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GLASGOW IS ONE OF UK'S BIGGEST TECH INVESTMENT HUBS

Discover what makes Glasgow stand out as a top UK investment location for multinationals and tech startups. Come join them and find all the support you need to set up and develop your operations in Scotland.

"We can help you in a range of areas such as finding potential partners, accessing R&D expertise, understanding the talent pool, support recruitment and training, find premises, gain market intelligence and competitive insights."

Graham Hatton, inward investment team leader at Scottish Development International





Written by [Graham Hatton](#) 

GLASGOW'S GROWING TECH SECTOR

Glasgow is one of the UK's top three fastest-growing technology investment hubs, according to Tech Nation. Tech companies in Glasgow attracted £43 million in venture capital investment during 2020, up 156% from £16.8m in 2019, according to the [UK Tech Ecosystem Update](#)  from Tech Nation, a network for ambitious tech entrepreneurs.

That's some going for a year beset with Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

Real estate investors in Glasgow also see tech's growth potential. In January 2021, Glasgow City Council granted planning permission for a [£100 million city centre mixed-use development](#)  that will include Grade-A office space for tech firms.

The development is next to [Glasgow Queen Street Station](#)  – itself the subject of a £120 million redevelopment – and is located in Scotland's first innovation district – [Glasgow City Innovation District](#) . This is a new £500 million hub of excellence led by the University of Strathclyde to bring together researchers and high-growth businesses alongside science, technology, digital and creative startups.

"We're committed to investing significantly in Glasgow as we recognise the strength and diversity of the Glasgow economy – and we're growing our own team in the city on this basis," says Will Hean, development director at Osborne+Co, the London-based developer behind the project, known as [Met Tower](#) (pictured).

"Glasgow's tech sector in particular will be significant as the economy works its way back to strength," he adds.



GLASGOW'S FINTECH COMMUNITY IS HOME TO JP MORGAN AND BARCLAYS

In Glasgow's nearby [International Financial Services District](#), Osborne+Co is also developing a new £140 million building that will become the new European Technology Hub for JP Morgan Chase.

The US investment bank employs around 2,000 people in Glasgow and says it is the [largest technology employer](#) and recruiter in Scotland. Its teams develop complex software and technology services for use by JP Morgan across the globe.

Tech roles are also key to the £400 million campus being developed on the south bank of the city's River Clyde by [Barclays](#) to host its new Northern European Hub. This will house the bank's technology, functions and operations teams and will double Barclays' workforce in Scotland to around 5,000 people.

Alongside the big corporates, Glasgow hosts a growing community of fintech firms with specialisms including payments, blockchain, open banking and 'regtech' – regulatory technology. These include Bellrock Technology, Encompass, Nude Finance, Soar and Swipii.

GLASGOW'S ABUNDANT DIGITAL SKILLS AND TALENT

Glasgow's digital tech economy is now the largest in Scotland and one of the fastest growing in the UK, according to [Invest Glasgow](#), Glasgow City Council's inward investment team.

Glasgow's digital tech sector has almost 34,000 jobs and turnover of more than £1 billion.

Access to talent and skills is a key attraction for investors across a range of specialist sectors. These include fintech, data science, software engineering, the 'internet of things', digital media, cloud computing, space technology and engineering.

"For a medium-sized city, Glasgow already produces an impressively wide range of world-class science and technology expertise," says Councillor Angus Millar, who chairs Glasgow City Council's Digital Glasgow Board. This provides strategic leadership on Glasgow's digital strategy.

Angus explains: "The city was a runner-up for the [European Capital of Innovation Award](#) and has commercial edges in nanotechnology, life sciences, digital media, energy and advanced manufacturing. Glasgow is also the global capital of the space and satellite industry and has been a UK leader for fintech education, meetups and artificial intelligence expertise. These sectors are served by the City Region's technology base, breadth of technical skills and efficient regional scale."

TECH COMPANIES INVESTING IN GLASGOW

International and national investors in Glasgow's software, information technology, engineering and space sectors include Arm, Siemens, Hewlett Packard, Dell, Cisco, Lockheed Martin, Rolls Royce and San Francisco-headquartered space tech company, [Spire Global](#).

Data science specialists include North Carolina-headquartered SAS, which employs around 100 people at its [Scottish Research & Development Centre](#) in Argyle Street, Glasgow. The company uses artificial intelligence (AI), advanced analytics and visual analytics to help clients tackle issues in areas such as fraud, risk, compliance, customer intelligence and data management.

"The R&D Centre in Scotland is one of only four major global R&D centres based outside SAS' global headquarters in the US and forms part of our ongoing investment in AI."

Roderick Crawford, VP & Country Manager, SAS UK & Ireland



Roderick adds: "While there are challenging times ahead due to the impact of the global pandemic, there is also tremendous opportunity for organisations in Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland that are undergoing or planning digital transformation projects. The time is ripe for innovation and to grasp the opportunities technology offers as we enter the fourth industrial revolution."

