

UK Government invests £150,000 in Scottish research projects to boost jobs and create skills

The UK Government is investing in three ambitious Scottish research projects to help drive local economic growth, provide skills training and create high-value jobs in Glasgow, Edinburgh and South-West Scotland.

A total of 17 projects across the UK will receive £50,000 each to power up the country's economic recovery through research and development.

Scottish projects receiving funding include:

- HotScot – a project led by the University of Strathclyde to extract low cost, low carbon heat from old flooded mines in Glasgow;
- Centre for Regulated Bio-Manufacture – led by Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University, the project aims to establish an advanced therapies, biologics and manufacturing cluster in the Lothian region; and
- Digital Dairy Value-Chain – led by Scotland's Rural College this project will combine digital communications with advanced manufacturing to help create a more modern, efficient, resilient dairy industry in South West Scotland and Cumbria.

They are receiving initial funding through UK Research and Innovation's flagship Strength in Places Fund. The 17 proposals could help the UK to respond to some of the world's most pressing challenges – from climate change to the production of medicines.

If the early stages of development are successful, each project will be able to apply for a further investment of £10-50 million early next year.

It follows the announcement by the UK Government in June 2020 of the first wave of the Strength in Places Fund, which saw 7 projects across the UK benefit from £400 million of government and industry funding to develop their research projects. This included:

- £55 million for a consortium led by the University of Edinburgh to fund research to understand financial behaviours and address financial challenges such as fair access to credit, property ownership and saving; and
- £91 million for a consortium led by the University of Glasgow to

translate new approaches in precision medicine into real-world settings, which will allow doctors to select treatments for patients based on a disease's genetics.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

We are backing our innovators and with the support they need to turn great ideas into first-class industries, products and technologies.

I am delighted we are helping to kick start plans for three pioneering research projects across Edinburgh, Glasgow and South West Scotland which will build on local strengths, helping to create jobs, while developing new skillsets and increased productivity across the country.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

As we recover from the impact of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to inspire the next generation of innovators.

This search for knowledge and technological progression will vastly improve lives and I am delighted a number of Scottish projects are benefiting from this very valuable UK Government investment with the prospect of many more millions of pounds to follow if their early stages of development are successful.

UKRI Strength in Places Fund lead, David Sweeney, said:

Strength in Places is a flagship fund for UKRI. We welcome the focus of the UK Government's R&D Roadmap in unlocking economic opportunities around local economies in more places around the UK. I am delighted with the range of bids funded across the UK in the second wave of Strength in Places that will foster the local ecosystems to support innovation and sustained growth and strengthen collaboration between industry and our world-class research base.

Strength in Places Fund panel chair, Dame Kate Barker, said:

The bids provide further evidence of excellent research that meets business needs across the whole of the UK. They demonstrate great potential for industrial collaboration by bringing together consortia of business, research organisations and local leadership organisations to contribute to increased growth and productivity in areas of local economic activity.

Today's funding forms part of the government's ambitious commitment to increase public spending in research and development (R&D) by £22 billion by 2024/25, putting the UK on track to reach 2.4% of GDP being spent on R&D across the UK economy by 2027.

It follows the publication of the government's [R&D Roadmap](#) last month, which set out plans to drive the country's economic recovery through research and development and level up UK regions.

Further information

Applications for the second wave of the Strength in Places Fund closed in October 2019. The winning projects will be awarded between £10m and £50m and will be announced in early 2021, following an assessment round in December 2020.

The Strength in Places Fund is a UK Research and Innovation flagship competitive funding scheme that takes a place-based approach to research and innovation funding to support significant local economic growth. The fund supports collaborative bids from local consortia including both businesses and research organisations, with strong engagement from local leadership partners and alignment with local economic plans.

The Strength in Places Fund is delivered by UK Research and Innovation in partnership with:

[The Office for Students](#) – higher education regulator for England

[The Department for the Economy](#) – higher education funding body for Northern Ireland

[The Scottish Funding Council](#) – higher education funding body for Scotland

[The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#)

More detail about the Scottish projects:

- Digital Dairy Value-Chain (South-West Scotland and Cumbria): Led by Scotland's Rural College, the consortium will combine digital communications with advanced manufacturing to help create a more modern, efficient, resilient dairy industry. It will provide dairy farmers in South West Scotland and Cumbria with access to innovative technologies and data, helping them improve their milk production and processing. The project will also seek to provide industry focused training for dairy farmers in remote rural regions, accelerating their digital business skills, and helping to increase the productivity of their farms and business models.
- Centre for Regulated Bio-Manufacture (Edinburgh): led by Heriot-Watt University, the consortium aims to establish an advanced therapies, biologics and manufacturing cluster in the Lothian region. Working with

the NHS, and through the creation of a new building for real world learning and cutting-edge laboratory facilities, it will seek to provide highly skilled training for the local population to help identify essential new therapies and bio therapeutics such as antibodies for the UK.

- HotScot (Glasgow): led by the University of Strathclyde, the consortium oversees three new mine water geothermal projects, extracting heat from old flooded mines, which will help to provide low-cost, low-emissions heat for communities and businesses across Scotland's Central Belt.