

Minister Iain Stewart breaks ground on Tay Cities Deal project

Building [work has now begun on the International Barley Hub \(IBH\) and Advanced Plant Growth Centre \(APGC\) at the James Hutton Institute.](#)

The two plant science innovation centres are being supported by £45 million from the UK Government and £17 million from the Scottish Government as part of the Tay Cities Region Deal.

The deal is a £700 million, 10-year regional investment partnership between governments and public and private organisations across Angus, Dundee, northeast Fife and Perth & Kinross.

With completion expected in early 2024, the centres will bring together industry and world-leading science to focus on solutions for the food and drink industry regarding climate change and a green recovery from the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Combined, the two projects aim to create over 470 jobs in the Tayside region and a further 2,200 jobs across the wider Scottish and UK economy, demonstrating the true national importance of the two initiatives.

To mark the commencement of the works formally, a breaking-ground ceremony was held at the James Hutton Institute campus in Invergowrie, led by both Iain Stewart, UK Government Minister for Scotland, and Mairi Gougeon, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, joined by project stakeholders and supporters.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

These exciting projects will place Scotland at the forefront of agricultural innovation, ensuring our food and drink production remains dynamic, sustainable and secure.

The UK Government is contributing £45 million to these projects through the Tay Cities Deal, which is bringing new jobs and investment to the region. We have committed more than £1.5 billion for regional deals across the whole of Scotland, helping communities to build back better from the pandemic.

The multi-million developments comprise state-of-the-art science, farm and field facilities, and a new access road.

The £35m International Barley Hub seeks to secure the long-term future of the barley sector by helping develop new varieties and growing systems that can cope with future climate change, plus new uses for the crop.

The project is underpinned by decades of research at the James Hutton Institute and partners, including the University of Dundee, SRUC and Abertay University, the Rowett Institute and others.

Businesses and sectoral interest groups such as the Scotch Whisky Research Institute, Maltsters Association of GB, and the National Farmers Union Scotland form part of the project consortium's demand side.

The £27m Advanced Plant Growth Centre aims to revolutionise crop production systems to produce food locally, 365 days a year, with less environmental impact. Such systems can be completely independent of the weather or availability of agricultural land, for example, indoor vertical farms using LED lights that have full environmental control and are located close to the population on unused derelict land. APGC will support a rapidly expanding industry with 25% annual growth and an estimated worth of \$12bn by 2026.