

UK advanced manufacturing gets boost with new investment in digital tech competition

UK manufacturers wanting to adopt the latest digital technologies will be able to bid for a new £30 million R&D competition.

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- Government launches £30 million R&D competition for projects aiming to radically boost the productivity and agility of UK manufacturing
- Competition forms part of the Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge, funded through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund
- The Fund – a key part of Government’s modern Industrial Strategy – will support the application of new digital technologies, including AI and Virtual Reality, in manufacturing

UK manufacturers wanting to adopt the latest digital technologies will be able to bid for a new £30 million R&D competition open today (Monday 22 July) through the Government’s modern Industrial Strategy.

The R&D competition is part of the Manufacturing Made Smarter challenge to support the transformation of UK manufacturing by encouraging the development and integration of industrial digital technologies.

The Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge will:

- Provide a collaborative and cross-sector approach to digital technology R&D and innovation to boost UK manufacturing productivity and competitiveness;
- Encourage the cooperation of small, medium and large scale companies

- throughout the UK supply chain to develop new digital capabilities and knowledge to become the recognised global leader in the application of industrial digital technologies such as data analytics, immersive technologies, connected environments and the Internet of Things; and
- Provide the platform for digital technology companies to engage directly in manufacturing.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

We want to support companies of all sizes who want to develop new digital capabilities, and will support projects that will help ensure the UK remains at the forefront of technological developments.

Through Made Smarter and our modern Industrial Strategy we are committed to making sure manufacturers are best placed to take advantage of the opportunities being created by industrial digitalisation and help our leading advanced manufacturing sector continue to grow.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport said:

The Manufacturing Made Smarter challenge will boost the productivity of UK manufacturing by encouraging the adoption of digital technologies across a wide range of sectors. It will ensure the long-term prosperity of UK manufacturing and contribute to an increase in total productivity, making the UK a global leader of the 4th Industrial Revolution and delivering clean growth.

Juergen Maier CBE, Siemens UK CEO and Co-Chair of the Made Smarter Commission said:

This investment is an incredibly important step forward, helping our small manufacturers embrace the latest advanced and digital technologies at a very disruptive time for the industry. Through this challenge there is a real opportunity to boost national productivity and stimulate engineering entrepreneurship which will create the new high wage-high skilled jobs of the future.

The first competition of the Manufacturing Made Smarter challenge, which opens today, will fund projects that will help transform the productivity and agility of UK manufacturing, ready for a fast start and with the potential for rapid impact. Projects must be business led and collaborative, with all consortia involving at least one SME.

Notes to editors

This new funding is from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and aligns with the recommendations made by Juergen Maier in his review for the government of industrial digitalisation called Made Smarter, and the activities of the newly formed Made Smarter Commission.