

Public Attitudes to R&D and Governments and Politicians

This briefing covers key findings for governments and politicians from CaSE's **Discovery Decade** 2022-23 public attitudes study, which comprised four nationally-representative surveys of a total of 18,000 people, and 14 focus groups. Full findings on CaSE's website.

National government is thought to fund and carry out a lot of R&D

- **39%** said national government funds a large amount of R&D and the same proportion said it carries out a large amount, comparable to universities and large businesses
- When asked about government-funded research, focus group participants tended to think of **studies to improve public services or major transportation projects**
- **53%** felt R&D was no better or worse when funded by private companies for profit versus by Government and charities not for profit

People across the political spectrum want more political focus on R&D

- **R&D is seen as an essential tool for solving big problems**, including climate change, improving the quality of the NHS and lowering the cost of energy bills
- **70%** said it was important for governments to invest in R&D, citing its role in benefiting future generations, keeping people healthy and keeping the UK secure
- **56%** want politicians to pay more attention to science and innovation and 79% said the UK should train more scientists and innovators; this support ran across voters

People struggle to see the benefits of R&D and want more detail on the rationale, risks and rewards

- **37%** could think of very few or no ways R&D investment improves their lives
- There is appetite to hear more about the **impact of R&D investment**, especially if this has a personal or local connection
- Relating R&D investment to **tangible issues**, like health or the environment, boosts support

"We have to see something at the end of the road... If you can tie R&D to some tangible benefit, such as the NHS, that will give some long lasting benefit."



Systems manager, Male, 44, Mansfield

Political messaging doesn't always resonate with the public - but place is an important way to connect

- Just **12%** have heard of the phrase 'science superpower' and know what it means - but more tangible messaging framed around R&D delivering **stronger growth and better jobs performs better**
- Framing R&D around international competition tends not to resonate with the public
- Many want their region to host a lot of R&D and **66% would support a new research lab being built in their area**; saying it would create local jobs and boost the economy