



UK Metals Council welcomes focus on the Foundation Industries in new funding competitions.

The UK Metals Council (UKMC) welcomes the focus on metals, as part of the foundation industries, that is being enabled through the Transforming Foundation Industries ISCF Challenge, which will be investing up to £4.7m in a Research and Innovation Hub to be delivered by EPSRC on behalf of UKRI. The aim of the Challenge is to 'enable the foundation industries which consist of metals plus glass, ceramics, paper, cement and chemicals to work together to address their common challenges of competitiveness and sustainability'. The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) is part of UK government's Industrial Strategy, a long-term plan to boost the UK's productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK through promoting innovation across key industries.

With a focus on employing a number of different approaches to realising impact and facilitating knowledge transfer, the Hub will be encouraged to enable academics to work with industry leads, such as the UK Metals Council, defining the research problems and works with the academic community to co-create the research plan and create multidisciplinary approaches to sector research. The Hub will be expected to work collaboratively with the newly commissioned Transforming Foundation Industries Network.

UKMC, which consists of the main metals sector trade bodies and represents over 11,000 companies and some 250k employees, was established to raise the profile of the UK metals sector, as strategically significant to the UK manufacturing sector.

In welcoming the funding focus, Chris McDonald, UKMC Chair and CEO of the Materials Processing Institute said, "The metals sector in the UK is very diverse, ranging from large multinationals producing primary raw materials, to SMEs located all around the UK supplying castings, forgings and a wide range of other services into the Advanced Manufacturing supply chain. Plus, there is also a significant supply chain to handle the recycling and re-use of metals - a vital part of the UK's circular economy. We have already been successful by ensuring that *all* metals are included in this funding challenge; the foundation industries are so often overlooked as they are incorrectly perceived to not be novel or innovative, yet they form a strategically significant part of the whole UK supply chain. We look forward to being able to exploit any opportunities for coordinated activity and cross-cutting research through the cross-sector knowledge transfer that will be enabled through the Hub in order to improve the sectors productivity and global competitiveness."

Pam Murrell, CEO of the Cast Metals Federation, one of the founding members of the UKMC agreed saying, "The sector plays an important role in providing skilled jobs, apprenticeships and supporting the whole UK infrastructure from road to rail, renewable energy and construction – but the sector needs investment to ensure it remains competitive. There are clear opportunities for increased automation, greater adoption of innovation and energy efficiency; the latter in particular can help to reduce the

environmental impact of the sector. We should not be exporting our carbon footprint so work to support re-shoring and boost UK supply chains will enable some of the challenges that the industry faces to be addressed, as well as helping the UK meet its Net Zero targets.”

Chris McDonald
Chair, UK Metals Council

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<https://www.ukmetalscouncil.org/>

The UK Metals Council comprises UK Trade Associations from the metals sector, working together with Government to support the industry to be more successful and productive. More information can be found at www.ukmetalscouncil.org