

£3m investment for Wales' growing geospatial and space technology sector

Aberystwyth University, in collaboration with QinetiQ, will lead the Geographical Data and Earth Observation for Monitoring (GEOM) programme, which uses state-of-the-art earth observation satellites.

The initiative will help Welsh companies exploit satellite and drone technology to capture vital information for use by sectors, including agriculture, energy, security, environment, transport and infrastructure. This will enable them to develop market-ready products and services.

The programme is being backed by £1.9m of EU funding through the Welsh Government.

Professor Drakeford said:

“This is another great example of how the Welsh Government is investing EU funds to position Wales as a competitive and outward-facing nation.

“Driving innovation through world-class research and expertise in our universities alongside businesses will secure investment and employability in this fast-growing sector.

“Wales has benefited hugely from EU funding over the years and this once again highlights the importance of securing replacement funding for Wales once the UK leaves the EU.”

Aberystwyth University will work with up to 25 companies, which are already using satellite and drone technologies, to help address challenges affecting the different sectors. These include using drones to precisely map hazards such as overhanging trees or over steepened embankment slopes along railways lines. This type of information would be dangerous and expensive if collected on the ground.

Peter Bunting, from Aberystwyth University, said:

“With the advent of mobile technologies, apps and smart systems linking with geospatial data derived from space systems, these technologies are playing an ever-increasing role in our economy and day-to-day life.

“This rapidly-growing area is just beginning to realise the potential for extracting spatial intelligence from drone technology. The GEOM programme ensures Welsh companies are at the forefront of this exciting and growing area, enabling job creation

and the development of new products and services.”