

Public Attitudes to R&D and Locality

This briefing covers key findings on public attitudes towards the locality of R&D's benefits and whether they should be felt at a local or global level from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 study, which comprised four nationally-representative surveys polling a total of 18,000 people, and 14 focus groups. Full findings are available on [CaSE's website](https://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/DiscoveryDecade).

People are divided on where the benefits of R&D should be felt first

"I don't think it really matters [where projects happen]. We get a lot of help from researchers from all around the world... If something helps in Australia, then it can be rolled out here as well, to improve our marine life."



Nail technician, Female, 37, Dundee

- Many see R&D as a **collaborative endeavour to fix global problems**
- Those passionate about the environment tended to take a more global outlook and were **less concerned by longer timeframes**
- Others prefer **tangible impacts closer to home**; they want clearer benefits to people like them or seek a strong personal or local connection to R&D projects

International competition didn't cut through as a rationale for investment

- **61%** did not feel R&D was a competition between countries
- Arguments to boost R&D investment framed around international competition performed worse than other pro-R&D arguments, while those **pitting the UK against competitor nations gained only shallow support**
- International competition tended to appeal more as a rationale to men, those aged over 65 and those in socioeconomic group AB

"I feel like [the argument about the UK falling behind other countries] is blackmail and wouldn't entice anyone to agree with R&D strategies. All we've done is go on about Britain being this, England being this. People will roll eyes and move along."



Nurse, Female, 42, Teesside

Most people would like to see a stronger focus on national and regional R&D and want to know more about local research

"I'd never heard of [graphene being discovered in Manchester]... That's the type of thing I'd like to see on social media or something; let's be proud!"



*Buyer for a hotel chain,
Female, 34, Greater Manchester*

- **73%** said the UK needed to be better at science and innovation
- **66%** would support a new research lab being built in their local area, citing benefits to the local economy and well-paid jobs
- **Two-thirds** don't feel well informed about R&D happening in their local area, but a similar proportion would like to hear more