



Press Release

October 2020

Energy Research Accelerator unveils plans to create nearly 7,000 green jobs in the Midlands.

The Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) is embarking on an ambitious plan to further its world leading research into energy solutions and Net Zero pathways, applying for a further £250m of Government funding in the Comprehensive Spending Review. The project is representative of the regions ambitious climate agenda and stands to level up the Midlands, kick-starting employment following the pandemic through the creation of almost 7,000 high skilled, green jobs.

For its bid, ERA has brought together eight Midlands universities, together with the British Geological Survey and the Energy Systems and Connected Places Catapults for its new bid. ERA is able to draw on a community of nearly 1,500 researchers, with a mission to deliver energy innovation to benefit businesses regionally and nationally.

With an initial funding of £60m five years ago, managed through Innovate UK, within a short space of time ERA has delivered beyond the original expectation. ERA has created 23 new research facilities, obtained £120m of industrial funding and close to £450m of total value in terms of new investments in energy research and development.

ERA has already helped to create jobs, develop skills and support over 1,000 SMEs and is now seeking further government support to continue to build on these successes.

The provision of proposed funding of £50m per annum for five years, would help ERA to generate:

- 6,800 Green jobs
- £1.5BN GVA

ERA has identified the major national and regional energy challenges and 'Big Ideas' which it will focus on in the next phase. These are:

Energy Storage - medium duration energy storage is needed as part of decarbonised electricity systems.

Decarbonisation of heat - remains the biggest energy challenge and acceleration and coordination in this sector is required.

System Simulation, Data, Digital and Informatics - dramatic changes to our energy infrastructure is hard to manage and hard to plan - real time simulation, data curation and informatics and large-scale demonstration is key.

Integrating Resource Recovery with Energy Production - the low-carbon management of resources produced in energy systems and beyond is essential.

Alternative Fuels - development and characterisation of replacements for fossil fuels is essential in decarbonisation of transport sectors such as aviation.

Low-Carbon Transportation – Low carbon individual urban transport offers a significant opportunity for decarbonisation. Regional freight transport will require different solutions such as hydrogen to help it decarbonise. The programme will support both of these areas.

Commenting on ERA's bid:

Science, Research and Innovation Minister, Amanda Solloway MP said: "There is an absolute passion for making sure that R&D is supported in this country. It's important for the future to support projects like this, which involve industry and researchers working together in a really positive way."

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street said: "The Energy Research Accelerator has a demonstrated track record of delivering in Phase I, creating 23 new research facilities across the region and attracting £120M of co-investment based on the £60M of government funding. This is an ambitious plan which sets out to deliver low-carbon transportation, improve the energy efficiency of the region's homes and tackle fuel poverty. We strongly support the proposal and look forward to being able to work closely with the ERA in transforming the West Midlands and achieving the 2041 zero carbon target. The West Midlands Combined Authority is fully committed to delivering sustainable, net zero, carbon solutions to the region by 2041."

Co-Chair of the Midlands Engine APPG, Darren Henry MP said: "As the Co-Chair of The Midlands Engine APPG, I am pleased to see another, proven example of world-leading research and development in ERA's work over the past 5 years. Through shared knowledge and support, the ERA project is able to lead the way in technologies that will support the Government in post Covid-19 economic growth and levelling up in the regions."

The community of researchers, academics and industry advisors involved deserve enormous praise for their progress to date and we look forward to the next phase of the project's vital work to enable the Midlands and the nation, to reach our net-zero objectives.”

MP for Nottingham South and Member of the Transport Select Committee, Lilian

Greenwood said: I'm proud to support the work of the Energy Research Accelerator, based in my constituency – in a post pandemic world we will need ambitious projects such as this one to prioritise Net Zero targets, high skilled jobs and regional development. As a member of the Transport Select Committee, I particularly welcome their research into the role of Hydrogen as an alternative fuel source. The people of the East Midlands and Nottingham South have a proud industrial history which will lead to a promising, clean industrial future.”

Director of ERA, Professor Martin Freer said: “Over the last five years, the Energy Research Accelerator has demonstrated its ability to deliver. We have established 23 world-leading facilities, secured £110 million in industrial co-investment, and have brought together over a thousand researchers who are helping hundreds of businesses to innovate. Our new proposal builds on this work and has the potential to bring significant investment and jobs to the region. I am delighted that we have received such tremendous support both from industry and parliamentarians from both Houses for our bid. We're looking forward to continuing our work, helping the UK achieve net-zero and building a sustainable, financially secure future for the Midlands and the country.”

Download ERA's proposal at <https://www.era.ac.uk/ERA-2-proposal>

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The Energy Research Accelerator

ERA has shaped regional policy, helping to establish Energy Innovation Zones and encompasses large scale demonstration projects such as the Trent Basin in Nottingham, the hydrogen demonstrator on the Keele Campus, the Tyseley Energy Park in Birmingham, the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre in Warwick and the newly established Peterborough Integrated Renewables Infrastructure project. This ability to drive innovation through the technology readiness levels, into real-world, city level projects is what makes ERA unique and provides the platform for the greater push required towards 2050.