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Manufacturing Scale-up Network Plus - Informational Webinar

Tuesday 3rd November 2026, 10:30 am UK Time

Agenda of today's webinar

- Introductions to the team leading this funding opportunity (~2 minutes)
- Webinar Housekeeping (~2 minutes)
- Opportunity Information (~35 minutes)
- Moderated Question and Answer Session



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Housekeeping

- This event is being recorded for asynchronous participation.
- This event is fully closed captioned. CC
- Attendees are muted and your video is turned off.
- We have addressed all accessibility requests that we received.

Tech issues and Chat Protocol:

- Please only use the chat for raising technical issues during the webinar (your name may be shown).
- The raise hand function is not active.

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Questions Protocol

- Submit your questions as the webinar progresses using the Q&A function.
- Have questions about the UKRI Funding Service? Email support@funding-service.ukri.org
- Questions can also be submitted to sustainablemanufacturing@epsrc.ukri.org after the webinar.
- Eligibility questions which refer to a specific individual or team should be emailed directly to us.

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Introduction to the Team

- Natalie Farwell, Portfolio Manager, Sustainable Manufacturing, call lead contact
- Jane Sykes, Joint Head of Sustainable Manufacturing, mobility lead
- Neil Bateman, Senior Portfolio Manager, Sustainable Manufacturing

Guest speakers:

- Ian Hyett, Policy lead for DRIVE35, Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade
- Alex Hickson, Head of Technology: Structures, Manufacturing and Materials, Aerospace Technology Institute

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Purpose of the Webinar

- Introduction to the Advanced Manufacturing Programme
- Provide a broader context of the funding opportunity
- Give an overview of the Manufacturing Scale up Network Plus Funding Opportunity
- Application Process
- Assessment Process
- Opportunity for Questions

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Advanced Manufacturing Programme

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Advanced Manufacturing

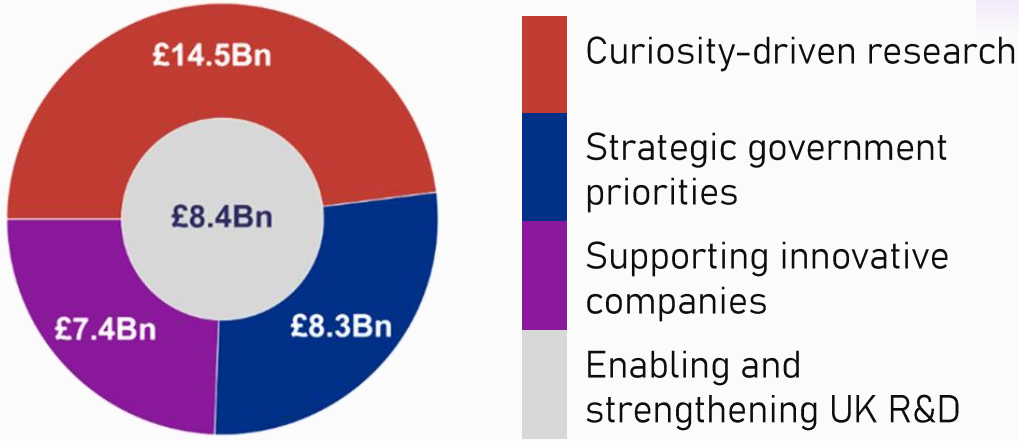


IS8: Growth driving sectors

Six frontier industries:

- Advanced materials
- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Batteries
- Space
- Agri-tech

UKRI Budget FY26/27 – FY29/30



£1.3bn for UKRI Advanced Manufacturing FY26/27 – FY29/30

Sector	Strategic government and societal priorities (SR total in millions)	Supporting innovative companies (SR total in millions)	Combined investment (SR total in millions)
Advanced Manufacturing	353	983	1,336

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Strategic Objectives

The UKRI Advanced Manufacturing Programme is a critical part of the Industrial Strategy, investing to **maximise economic growth** and **crowd in private investment**, increasing business investment in R&D and scale up.

