

UK Government invest in Scottish research

A research project led by Heriot-Watt University is one of three awarded funding by the UK Government today.

The Centre for Regulated Bio-Manufacture aims to establish an advanced cluster in Lothian of manufacturing, therapies and biologics and is one of a total of 17 projects which will each receive £50,000. They will work with the NHS and will create a new building for 'real-world learning and cutting edge lab facilities. They aim to provide highly skilled training for the local population.

The funding is coming through the UK Research and Innovation's flagship Strength in Places Fund. The principle behind the funding is to help the UK respond to some of the world's most pressing challenges such as production of medicines or climate change. Further investment will be available to those who are successful in the early stages.

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.

Earlier in the year a sum of £55 million was awarded to 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.

The other two projects are **HotScot** – a project led by the University of Strathclyde to extract low cost, low carbon heat from old flooded mines in Glasgow 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.