

# Business growth scheme open to next group of space entrepreneurs

A pioneering programme to help firms find their place in space has given a total of 31 businesses a £900,000 boost and created new jobs – and the search is now on to find the next group of entrepreneurs.

Twenty businesses will be supported on the next phase of the Leo Programme, a free six-month accelerator run by the UK Space Agency and powered by Entrepreneurial Spark, where they will get access to tailored, specialist online and in-person support from space industry and business growth experts.

The programme is open to businesses already in the space sector and those already exploring the possibilities presented by the industry. Firms working in a linked industry looking for a route into the space sector can also apply.

Portia Bircher, local growth manager at the UK Space Agency, said:

After a challenging time for every business, it's time to look forward. And as one of the UK's fastest growing sectors, trebling in size since 2010 and now generating some £16 billion annually, space is the place to be.

Whether your specialism is design, engineering, research, logistics or communications, space offers opportunities for businesses in every part of the UK.

With the private sector playing an increasingly crucial role growing the industry, we are committed to providing world-class advice and support for UK firms of all sizes who want to join us in exploring this new and lucrative frontier.

The experts involved in the scheme will help businesses look at their commercial goals and work with them to come up with a clear 90-day plan for the next steps.

Workshops will cover topics including business growth tools and how to change your mindset to adapt faster, take risks and improve as a leader. There will also be one-to-one access to leadership groups and industry specialists and the chance to join a thriving, supportive network of like-minded businesses.

Businesses who took part in the shorter, 10-week pilot project earlier this year said they found it insightful, inspirational and useful. Eight new jobs were created as a result of joining the scheme and the firms which took part raised £900,000 through equity funding and grants during the programme.

Thirteen secured new partnerships or substantial customers and 13

entrepreneurs who were introduced to the space sector through the programme have said they will remain there.

As well as those directly involved in space, businesses taking part came from sectors including mechanical engineering, textile manufacturing, cosmetics, bio-plastics and finance as well as university spin-outs working on technological developments based on research.