



Big science supporting small businesses



From the invention of the jet engine to the advent of the silicon chip, the scientific breakthroughs and technologies developed by businesses have transformed the world we live in.

For small, high tech businesses growing and developing these kinds of innovative products and services can be an uphill struggle in difficult economic times and an increasingly global marketplace.

The Science and Technology Facilities Council's Innovations Technology Access Centre (I-TAC) provides a solution to these challenges which can help give small start ups and established businesses a competitive edge. Located at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus in Cheshire, I-TAC offers flexible and affordable access to over £3m of ready to use, fully-equipped biological, imaging, materials and physical science laboratories.

Companies can either lease their own exclusive-use, 'lock and leave' laboratories or opt for access to low commitment 'hot labs' and multi-user areas available on an hourly or daily basis. Access is tailored to the specific needs of each individual company – enabling them to

minimise costs, get the best results from their work and find the best solutions to meet their business needs.

Manchester-based firm Byotrol, which has developed a patented, next generation hygiene technology, was the first long-term tenant, deciding to relocate their principle microbiology R operations to I-TAC. Byotrol is using I-TAC to develop specific versions of their technology for the healthcare, food production, animal welfare and consumer markets.

Much more than lab space

As well as providing access to lab space and equipment, I-TAC uniquely offers businesses the opportunity to work alongside STFC's own highly skilled scientists and leading north-west academic institutions as they carry out their work. STFC, as one of Europe's largest multi-disciplinary research organisations, funds a wide range of scientific programmes and operates world class, large-scale research facilities including synchrotrons, laser facilities and neutron sources.

STFC 's technology transfer office STFC Innovations Ltd has a strong track record of successfully supporting growing companies. It manages the intellectual property and licensing of STFC's technology into commercial ventures – creating 15 spin out companies to date– and has

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commercial expertise that can advise companies about how to access sources of funding and bring their products to market. STFC Innovations Ltd also coordinates the European Space Agency's Technology Transfer Network in the UK and manages the ESA Business Incubator Centre at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire.

A rich environment for success

Businesses working with I-TAC are able to access the unique support, expertise and innovation opportunities offered by the wider Daresbury Campus – a nationally recognised hub and community of world class science, research and innovation.

The Campus offers many prospects for knowledge sharing, collaboration and networking with leading universities, research institutions and more than 100 small, high-tech companies employing more than 300 people on site. Other facilities on the Campus include the Daresbury Innovation Centre and Vanguard House which offer high-quality offices and larger leasable space suitable for companies wishing to set up their own laboratory. A regular programme of events and activities also take place on site which make it easier and faster for small companies to find key partners in industry on a regional, national and international basis.

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