The Programme's second objective is to **strengthen resilience**, improving the sector's ability to adapt to disruption.

Approach

- ✓ Investments will target segments of frontier manufacturing industries where **the UK has a clear opportunity to lead** globally.
- ✓ The programme coordinates with other public investments to deliver **a coherent national pipeline** from discovery to commercialisation and scale-up.

Outcome

- ➢ The UKRI Advanced Manufacturing Programme turns research excellence into industrial growth, investment and resilience. This ensures the UK is the best place in the world to **start, scale and invest** in advanced manufacturing.

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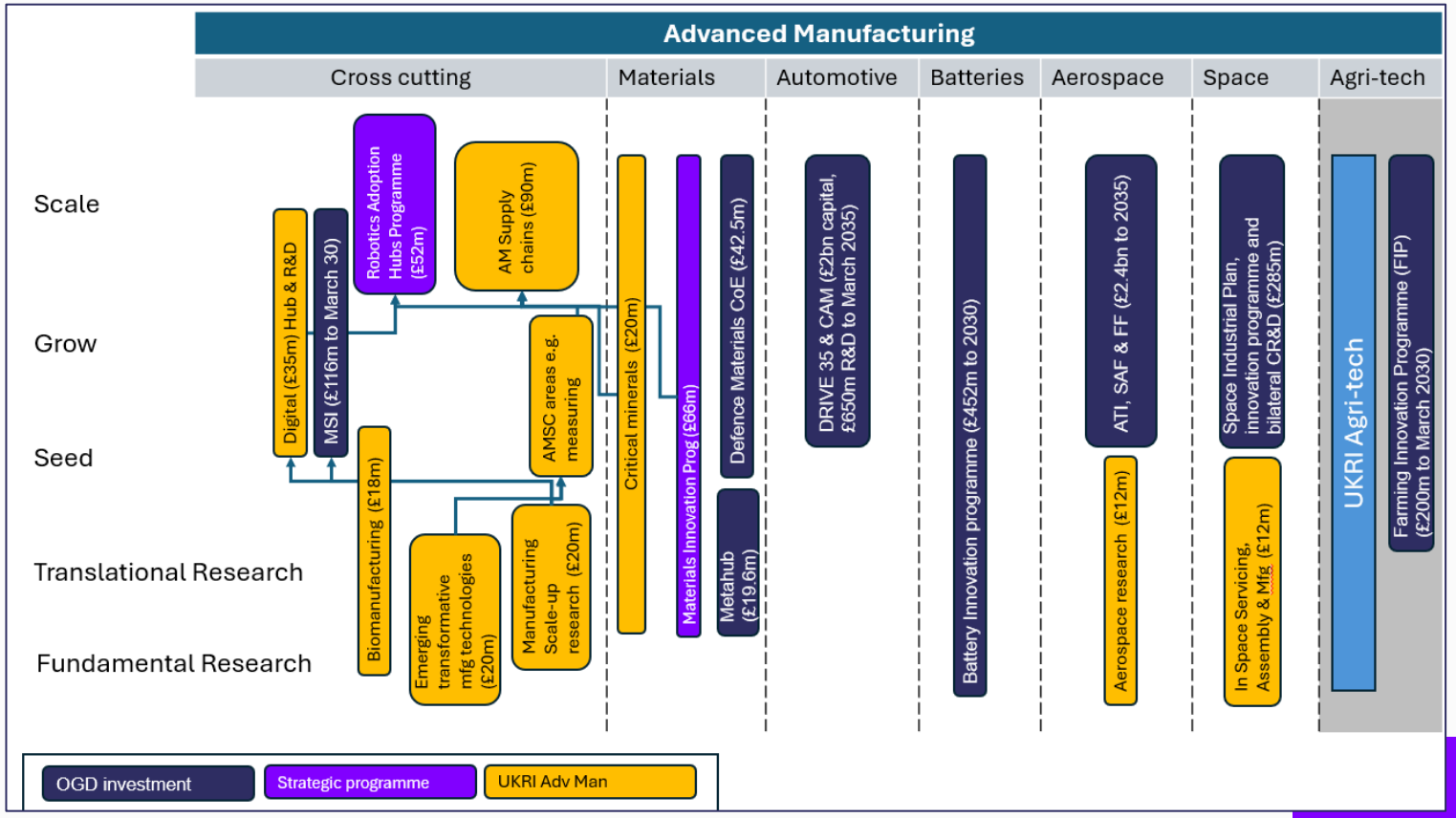


