

Press release: Ploughshare successes continue to support UK prosperity

Ploughshare Innovations, the technology commercialisation arm of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), is pleased to announce an increasing number of growth and economic benefits it has provided to the UK economy, including the creation of hundreds of jobs and multi-million pound export deals.

The latest report, commissioned by Ploughshare and conducted by independent economics consultancy SQW, shows an increase in the benefits Ploughshare has delivered since the previously published report in 2015.

The economic impacts include:

- The creation of a maximum of 585 jobs, an increase of 85
- An increase of 70% in exports from £44 million to £75 million
- £118 million Gross Value Added (GVA), a measure of goods and services produced, increased by £53 million
- Spin-out companies have attracted £140 million investment, an increase of £10 million

In addition to quantitative contributions, Ploughshare's activities have also provided wider qualitative benefits to both industry and society.

The commercialisation of technologies has contributed to the development of new products for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), including advanced vehicle armour, electronic warfare software, and bio and chemical threat detection. In addition to improving UK capability, this also supports UK supply chains. For example, 85% of the suppliers for the vehicle armour product worldwide are UK-based. Beyond defence, notable applications include portable diagnostic devices to detect viruses, which were trialled in Sierra Leone to support those affected by Ebola.

James Kirby, CEO of Ploughshare Innovations commented:

This latest report again demonstrates the success that Ploughshare has become. By commercialising the best Intellectual Property (IP) created at Dstl we maximise their investment in technology research and provide wider benefits to both humanity and the UK's prosperity and security.

Graham Farnsworth, Head of IP Group at Dstl added:

Our collaboration with Ploughshare is providing amazing opportunities to develop our technology for wider applications. It also provides our scientists with personal and professional

benefits by being involved in the commercialisation process which in turn has a positive impact on the whole IP creation process.

News story: Consultation on proposals to protect London–Exeter rail passengers

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) raised concerns over the award of the franchise to FirstGroup and MTR because FirstGroup already operates the Great Western franchise, the only other train service between London and Exeter.

The companies were given the opportunity to avoid an in-depth ('phase 2') investigation by offering proposals (known as 'undertakings in lieu of reference') to the CMA to address the concerns identified. The companies have now offered to cap unregulated fares between London and Exeter on both South Western and GWR services by linking these to prices on a number of other comparable routes where competition remains.

They have also proposed to maintain the availability of cheaper advance fares on both services – again by comparing with similar routes where competition remains.

The CMA has decided that there are reasonable grounds for believing these proposals, or a modified version of them, might be acceptable to remedy the competition concerns it has identified by protecting passengers using both London–Exeter rail services.

As part of its process, the CMA is now undertaking a public consultation on the proposals. The deadline for responses is 8 August 2017.

Details on this consultation will be found on the [case page](#) along with full text of the decisions, all other information about the investigation and how to submit a response. The CMA has until 20 September 2017 to consider whether to accept the undertakings, although it may decide to extend this deadline to 15 November 2017 if it decides that there are special reasons for doing so.

The CMA's consultation on the proposals comes in advance of the start of the franchise, due on 20 August 2017.

News story: Call for sponsors and partners for GREAT Festival of Innovation, Hong Kong

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is organising a high profile GREAT Festival in Hong Kong in Spring 2018. The spectacular 4-day festival will promote and increase the UK's trading relationship with Asia.

The aim is to use the festival to build new and long lasting partnerships with UK and Asian businesses, all focused around the theme of innovation.

The festival will bring together the best and brightest innovators to foster new partnerships.

Companies participating will access talent and thought leaders in areas such as infrastructure and finance, technology, innovation, healthcare, education and consumer goods to name a few. Sponsorship offers a truly unique platform for companies in these sectors to:

- gain significant commercial exposure through a strategically important international event held in a growing and well established international market
- showcase the very best ideas, products, expertise and services to an influential Asian audience through a major media and communications programme around the festival
- align with the UK's brand and values through the world recognised GREAT Campaign
- promote products and services to Asian consumers online via DIT's [e-exporting programme](#)
- participate in thought leadership debates and meet the world's leading innovators in one place
- work in partnership with DIT to create and distribute digital content and amplify audience reach across Asia
- meet and discuss important issues with the government representatives taking part in the festival
- showcase your innovation to the influencer audience across Asia

All our sponsorship and partnership opportunities can be tailored to help individual businesses exploit the platform that the GREAT Festival provides.

Partnership packages at GREAT Festival of Innovation, Hong Kong

Bespoke partner rights packages for businesses can be developed – providing either direct financial support or value in kind support in the form of a free product or service. Expressions of interest for value in kind support are sought for:

- creative services and production
- business support services
- AV equipment and support
- marketing, PR and media and communication services
- catering and beverage products

Any company wanting to register an expression of interest, in either cash or value in kind sponsorship, should contact Steven Anderson, Head of Sponsorship and Partnerships, Department for International Trade.

Hong Kong and the GREAT Festivals

Hong Kong and Asia is a hugely important market for British companies.

