

Innovators from Teesside to Cornwall backed as new round of UK regions granted up to £20 million to grow thriving sectors

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Partnerships in regions across England and Wales backed to build on local innovation strengths and fast-track ideas from prototype to market.

Regions across England and Wales are the latest to be backed by up to £20 million by the UK government to strengthen their local innovation economies and unleash benefits across the UK.

Funding awarded through the competition element of the UK government's £500 million Local Innovation Partnerships Fund follows backing for the Tay City Region's creative technologies sector.

The new funding will:

- Help the South West become one of the best places in the world to develop, test and use autonomous technology like drones on land, at sea and in the air.
- Bring together the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor's strengths in autonomous vehicles, high-performance engineering and space technology, helping ideas move faster from test track to real-world use.
- Support Greater Lincolnshire in turning its mix of agri-tech and defence expertise into real-world products and growing businesses.
- Support 2 connected clusters in South-West Wales:
 - Energy Security, helping scale offshore wind, hydrogen and cleaner industrial energy using the region's ports and infrastructure; and
 - Materials Security, developing new ways to recover, recycle and process critical materials so UK manufacturers rely less on imports.
- Help East Midlands manufacturers to scale up clean energy and advanced production technologies. New testing and validation facilities, alongside supply-chain and commercialisation support, will help smaller firms work with global manufacturers and bring new products to market.
- Jointly support the regions of East Yorkshire and Hull, and separately Tees Valley, with up to £30m to support those regions working on a powerful clean energy and industrial decarbonisation programme that brings together the strengths and opportunities across them.

UK Science and Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said:

It is a tribute to the pioneering spirit in every corner of our country that we are backing nations and regions across the UK to advance innovation in everything from defence to AI and clean energy to space tech.

This latest funding will take local expertise to the next level, helping to create jobs and growth from Teesside to Cornwall and build on our backing for local innovation in all 4 nations of the UK.

By working with local leaders, researchers, and businesses, we can unleash transformational research and products that improve lives.

Local partners will now work with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to design projects which target this investment, building on existing local strengths. It will help to fast-track ideas from prototype to market, back collaborative R&D, attract expert talent, and open up clear routes to investment and new markets.

New funding builds on 10 regions who were earmarked for a share of funding last year from across the 4 nations.

Secretary of State for Wales Jo Stevens said:

This UK government funding is vital to boost jobs and investment in 2 leading sectors in South West Wales.

This is just one of a range of steps we are taking to build an economy for Wales that is fit for the future, creating well-paid and skilled jobs that put money into people's pockets and provide employment for decades to come.

Adrian Dawson, Director of Strategic Project Development at the University of Plymouth, said:

Over recent years, we have seen rapid expansion across the autonomy sector, in terms of technologies and applications as well as economic opportunities. However, the demand for autonomous systems and solutions is only going to increase and meeting that demand will require collaborative working across industry, innovation, academia and government.

This initiative will enable the South West to build on its existing expertise across land, sea and air and our vision is for it to become the world's foremost region in the global autonomy market, driving transformational growth in autonomous systems that have wide-ranging defence and dual-use applications.

Professor David Phoenix, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University, said:

The Open University is proud to lead a partnership that brings academia, industry and local government together to accelerate commercial readiness, and unlock an estimated £4.5bn in annual GVA by 2035 via the central spine of the Oxford-Cambridge region.

Our geography is already rich in talent, creativity and technical excellence and is an area where research is scaled and translated into engineered reality. The Innovation Circuit positions the region as the nation's 'engine room' for applied innovation, where breakthroughs move rapidly from lab to street, and from street to scale, driving UK competitiveness and global market leadership.

Notes to editors:

This funding forms part of the record £86 billion R&D settlement until 2030 and represents a key pillar of the government's modern Industrial Strategy, supporting high-growth sectors in every region. For areas ready to unlock their innovation potential, this competition offers a transformative

opportunity to secure the partnerships and investment needed to drive growth and improve lives across the country.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/innovators-from-teesside-to-cornwall-backed-as-new-round-of-uk-regions-granted-up-to-20-million-to-grow-thriving-sectors>