News story

New £153 million programme to commercialise UK's quantum tech

£153 million Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund funding, alongside £205 million from industry, will support commercialisation of quantum technologies.

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£153 million will be invested into commercialising the UK's quantum technologies.

New quantum technologies have the potential to revolutionise a range of industries – from cyber security to defence and healthcare.

But as an emerging technology, research and innovation in quantum technologies requires continuing government support in order to maximise the industry's potential in the UK.

Government has announced that it will invest £153 million through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's (ISCF) new commercialising quantum technologies challenge.

The funding will support businesses delivering quantum-enabled products and help remove technological barriers to productivity and competitiveness in the UK. It will be supported by £205 million from industry.

The programme will be delivered by UK Research and Innovation, and lifts total UK investment or planned investment in the National Quantum Technologies Programme (NQTP) to over £1 billion.

What is quantum technology? Read a blog by challenge director Roger McKinlay.

Challenge scope

The challenge will invest in 4 key areas, designed to support all aspects of the UK's quantum industry growth:

- product and service innovations: a series of collaborative research and development competitions to deliver game-changing quantum-enabled products and services
- industry-led technology development projects: a programme of industry-managed research activities addressing specific challenges
- supply chain: feasibility projects focused on innovative components and supply chain elements across the quantum sector
- investment accelerator: encouraging venture capital for early-stage, spin-out and start-up quantum technologies companies

Laying the foundations for a quantum industry

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

" The UK is a world leader in quantum technologies. The funding announced today builds on the great progress we have made and lays the foundations for a quantum technology industry here in the UK.

" It will ensure that we remain at the forefront of this exciting and evolving field and that we realise its potential, from improved healthcare to more accurate and reliable navigation, that is fundamental to so many services."

Transforming lives

Roger McKinlay, Challenge Director for Quantum Technologies at UK Research and Innovation said:

" Quantum technologies will transform all aspects of our lives from more efficient infrastructure to higher levels of security in the transmission and storage of data.

" The announcement of this significant public funding for the industrialisation of quantum technologies exemplifies the benefits of the Industrial Strategy, both in terms of improved coordination across government departments and also the creation of long-term partnerships between government, academia and businesses. Five years of investment in the UK National Quantum Technologies Programme has given the UK a technological lead which businesses are now ready to turn in to a significant commercial advantage."

Read about the UK National Quantum Technologies Programme.

Building on pioneer projects' success

Through the ISCF quantum challenge, UK government has already invested £20 million in 4 pioneer projects.

The projects, which are still ongoing, focused on delivering quantum-enabled prototypes within 2 years in 3 areas:

- gravity sensing
- secure communications
- developing a quantum-enabled clock

One project has been developing a device that will use quantum technology to see underground. The device has applications in infrastructure planning and development and is being delivered by engineering and environmental firm RSK.

Case study: 2020 quantum prototype will help engineers see underground.

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