Glasgow is also one of four hubs for [The Data Lab](#) – Scotland's innovation centre for data and AI – and hosts [CENSIS](#), the Centre of Excellence for sensing, imaging and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies – and the [Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre](#). These are three of eight [national innovation centres](#) that help accelerate technological advances.

GLASGOW'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Glasgow's creative and cultural sectors are also benefiting from the city's technology expertise. For example, it was recently announced that the BBC, the University of Glasgow and The Data Lab would be collaborating to develop [new forms of conversational AI](#).

Scientists at Glasgow University are already working on technology that could significantly enhance the capabilities behind virtual assistants like Alexa and Google Assistant.

"Conversational AI represents a fascinating and essential evolution for voice assistants. The implications for user experiences and accessibility are far reaching and it's fantastic to see Scotland at the forefront of artificial intelligence research once again."

Gillian Docherty, chief executive of The Data Lab who facilitated the partnership



Glasgow was named the [UK's cultural and creative capital](#) by the European Commission in 2019 and is also UK's first [UNESCO City of Music](#).

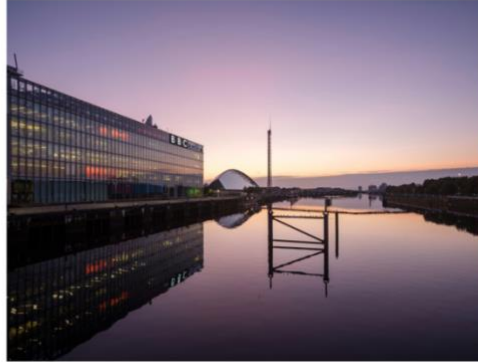
Glasgow is second among the UK's 11 [core cities](#) for producing creative graduates. The city also boasts one of the UK's largest concentrations of creative enterprises, spanning sectors including film and TV, advertising, publishing and design, web and digital media, animation, software and games development.

Broadcasters BBC Scotland and STV are both headquartered in Glasgow. Channel 4 also selected Glasgow as one of two creative hubs across the UK in 2019 and is based in Glasgow City Innovation District.

GLASGOW'S FLOURISHING DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNITY

The [Pacific Quay development](#) on the south bank of the River Clyde, where the BBC (pictured) and STV are based, is the heart of Glasgow's digital media quarter.

Leading digital agencies in Glasgow include Screenmedia, After Digital, MadeBrave and Dog Digital. Mobile app developers such as Waracle and Add Jam also have a presence in the city.



"Demand for digital content for smartphones and other devices has helped to fuel the growth of these agencies and developers," says Alisdair Gunn, Head of Engagement for Glasgow City Innovation District.

"What we are now starting to see evolving is a new generation of technologies called deep tech," Alisdair adds. "This involves finding solutions to underlying scientific or engineering challenges using technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, data science and machine learning. Universities across Glasgow are leading these developments, including generating intellectual property that sits behind the new products and services."

UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS

Glasgow is home to five institutions of higher education and is the only UK city outside London to have two of its universities ranked in the top 40 nationally for their research.

The [University of Strathclyde](#) is a top-20 UK university for research, with key strengths including advanced manufacturing and materials, energy, health and wellbeing, and measurement science.



University of Glasgow's iconic Gilbert Scott Building

The University of Glasgow is home to the [James Watt School of Engineering](#), the UK's oldest school of engineering, and is a centre of research excellence in fields including precision medicine, quantum technology and nanofabrication.

These technologies are the focus of a new innovation district being developed by the university and its partners along the banks of the Clyde, the [Glasgow Riverside Innovation District](#) (GRID).

GRID will work in partnership with the city's other two innovation districts – Glasgow City Innovation District, anchored by the University of Strathclyde – and the [Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland](#) (AMIDS).

AMIDS is a 52-hectare site in development next to Glasgow Airport and includes the £65 million [National Manufacturing Institute](#) and £56 million [Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre](#).

AMIDS is already home to two existing major research centres, operated by the University of Strathclyde—the new [Lightweight Manufacturing Centre](#) and the [Advanced Forming Research Centre](#), Scotland's only [High Value Manufacturing Catapult centre](#).

JOIN GLASGOW'S TECH SCENE

My own role as team leader at Scottish Development International involves working with software and IT businesses looking to invest and develop operations in Scotland. We can help you in a range of areas such as finding potential partners, accessing R&D expertise, understanding the talent pool, support recruitment and training, find premises, gain market intelligence and competitive insights. You can also find out more about investing in Glasgow from our partners, [Invest Glasgow](#).

[Find out more about software and IT in Scotland](#)

Meantime, if you'd like to chat about specific support, contact me direct through LinkedIn.

[Graham Hatton - LinkedIn](#)