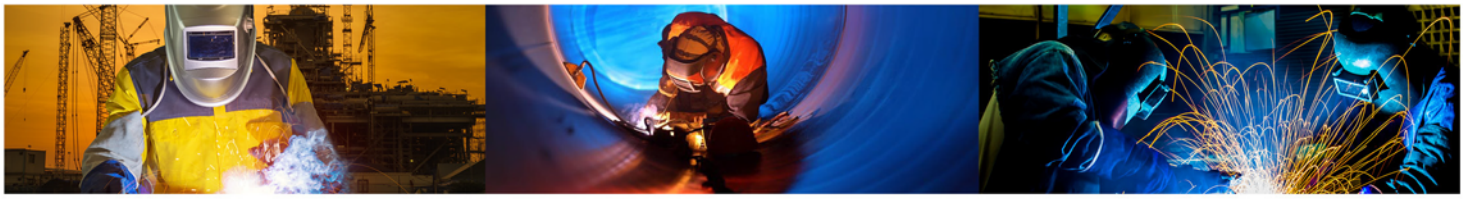


WeldingWorld

Investment plan into battery technology is launched

The first phase of a £246 million government investment into battery technology has been launched.

Known as the Faraday Challenge, the 4-year investment round is a key part of the government's Industrial Strategy. It will deliver a coordinated programme of competitions that will aim to boost both the research and development of expertise in battery technology. An overarching Faraday Challenge Advisory Board will be established to ensure the coherence and impact of the challenge. The board will be chaired by Professor Richard Parry-Jones, a senior engineering leader with many decades of senior automotive industry experience and recently chaired the UK Automotive Council for 6 years.

At a speech hosted by the Resolution Foundation in Birmingham, Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

"The Faraday Challenge will put £246 million into research, innovation and scale-up of battery technology. The first element will be a competition led by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to bring the best minds and facilities together to create a Battery Institute. The most promising research completed by the Institute will be moved closer to the market through industrial collaborations led by Innovate UK. And the Advanced Propulsion Centre will work with the automotive sector to identify the best proposition for a new state-of-the-art open access National Battery Manufacturing Development facility.

"The work that we do through the Faraday Challenge will – quite literally – power the automotive and energy revolution where, already, the UK is leading the world."

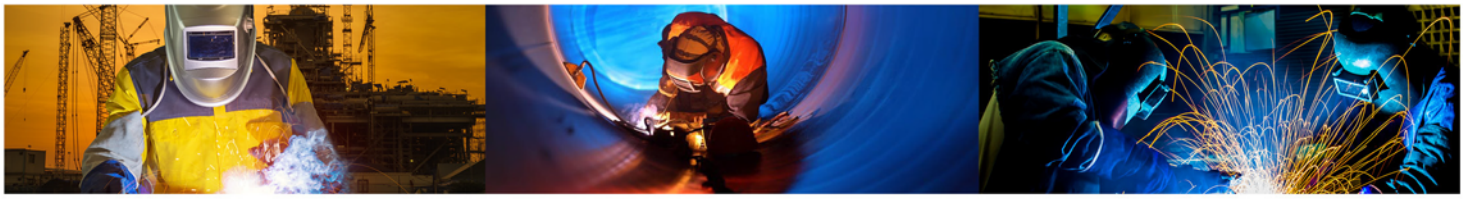
The Faraday Challenge's competitions are divided into 3 streams - research, innovation and scale-up - designed to drive a step-change in translating the UK's world-leading research into market-ready technology that ensures economic success for the UK:

Research: To support world class research and training in battery materials, technologies and manufacturing processes, the government has opened a £45m competition, led by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), to bring the best minds and facilities together to create a virtual Battery Institute. The successful consortium of universities will be responsible for undertaking research looking to address the key industrial challenges in this area.

Innovation: The most promising research completed by the Institute will be moved closer to the market through collaborative research and development competitions, led by Innovate UK. The initial competitions will build on the best of current world-leading science already happening in the UK and helping make the technology more accessible for UK businesses.

Scale-up: To further develop the real-world use and application of battery technology the government has opened a competition, led by the Advanced Propulsion Centre, to identify the best proposition for a new state-of-the-art open access National Battery Manufacturing Development facility.

The announcement follows a review, commissioned as part of the Industrial Strategy green paper, by Sir Mark Walport in which he identified areas where the UK had strengths in battery technology and could benefit from linkage through this challenge fund.



The Faraday Challenge forms 1 of 6 key challenge areas that the government, together with business and academia, has identified through its flagship Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) as being one of the UK's core industrial challenges, where research and innovation can help unlock markets and industries of the future in which the UK can become world-leading.

The Business Secretary also confirmed the launch of the third Connected Autonomous Vehicles research and development competition, with £25 million of funding being made available to new projects.

For the first time the government is making funding available to off-road driverless innovation, with investments earmarked for cutting-edge projects that will grow the commercial potential of off-road driverless technology and develop technologies that will increase productivity and improve mobility in a range of sectors including construction, farming and mining.

Government has already invested more than £100 million of research and development funding in over 50 connected and autonomous vehicle projects across the country to help UK businesses and Universities take advantage of the huge commercial opportunities in this area.