

Innovation investment **Funding announced for leading laser scientists.**

An investment of over £5million will bolster the work of one of Europe's most cutting-edge research and innovation facilities.

The funding from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise will support the second phase of work of the Fraunhofer Centre for Applied Photonics (FhCAP) in Glasgow.

The non-profit centre specialises in photonics, or laser technology, and FhCAP is the innovation catalyst at the core of Scotland's £740m-a-year photonics community.

The centre works in partnership with businesses by harnessing some of the best scientific minds to solve industrial challenges and drive innovation in areas such as renewable energy, security, defence and health care.

Scottish companies benefit from working with Fraunhofer to develop new products for international markets, helping to drive up Scottish exports. Fraunhofer also helps attract inward investment into Scotland due to its globally recognised reputation for innovation excellence.

Scottish Government Innovation Minister Paul Wheelhouse visited the lab in Strathclyde University's Technology and Innovation Centre to announce the funding.

He said: "Photonics is a key enabling technology and Scotland punches above its weight with a thriving, globally-competitive sector, with the Fraunhofer Centre for Applied Photonics at its heart.

"Their range of expertise and services is unique in the UK and Glasgow was chosen by the internationally respected Fraunhofer Institute as their European location to build on the considerable Scottish strengths in advanced photonics.

"This investment will allow Fh-CAP and Scotland's thriving photonics industry, to continue to grow, and is evidence of the Scottish Government's strong commitment to supporting our science and research communities and to continuing to establish and nurture research linkages within Europe."

As well as supporting the world-leading innovation of the lab, the funding package will allow the organisation to add a further 10 scientists and 10 students to the workforce.

Simon Andrews, Executive Director of the Fraunhofer UK Research said: "This most welcome and continued investment confirms that our work has proven hugely successful.

"We have, too, a repeat and growing customer base. The European Space Agency is, for instance, awarding us leading roles in their cutting-edge quantum technologies projects.

“The backing of the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise is a crucial part of the model and allows our not-for-profit organisation to focus on its role - innovation for industry.”

David Smith, Sector Director of Digital Technology at Scottish Enterprise, commented: “Scotland has a thriving and globally recognised photonics sector, with Fraunhofer firmly at the heart of this community.

“We’re pleased to invest in this next phase of activity to unlock even more opportunity for Scottish companies to develop new products and processes which will enable them to compete in worldwide markets.

“It’s testament to Scotland’s reputation as the leading European location for R&D investment that the globally renowned Fraunhofer brand is extending its commitment to its UK headquarters and its first UK research centre here in Scotland. We look forward to working with Simon and his team over the next five years to build on the momentum achieved to date.”

FhCAP is based in the University of Strathclyde’s Technology and Innovation Centre, a building which fosters the development of research, innovation and technology.

Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Principal of the University of Strathclyde, said: “Since being established in 2013 within the Strathclyde Technology and Innovation Centre, and in partnership with our Institute of Photonics, the Fraunhofer CAP has gone from strength to strength, and is recognised as being at the forefront of research, development and commercialisation in photonics.

“This funding announcement reflects its continuing success and impact at the heart of Glasgow City Innovation District, the city’s network of companies, organisations and academia for exchanging and generating new ideas. We look forward to continuing to work closely with Fraunhofer in the years ahead.”

BACKGROUND

- FhCAP is a partnership between Strathclyde, the University’s Institute of Photonics, Fraunhofer Gesellschaft and the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics.
- Glasgow City Innovation District is a project designed to promote a number of buildings in that sector around the Technology and Innovation Centre. More information can be obtained from corporatecomms@strath.ac.uk