Innovation Knowhow Capability
The Midlands Opportunities in Advanced Materials
The Midlands
Located in the centre of the United Kingdom—the heartbeat of the UK’s economy

The Midlands accounts for almost a third of all UK materials companies

Home to many, globally significant material users such as Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls Royce, Bombardier, JCB, PepsiCo, Müller, Toyota and Alstom to name a few.

Ranked 1st for Metals
With over a third of all UK metals companies based in the Midlands

Ranked 1st for Ceramics
With almost half of all UK ceramics companies in the Midlands

Ranked 1st for Polymers
A quarter of all UK polymer companies call Midlands their home

Ranked 2nd for Composites
Almost 20% of all UK composites companies are based in the region

A reputation for academic excellence in materials research:
Midlands Innovation is a world-class research and innovation partnership, combining the collective excellence of eight leading universities in the heart of the UK: Aston University, University of Birmingham, Cranfield University, Keele University, University of Leicester, Loughborough University, University of Nottingham and Warwick University.

Ranked 1st for Metals
With over a third of all UK metals companies based in the Midlands

Leading in Turnover
With 14% of all UK materials turnover

Leading in Employment
With almost 20% of all UK materials employment

Has strength and depth in the supply chain, including leading materials manufacturers such as GKN, Magna International, Dynamic Materials, Morgan Advanced Materials and Haydale.

90% of all UK businesses are within 4 hours of the Midlands network of freight and passenger airports. Birmingham Airport handles over 10 million passengers across 140 routes annually, while East Midlands Airport is the UK’s second largest cargo handler. In total, 45% of British rail freight and 33% of heavy road freight goes to, from or through the Midlands.
Bombardier Transportation is the UK’s leading rail engineering and manufacturing company. Its design, engineering and manufacturing teams produce a comprehensive range of rail equipment, from signalling and rolling stock to complete transportation systems. The company’s Derby operation in Litchurch Lane is Bombardier’s Global Centre of Excellence in aluminium train technology, forming an integrated works where trains are designed as well as assembled. In addition to being a world-wide centre of excellence for aluminium body design, this site is globally recognised for its development of electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) testing, systems integration and human factors/ergonomics.

Excellent access to the automotive market with 7 volume car and 7 commercial vehicle manufacturers with 16 of the world’s top 20 automotive suppliers located in the Midlands.

At £55b, HS2 high speed rail is one of the world’s largest live global investment programmes in conventional and light rail renewal & expansion, as well as improved stations and infrastructure.

The Midlands is home to over one quarter of the UK aerospace industry, 7% of Europe’s and 3% of the World’s. (Source: Midlands Aerospace Alliance)

With over 1,100 life science businesses, the Midlands is home to the largest number of medical technology and device companies in the UK.
A Culture of Innovation

Innovate UK, the UK’s innovation agency, is responsible for supporting industrial research and technology development. The Midlands received 24% of all Innovate UK grants in 2016-17 (number of grants awarded) – the largest share across the UK, outside of London and the South East of England. In comparison, London received 17% and the South East of England 18%.

The Catapult Centres are a network of world-class centres designed to transform the UK’s capability for innovation and help drive future economic growth in the following areas:

**High Value Manufacturing Catapult**

- HVM is the application of leading edge technical knowledge and expertise to the creation of products, production processes, and associated services

**Transport Systems Catapult**

- UK’s technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility – the future of transport systems

**Energy Systems Catapult**

- Transformation of the whole energy system and capture the new commercial opportunities created (covering electricity, heat and combustible gases)

**Medicines Discovery Catapult**

- A new initiative targeted at developing new complex biological assays and advanced biochemical analysis

The Midlands is home to 20 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). More than 40 research groups and centres across 14 HEIs are undertaking world-class, advanced materials research in metals, alloys, ceramics and composites (including nanocomposites), with a focus on the automotive, aerospace, energy and biomedical sectors.

With several Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs), including Lucideon and Smithers Rapra, Midlands companies can draw in their expertise to support materials innovation.
Why locate in the Midlands

The Midlands has a compelling offer of commercial opportunity, affordability, connectivity and quality of life.

Strategically placed at the heart of the UK’s road and rail infrastructure, with the M6, the M1, the West Coast Mainline, the East Coast Mainline and the Midlands Mainline, makes the Midlands a great business location.

The cultural life of the Midlands is set to bring growth and opportunity. The region will host the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This will involve £750 million of investment and represents the biggest sporting event awarded to a UK region since London held the Olympics in 2012.

The region has some of the finest living and working landscapes in the UK with five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and over 33 nature reserves. From ancient deer parks to the 10,000 acre Sherwood Forest, which is home to over 1000 ancient oak trees and the legend of Robin Hood, whether it’s walking, abseiling, or cycling, the Midlands offers a great environment to enjoy physical activity and a wide range of sporting experiences.

With an average house price of £199,500, compared to £585,000 for London and £376,000 for Oxford and Cambridge, the Midlands offers great value for money and affordability.  
(Source: Right Move 14.3.2017)
Support for Investors

The Department for International Trade (DIT) helps businesses export and grow into global markets. We also help overseas companies locate to and grow in the UK.

We can help with information on how to set up in the UK, provide sector specific information about the materials industry in the UK, and support you to identify the right location here for you and introduce you to local partners and supply chains.

Our network of UK specialists includes a team who are based in the Midlands, providing expert local knowledge of projects, potential public and private sector partners and other local business support.

Across the Midlands, there are 8 government-designated Enterprise Zones. Benefits available to investors range from simplified planning to business rate discounts for up to 5 years. Individual zones have specific support packages for occupants, related to their sector focus. For example, MIRA Technology Park in Leicestershire is a national centre of automotive R&D excellence. Also, there are 22 science parks across the Midlands all contributing to its cutting-edge research.

The Midlands attracted over 1,000 Foreign Direct Investment projects between 2012 and 2017, creating almost 57,000 new jobs and safeguarding a further 40,000. The region accounted for over 16% of the UK’s overall exports in 2017.

Large Economy
UK ranked 5th in the world in GDP

Low Corporation Tax
UK rate at 19%

Ease of doing business
UK ranked 7th globally by the World Bank

For more information on materials opportunities in the Midlands, please contact: midlandsengine@trade.gov.uk