

The GERI Outreach Project:

This ERDF funded project will bring together the staff and technical equipment of LJMU's internationally renowned General Engineering Research Institute (GERI) within a centralised research laboratory complex in order to provide a dedicated facility for engineering research. The facility will provide a high quality resource and knowledge base that is situated in the Northwest region of the UK providing expertise in measurement, sensing, materials processing, advanced manufacturing and biomedical engineering.

The centre will add value to existing regional initiatives such as; MAS, the NW Aerospace Alliance, the NW Automotive Alliance, Business Link and BioNow and future initiatives, by working with them and by providing referral, follow-on and extension facilities.

In addition to the creation of a new facility, the GERI Outreach project aims to engage NW based SMEs as core partners in collaborative RTD and Knowledge Exchange partnerships, which are leading-edge in terms of science and technology.

The project will work with SMEs to engage in collaborative research and development activities leading to increased capital within the region. These collaborative relationships will include SMEs, "blue chip" companies, research partners and academic partners. Between the 'consortium' risk will be shared and best practice will be shared with regard to exploitation of new technology as exhibited by multinational and 'extra' regional companies. SMEs across the region will have access to the Research Institute's measurement/inspection, grinding, and laser micro / nano processing technical equipment and expertise.

As part of the project, a Liaison Engineer will raise business awareness of relevant national, international and regional initiatives for R&D, through working with sector agencies to deliver targeted assistance. This will increase the proportion of research and development funding, from both national and international sources, which flows into the region.

A Research Access Fund has also been set up that is designed to support SMEs in undertaking early phase research that will provide the preliminary results that are often needed to support grant applications.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

1. To ensure that an increased number of SME's become involved in collaborative research and development, thereby leading to increased Intellectual capital within the region's companies.
2. To build partnerships and collaborative relationships for regional SME's with a wide range of third parties, to include; "blue chip" companies, research and academic partners and other SME's undertaking complementary activities. The consortium approach is an effective risk sharing strategy and will help regional companies to share in best practice with regard to exploitation of new technology as exhibited by multinational and 'extra' regional companies
3. To increase the proportion of research and development funding, from both national and international sources, which flows into the region

4. To provide a centre which adds value to existing regional initiatives such as; MAS, the NW Aerospace Alliance, the NW Automotive Alliance, Business Link and BioNow and future initiatives, by working with them and by providing referral, follow-on and extension facilities

5. To promote the General Engineering Research Institute as a high quality resource and knowledge base in the Northwest region for measurement, sensing, materials processing, advanced manufacturing and biomedical engineering.

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