# UK’s £86bn industrial strategy aims to boost tech innovation but must embed cybersecurity to succeed



The UK government has unveiled a comprehensive Modern Industrial Strategy, a ten-year plan designed to propel the nation to the forefront of global technological innovation. Central to this strategy is a commitment of £86 billion over four years towards research and development, with an annual allocation of £22.5 billion targeted at advancing key sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and engineering biology. The initiative targets eight high-growth sectors, including digital technology, aiming to simplify and accelerate business investment decisions to foster long-term economic growth.

However, economic investment alone is insufficient to create thriving technological ecosystems. There is a growing recognition among policymakers that cybersecurity must be a foundational pillar alongside economic strategy. Emerging technologies introduce new security risks that could undermine the resilience and trust necessary for digital transformation to succeed.

Sabeen Malik, Vice President of Global Government Affairs and Public Policy at Rapid7, highlights that cybersecurity is increasingly being viewed not merely as a defensive necessity but as an enabler of economic growth. Digital trust is essential for scaling emerging technologies across critical infrastructure and public services. Speaking at the CYBERUK 2025 conference, National Cyber Security Centre Chief Technology Officer Ollie Whitehouse noted that the UK has yet to adequately incentivise and reward companies innovating in cyber resilience.

This challenge is reflected in the UK government’s Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, which seeks to embed cyber readiness at the heart of the national economic strategy. The bill aims to strengthen regulations, extend protections to critical public services and supply chains, increase mandatory incident reporting, and empower regulators to better address vulnerabilities amid an increasingly complex cyber threat landscape. These measures are intended to safeguard the UK’s digital economy and ensure long-term economic stability.

Malik emphasises that closing the gap between high-level policy ambitions and effective, operational mechanisms relies heavily on building mutual trust through smart, risk-informed collaboration between the public and private sectors. Currently, cooperation often remains reactive or superficial, with private sector data shared only after incidents occur, and government guidance failing to fully reflect operational realities. She argues for a more proactive and integrated approach—involving partnerships that go beyond self-attested best practices to data-driven, agile collaboration. This enhanced cooperation enables better anticipation and mitigation of systemic cyber risks.

She outlines a framework centred on three core areas: partnerships, procurement, and policy pivots. Partnerships require ongoing engagement that combines private sector threat intelligence and real-time operational insights with the public sector’s strategic, geopolitical perspective. Procurement policies are a crucial economic lever, and how governments buy and fund technology must incentivise innovation in cybersecurity, reward resilience, and provide flexibility in contracts to encourage private sector participation. Meanwhile, the ability to pivot—adapt and review existing regulations to keep pace with the fast-evolving cyber threat landscape—is critical. Regulations need to be risk-based, adaptive, and innovation-friendly to avoid becoming barriers to progress.

Finally, Malik stresses the importance of investing in public sector capability, providing teams with the necessary tools, training, and resources to engage meaningfully with private partners. Building this capacity is essential for fostering trust, the cornerstone of effective and sustainable cyber partnerships.

In sum, while the UK’s ambitious industrial and cyber strategies signal a promising commitment to leadership in technology and digital security, the path forward depends on closing gaps between vision and implementation. Strengthening collaboration between government and industry, embedding cybersecurity into procurement processes, and embracing adaptable regulatory frameworks are critical steps to ensuring that the UK not only innovates but does so securely and resiliently in a rapidly changing digital era.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-the-uk-the-best-place-to-do-business-modern-industrial-strategy-set-to-deepen-global-collaboration), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy-2025), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-modern-industrial-strategy)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cyber-security-and-resilience-bill), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-cyber-laws-to-safeguard-uk-economy-secure-long-term-growth), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cyber-security-and-resilience-bill)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thinkdigitalpartners.com/news/2025/07/21/the-uk-can-lead-in-cyber-but-not-without-mutual-public-private-trust/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-the-uk-the-best-place-to-do-business-modern-industrial-strategy-set-to-deepen-global-collaboration> - The UK government has unveiled the Modern Industrial Strategy, a ten-year plan focusing on eight high-growth sectors, including digital technology. The strategy commits £86 billion over four years to research and development (R&D), with £22.5 billion allocated annually to support advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and engineering biology. This initiative aims to position the UK as a global leader in innovation and technological investments.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cyber-security-and-resilience-bill> - The forthcoming Cyber Security and Resilience Bill is set to improve the UK's cyber defences and protect essential public services. The bill will expand the remit of existing regulations to cover more digital services and supply chains, strengthen regulators, and mandate increased incident reporting. These measures aim to address vulnerabilities and safeguard the UK's digital economy against growing cyber threats.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-cyber-laws-to-safeguard-uk-economy-secure-long-term-growth> - The UK government has outlined the scope and ambition of the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, aiming to bolster the UK's online defences, protect the public, and secure long-term economic growth. The bill will introduce measures to enhance the protection of supply chains and critical national services, including IT service providers and suppliers, in response to the increasing range of online threats.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy-2025> - The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025 is a comprehensive plan to increase business investment and grow future industries in the UK. The strategy focuses on eight high-growth sectors, including digital technology, and aims to make it quicker and easier for businesses to invest, providing the stability and simplicity needed for long-term investment decisions.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-modern-industrial-strategy> - The UK Modern Industrial Strategy is a ten-year plan focusing on eight high-growth sectors, including digital technology. The strategy commits £86 billion over four years to research and development (R&D), with £22.5 billion allocated annually to support advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and engineering biology. This initiative aims to position the UK as a global leader in innovation and technological investments.
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