New UKRI Investments

The programme will invest subject to business case in:

- Scaling supply chains (£90m)
- Digital Manufacturing (£35m)
- Critical minerals (£20m)
- **Manufacturing scale-up research (£20m)**
- Emerging transformative manufacturing technologies (£20m)
- Advanced Biomanufacturing (£18m)
- Aerospace research (£12m)
- In Space Servicing, Assembly and Manufacturing (ISAM) (£11m)

▪Further investments are expected, co-investing with the other IS-8 Programmes & double down of key opportunities



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Delivering government growth ambitions

- Ian Hyett DRIVE35
- Alex Hickson ATI

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade



DRIVE35: a £4 billion programme for UK automotive

Driving Research & Investment in Vehicle Electrification

THREE PILLARS OF DRIVE35

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

DRIVE35 is a £4 billion programme of capital and R&D funding to 2035, helping the UK automotive sector move to zero-emission vehicle manufacturing:



01

Innovation

Mid to late-stage R&D for zero-emission vehicle technologies.



02

Scale-up

Pilot and demonstration-scale manufacturing, bridging innovation and transformation.



03

Transformation

Capital funding for vehicle manufacturing and building the EV supply chain

Innovation funds the technology development, Scale-up proves it, Transformation industrialises it .

PILLAR 1: INNOVATION

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

Projects must align to at least one of three technology themes.

THEME 1

Promote Zero Emission Vehicle Technologies

- Batteries and energy storage
- Electric machines and driveline
- Power electronics, including V2X
- Fuel cells and hydrogen storage
- Lightweight structures and non-fossil-fuel engines

THEME 2

Enhance Manufacturing Competitiveness

- AI, digital twins, vision systems and IoT
- Process decarbonisation
- Lean manufacturing and automation
- Supply chain development

THEME 3

Future Vehicle Innovation: SDV and E/E Architectures

- Software-native tools and embedded software
- E/E architectures and high-performance compute
- Simulation and digital twins
- Safe, secure AI in vehicle software

Three funding routes

Collaborate: collaborative projects, 18-36 months, £2.5m-£25m grants, 50% match.

Demonstrate: single business or collaboration, 12 months, £500k-£1.5m grants, 50% match.

Mobilise: SME accelerator programme, 12 months, up to £180,000 grant per business.



PILLAR 2: SCALE-UP

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade



FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Scale-Up Feasibility Studies

Studies into UK facilities
Grants for detailed studies of zero-emission manufacturing facilities.

Pilot to industrial scale
Pilot, demonstration and industrial-scale manufacturing.

A decision-ready business case
Builds the case for future investment.

STEP 1 Test the case first



FUND

Scale-Up Fund

Zero-emission manufacturing
Scaling up zero-emission vehicle technologies.

Grants of £2.5m to £20m
Covering up to 50% of project costs.

First-of-a-kind facilities
Backs pilot and demonstration-scale facilities.

£2.5m–£20m grants, covering up to 50% of project costs

PILLAR 3: TRANSFORMATION

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

Capital funding for large-scale industrialisation of vehicle manufacturing and the EV supply chain.