UK exports to Hong Kong alone are worth over £8 billion and with over 600 British companies established in market, it remains a significant market in which to grow your business. It is widely regarded as one of the most dynamic trading markets in the region. As one of the world's largest trading economies, it remains a hugely important market for British business looking to do business in Asia.

This is the third GREAT Festival following highly successful 'GREAT Festivals of Creativity' in Istanbul in 2014 and Shanghai in 2015. Watch highlights of the Shanghai GREAT Festival.

[Shanghai GREAT Festival](#).

News story: Leading the world in battery technology: apply for funding

New funding opportunities worth up to £85 million have been unveiled by Business Secretary, Greg Clark under the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's Faraday Challenge. These aim to make the UK a world leader in low carbon vehicle technology.

They include funding to:

- support the UK's position as a leader in the design, development and manufacture of future batteries for vehicle electrification
- set up a new facility to work on new technologies to propel the development of low carbon vehicles, through the [Advanced Propulsion Centre](#) (APC)

In addition to the Faraday Challenge opportunities, up to £25 million has been allocated for connected and autonomous vehicles.

A challenge to support the low carbon economy

The Faraday Challenge is one of a series of challenges set by the UK government as part of its Industrial Strategy. It will see £246 million invested in battery technologies over the next 4 years.

A total of £1 billion will be invested across all of the challenge areas.

Faraday Challenge competitions

Battery innovation for the electrification of vehicles

- the [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (BEIS) and Innovate UK have up to £30 million available for collaborative research and development projects for new battery technologies, and up to a further £10 million for feasibility studies
- the competitions open on 25 July 2017, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 14 September 2017
- we expect collaborative research and development projects to range in size from £1 million to £15 million and last up to 3 years
- we expect feasibility studies to range in size from £150,000 to £1 million and last between 3 and 12 months
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs

National battery manufacturing development facility

- the APC has up to £45 million to support one project to develop a virtual centre for battery research to make technology more accessible and affordable for business
- the competition opens on 25 July, and the registration deadline is midday on 13 September 2017
- work must be carried out in the UK
- project build is expected to last a maximum of 24 months, with the construction complete and the facility operational by early 2020
- you may be eligible for up to 100% of your project costs if you or the delivery organisation is a non-profit research organisation

Research into batteries

Separate to these competitions, the Faraday Challenge will support activities across research, innovation and scale up. This includes a call by the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) to establish a virtual research institute, plus associated research into battery development.

Autonomous vehicles competitions

The Business Secretary also announced 2 competitions to encourage projects that show how connected and autonomous vehicles can work in the real world. These will be funded by the [Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles](#) (CCAV).

New connected and autonomous vehicle technologies

- up to £23 million is being made available for collaborative research and development projects, and up to a further £2 million for feasibility studies
 - the competitions open on 25 July 2017, and the deadline for applications is midday on 25 October 2017
 - we expect collaborative research and development projects to range in size from £500,000 to £4 million and last between 18 and 30 months
 - we expect feasibility studies to range in size up to £250,000 and last between 12 and 18 months
 - businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
-

Press release: First self-service licences issued

A number of customers have now benefitted from [the automated approach to marine licensing introduced by the MMO in mid-July](#). These include the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in Devon and [Fathoms Free](#), a volunteer marine conservation organisation in the South West.

Where activities are a low risk to the marine environment and sufficiently consistent in nature and extent applicants may be able to get a marine licence through the new self-service online process. This new digital tool is making it quicker, cheaper and more convenient for applicants to get a licence permitting their activity.

Fathoms Free removal of fishing gear

Part of the work of Fathoms Free is clearing up marine debris including Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). They conduct underwater litter picks, which include the removal of ALDFG.

Some litter removal activities would not normally need a marine licence, but the larger objects that do would have been subject to the normal marine licensing process which attracts a higher fee and longer processing time (potentially up to 13 weeks).

Fathoms Free obtained licences to recover ALDFG objects:

- over 12 months old
- that might affect an area or feature of nature conservation
- the recovery of which requires use of a lifting bag(s) of 100kg total lifting capacity per object or more

The objects potentially include trawler nets, monofilament nets, ropes,

lobster pots, crab pots, bivalve dredging gear and other similar man-made objects that pose a threat to marine life due to being designed for, or capable of, entrapment, entangling or injury.

To make sure the work would not have any unintended impacts on wreck sites or the environment the charity agreed a method with Natural England and Historic England in advance of applying.

The licences allow the charity to remove ALDFG from 8 different wreck sites, each cost £50 and were issued instantly.

Robert Thompson from Fathoms Free explained:

We plan to remove abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear from numerous sites which require boat access and divers for their removal. These sites have various types of gear negatively impacting on a range of different habitats.

We were pleased to learn that the process for obtaining permission was being simplified by the MMO and that they involved us in testing the system prior to its launch.

More information about self-service marine licensing is available on [the MMO's website](#). Details of all self-service licences issued are available on the [MMO's public register](#).