

Großbritannien: Investitionen in die Materialforschung für wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/northern-powerhouse-science-plans-set-out-by-chancellor>

Der britische Schatzkanzler hat am vergangenen Mittwoch in Manchester die Pläne zum Aufbau eines Nationalen Instituts für Materialforschung und Innovation in Nordengland begrüßt. Zeitgleich gab er die Gründung eines Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre an der Universität Manchester bekannt. Beide Vorhaben sollen dazu beitragen, die Innovationskraft in Nordengland weiter zu stärken, um so die Wirtschaft in der Region anzukurbeln.

Northern Powerhouse science plans set out by Chancellor

Ambitious proposals for a potential major new National Institute for Materials Research and Innovation welcomed.

Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne welcomed ambitious plans for a potential major new National Institute for Materials Research and Innovation in the north of England.

Chief Scientific Adviser Mark Walport has been considering options for the centre in response to the Chancellor's speech in June where he called for action to capitalise on the north's real strengths in scientific innovation and its importance in driving recovery there.

Central to his plan is the opportunity to build on the north's expertise in materials science – the development of super lightweight, strong and flexible materials that have applications across a range of industries like healthcare, energy or transport.

Recent breakthroughs include safer nuclear fuels that can operate at high temperatures helping to prevent nuclear disasters such as Fukushima; a super strong steel replacement that can operate at extreme pressure allowing access to hard to reach oil and gas reserves; and biodegradable implants that dissolve safely in the body for use in reconstruction surgery – particularly for burns and cleft lip and palate treatment – vastly improving results and reducing discomfort.

George Osborne said: "This is another big step in delivering our plan for the Northern Powerhouse. Science is at the heart of the economic prospects for the north of England. I asked Mark Walport to develop exciting plans – and this proposal is certainly exciting."

Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC)

The Chancellor also announced that The University of Manchester is to build a £60 million Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC).

Graphene is another example of cutting edge materials science developed in the North. It is a one atom thick pure carbon material that has a range of applications from food packaging that could tell you when your food goes off to drugs that can be delivered to specific cells to bendable mobile phones with enormous battery life.

The Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) will provide facilities so that graphene based products can be fast tracked from the drawing board to the market.

It will be partially funded by £15 million from the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF), £5 million from Innovate UK (formally the Technology Strategy Board) and £30 million from Masdar, the Abu Dhabi-based clean technology and renewable energy company. The remainder will be sourced by The University of Manchester from available funding schemes including European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The new centre will complement and build on the UK National Graphene Institute, also located at The University of Manchester and which is nearing completion following nearly £40 million of funding at Budget 2012. Taken together both projects represent a significant investment in graphene technology.

This is a significant success for partnership working between HM Treasury, UK Trade and Investment, the City of Manchester and The University of Manchester in attracting foreign investment to support both UK science and innovation, and regional development.

Meeting with key northern leaders

The Chancellor made the announcement in Manchester where he chaired a meeting of key northern leaders from the public and private sector including Jim O'Neill, head of the City Growth Commission and Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester.

"This is the third in a series of meetings since June to promote the Chancellor's vision to see Britain's great northern cities be a northern powerhouse of the British economy", said Professor Rothwell.

In a keynote speech in June the Chancellor set out his three key priorities of new transport, science and powerful city governance. This was followed up in August when the Chancellor visited Manchester to hear northern cities' setting out their transport priorities in a report in response to his speech calling for improved connectivity in the region. The Chancellor welcomed the report and committed to working on delivering its component parts.

There will be further regular meetings in the months ahead to drive forward the northern powerhouse proposals following up on connectivity and local governance.

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