FUNDING

Capital-only funding

- Grants for capital investment, not R&D
- Builds an internationally competitive EV supply chain

PROJECTS

Eligible projects: examples

- Vehicle assembly, including upgrading or new plants
- Batteries, including gigafactories
- Electric motors and drives
- Power electronics and fuel cells
- Upstream supply chain and recycling

APPLICANTS

Who can apply

- UK-registered businesses
- Businesses of all sizes, including collaborations
- Capital-focused investment projects supporting UK automotive

Aims to create and safeguard skilled jobs and attract private investment.

Drives emissions reductions and secures future zero-emission vehicle manufacture in the UK.



FIND OUT MORE

Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

Where to find the latest DRIVE35 guidance and competition information

WHERE TO LOOK

GOV.UK
Search for DRIVE35 funding programme.

Advanced Propulsion Centre
Funding opportunities, key dates and guidance.

Innovate UK
Innovation and Scale-Up competitions.

WEBLINKS

GOV.UK
DRIVE35 Funding Programme: Innovation - GOV.UK
DRIVE35 Funding Programme: Scale-Up - GOV.UK
DRIVE35 Funding Programme: Transformation - GOV.UK

Advanced Propulsion Centre
Automotive funding opportunities

Innovate UK
Innovation competitions - Innovation Funding Service

Before you apply
Competition rounds and dates change, so check the latest guidance.
DRIVE35 Innovation and Scale-Up competitions are advertised on the UKRI Innovation Funding Service portal.

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Broader Context of the Funding Opportunity

Why Manufacturing Scale-Up Matters

Current challenge

- Innovation does not always progress efficiently to manufacturing adoption
- Scale-up barriers slow commercialisation and investment
- Opportunities for productivity and growth can be lost overseas
- Manufacturers and supply chains face common challenges across sectors

Why now?

- Ambitious growth plans across aerospace, automotive and other frontier industries
- Increasing global competition in advanced manufacturing
- Need for greater resilience, productivity and competitiveness in UK manufacturing
- Growing policy support for strengthening UK industrial competitiveness and supply chains

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Impact and benefits

How the Network Creates Impact

- Identifies and addresses barriers to scale-up.
- De-risks innovation and unlocks private investment.
- Accelerates adoption and commercialisation of emerging technologies.
- Creates stronger pathways from research to industrial deployment.

Strategic Benefits for the UK

- Stronger manufacturing capability
- Increased business engagement in R&I
- Faster commercialisation of innovation
- Enhanced productivity, resilience and economic growth
- Better alignment of UKRI investments with industry needs and opportunities

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Network Plus Funding Opportunity Overview

Manufacturing Scale-up Network Plus aim

Establish the UK's focal point for manufacturing scale-up research and innovation.

Key Objectives

- Accelerate scale-up of manufacturing innovation, primarily in **automotive and aerospace**.
- Enable cross-sector learning across **batteries, space, advanced materials and related technologies**.
- Strengthen links between:
  - Discovery research
  - Technology development
  - Industrial adoption
  - Investment and commercialisation
- Improve UK competitiveness, productivity and resilience in manufacturing.
- Provide industry-led evidence and insight to inform future UKRI manufacturing investments.

Definition of Manufacturing Scale-up Progressing technologies, materials and processes from **R&D through demonstration, commercialisation and industrial deployment** to deliver economic impact.

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Building a connected Manufacturing Scale-up Ecosystem

Bring together:

- Universities and researchers
- Manufacturers and supply chains
- Investors
- Catapults and innovation centres
- Policymakers and government

Core Deliverables:

- Industry-informed **Strategic Roadmap** and evidence base by the end of Year 1
- National manufacturing scale-up **conference**/showcase within first 12 months
- Engagement and **alignment** with existing and future UKRI Advanced Manufacturing investments
- Strategic **intelligence** on:
  - +Emerging technologies
  - +Capability gaps
  - +Regional strengths
  - +Future investment opportunities

Expected Outcome A collaborative community focused on solving real-world scale-up challenges and accelerating innovation into industrial use.

