

PRESS RELEASE

£4 million centre for post-doctoral development in infrastructure, cities and energy to be launched

An award of £4 million has been made by Research England for the development of C-DICE, a new centre for post-doctoral development in infrastructure, cities and energy.

Led by Loughborough University, in partnership with the Universities of Birmingham and Cranfield, C-DICE brings together 18 higher education institutions from across the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) and the UK Collaboratorium for Research in Infrastructure and Cities (UKCRIC), as well as industry and other stakeholders. These include Engie UK, the Building Research Environment (BRE) Trust, Manufacturing Technology Centre, HS2, Severn Trent Water and many more. These partners, together with others, have pledged a further £3.4 million in cash and in-kind contributions, making the programme the biggest investment in postdoctoral development in the UK.

The aim of C-DICE is to develop world-class postdoctoral researchers who have the advanced technical skills needed for the infrastructure, cities and energy sectors. C-DICE will tackle two urgent challenges that are vital to the delivery of the UK's Industrial Strategy and a prosperous and resilient UK.

The first challenge is how to build the advanced skills required to create a pipeline of world-class talent for the Infrastructure, Cities and Energy sectors. The second concerns the most significant global issue that we face - how to accelerate progress towards a net zero-carbon society by 2050, the achievement of which demands a massive interdisciplinary research effort.

There are four main strands to the C-DICE programme:

1. The Training Strand - bespoke training and development activities linked to the UKRIC and ERA facilities;

2. The Development Strand - providing funded placements and secondments with academic and industry partners
3. The Sandpit Programme - placing researchers in multi-disciplinary teams to generate novel solutions to the net zero-carbon challenge
4. The Impact Strand, which delivers knowledge exchange events to maximise and disseminate the outcomes and benefits.

Post-doctoral researchers, academics and industry partners involved in C-DICE will be able to benefit from the collaborative network being created.

Speaking about the C-DICE programme, Dr Kathryn North, C-DICE Director and Head of Researcher Development at Loughborough University, said: “This is a fantastic opportunity for us to create a world-class centre which will put the UK at the forefront of post-doctoral development in infrastructure, cities and energy. We have established a great partnership involving industry, 18 higher education institutes and UKCRIC and ERA, and I am confident that this will provide the perfect environment for postdoctoral researchers to reach their full potential.”

Professor Martin Freer, Director of the Energy Research Accelerator (University of Birmingham), commented: “The funding of the C-DICE project is tremendous news, it is a fantastic asset for the development of post-doctoral researchers. From ERA’s viewpoint, it will enable our energy researchers to access an unrivalled package of training and development programmes, facilities and expertise, developing the vital skills they need for their energy careers.”

Professor Paul Jeffrey, UKCRIC Director of Research Impact (Cranfield University) “I am delighted that UKCRIC post-doctoral researchers will benefit from this investment, which will help to catalyse research efforts vital to resolving some of the major challenges for infrastructure and cities. The breadth of partners and relevance to industry coupled with the focus on postdoctoral researchers will provide a transformative environment for research in this area.”

The C-DICE programme will start from January 2021. For more information, please contact k.north@lboro.ac.uk

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Notes to Editors

For more information about C-DICE and this press release, please contact Nick King, Marketing Manager, Energy Research Accelerator, email: nick.king@era.ac.uk
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About C-DICE

C-DICE is a £4m, four year programme funded by Research England. Its aim is to develop world-class postdoctoral researchers who have the advanced technical skills needed for the infrastructure, cities and energy sectors, alongside delivering novel solutions for research towards achieving the net zero-carbon ambition of the UK.

The C-DICE programme brings together all of the higher education institutes involved in the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) and the UK Collaboratorium for Research in Infrastructure and Cities (UKCRIC). The programme is co-ordinated through the universities of Loughborough, Birmingham and Cranfield, and also incorporates the universities of Aston, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Heriot Watt, Keele, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Southampton and UCL.

C-DICE also includes 10 private sector partners, including EDF, Engie, HS2, Mott MacDonald, Severn Trent and WSP.