

Projects include the A9, Aberdeen to Inverness rail line, the Aberdeen by-pass, the Borders Railway, the completion of the Glasgow-Edinburgh rail improvements and the Dundee Waterfront project.

In addition, we are supporting our construction sector by providing £30 million of ring-fenced support for smaller developers within the Help to Buy Scotland scheme. We will also invest £70 million over the next year in the Open Market Shared Equity Scheme to help first-time buyers, with low or moderate incomes, on to the property ladder.

Our aim is to foster a culture of **Innovation**. In government that means establishing a new Ministerial-led Innovation Forum and supporting the network of Innovation Centres, so that we can ensure effective knowledge and innovation transfer from our academic research base into the wider business community. This approach includes a £1 million Innovation Challenge Fund to help address major societal and industrial challenges.

We are supporting international collaboration by piloting Innovation and Investment Hubs at key global locations and are also promoting innovation in, and through, the public sector as a means of getting the most out of public expenditure across the economy.

We recognise and applaud the vital part played by our universities in creating world-leading research, including in areas of cutting-edge science and technology, and boosting both Scotland's international profile and innovation base. We will continue to work closely with our universities to maintain their position of global excellence.

Supporting Scottish business

We have been working hard to help Scottish business succeed, including:

- Delivering the most competitive business tax environment anywhere in the UK through our business rates policies, and the package of business rates reliefs worth an estimated £618 million in 2015-16.
- Maintaining the Small Business Bonus Scheme which removes or reduces rates for almost 100,000 businesses.
- We're helping business get access to finance through the Scottish Loan Fund and the Scottish Investment Bank and we are providing advisory support through Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Business Gateway to help companies improve their chances of securing funding.
- Promoting a culture of entrepreneurial ambition and innovation in Scotland by supporting ambitious collaborations between universities, businesses and others to capitalise on Scotland's world-class research including through a network of eight Innovation Centres.
- And, we're working to encourage more Scottish companies to become active exporters with Scottish Development International working with partners to support up to 10,000 more businesses develop the skills to go international.