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Project partners

- Project partners are required for this opportunity
- Project partner engagement must demonstrably extend beyond an advisory role
- It should be clear that each project partner has a clear interest in the network achieving outcomes and impacts relevant to its business or mission
- Contributions may be financial or in-kind and partners can come from industry, academia, government, the third sector or international organisations.

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A closer look at the Network Structure

Two-phase approach over 5 years

Phase 1: Scoping (Year 1)

- Map UK capabilities
- Benchmark international activity
- Horizon scan emerging technologies and opportunities
- Convene the community through a national conference/showcase

- **24 months** of funding will initially be released
- A formal review will be undertaken around 12 months following the start of the grant
- Funding will continue for 12 more months following this review
- Subject to satisfactory progress, the final 3 years of the network will be funded

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A closer look at the Network Structure

Phase 2: Network Delivery (Years 2-5)

- Build and sustain the manufacturing scale-up community
- Support new ideas and collaborations
- Develop evidence and strategic insight
- Accelerate adoption of manufacturing innovation
- Inform future investment and policy decisions

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Funding Available

One Network Plus will be funded

- UKRI will fund up to £4.5M (80% of FEC)
- FEC can be up to £5.625M
- Flexible funding is available to support up to 50% of the total eligible project costs.

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Flexible Fund

Flexible Funding Programme Supports activities up to **TRL 4** through transparent and competitive processes, including:

- Feasibility studies
- Pump-priming research
- Knowledge exchange activities
- Early-stage testing of ideas
- New collaborations and partnerships
- Stimulate industrial engagement, attract additional investment and leverage cash or in-kind support from industry partners
- Policy and impact-focused activities

Up to £2.8m – half of funds available

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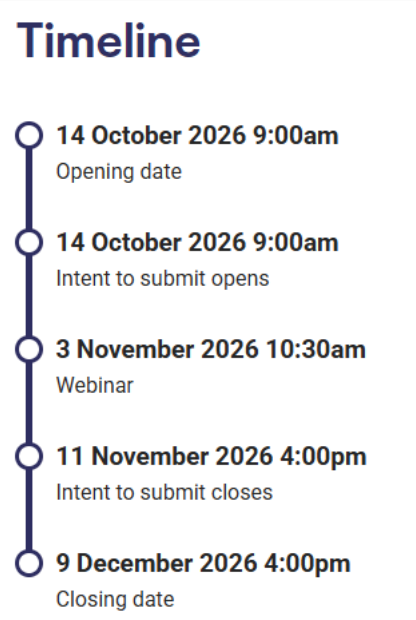
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Application and Assessment process

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Key dates

You must complete an intent to submit (ItS) to be eligible to apply – 11 November 2026 4:00pm UK time



UKRI must receive your full application by 9 December 2026 at 4:00pm UK time.

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What do you need to submit on the Funding service

Summary

Core Team

Application Questions (assessed)

- Vision and Approach
- Governance
- Flexible Fund
- Applicant and Team Capability to Deliver
- Ethics and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)
- Resources and Cost Justification
- Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)
- Added Value
- Programme leadership and management

Project Partners and letters/emails of support

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What happens after you apply

Expert peer review panel comments	January 2027
PL response	End of February 2027
Panel shortlisting	Early-Mid April 2027
Interviews	Shortlisted proposals - Mid-May

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The Interview – in person at Polaris House

What will happen at the interview?

- If invited, applicants will be given four weeks notice prior to the interview date.
- Up to four applicants per project team will be permitted to attend the interview, with at least one member from industry being part of the interview
- Further information will be given the nearer the time on interview specifics

Brief overview of a typical interview format:

- A presentation will be followed by a question and answer with the panel
- Panel will score then rank the applications against the assessment criteria using:
  - application
  - panel comments
  - project lead response
  - interviews

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After Interview

- Panel will make a funding recommendation, and the final decision will sit with UKRI
- We aim to complete the assessment process by June 2026.
- The Network Plus funded through this funding opportunity will have a fixed start date of **1 September 2027**.

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Questions

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