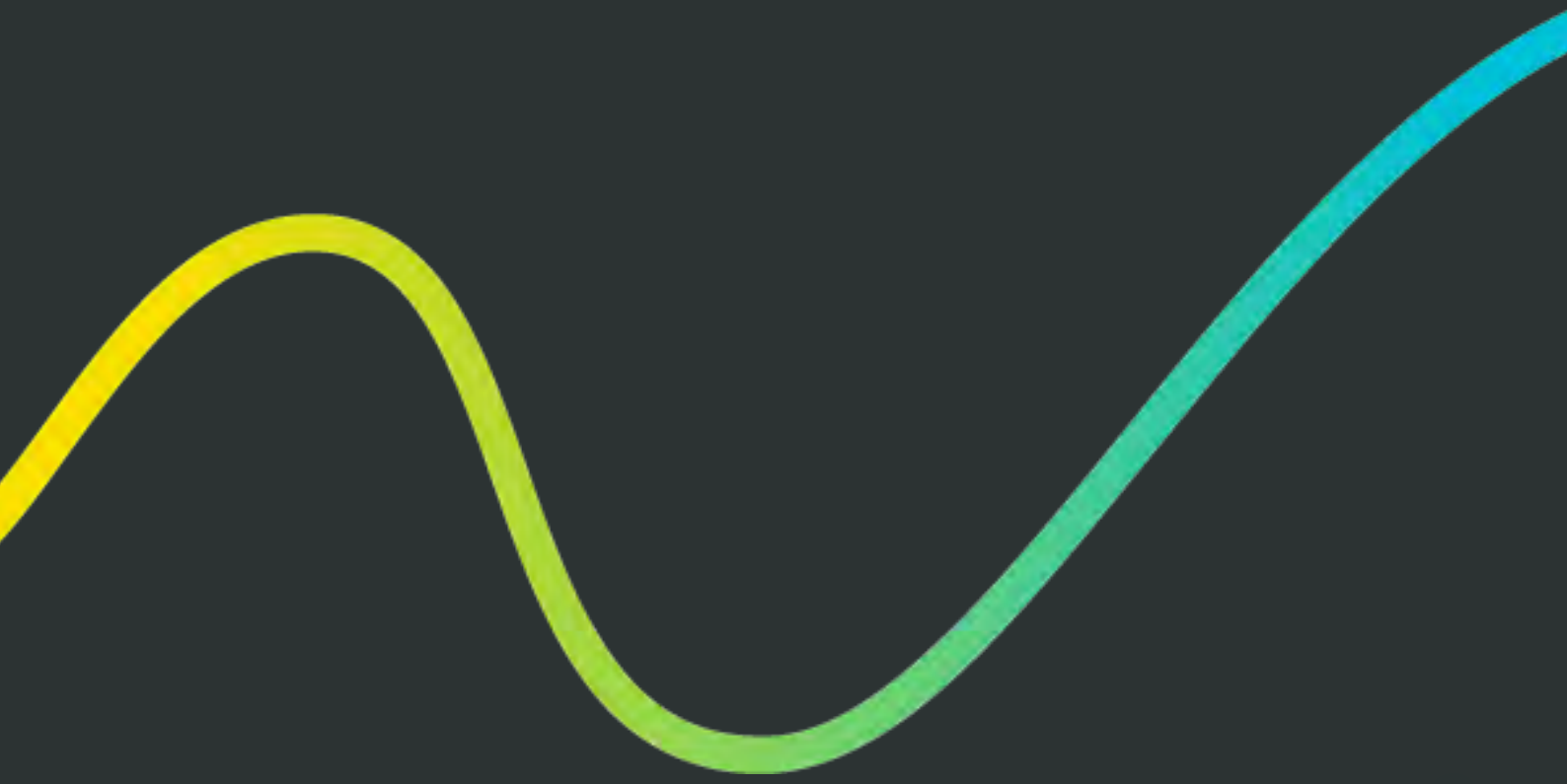

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