

MOD Partners with Aerospace Xelerated to Support Startups Using Autonomy and AI to Solve Challenges in Aerospace

- The Ministry of Defence, through the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), has joined Aerospace Xelerated as a new programme partner.
- Led by The Boeing Company, Aerospace Xelerated, formerly known as the ATI Boeing Accelerator, will invest in world-class startups solving challenges for the aerospace sector, ranging from autonomous navigation to reduced workload.
- Successful startups will benefit from a £100K equity investment from Boeing, a further £100K+ in programme perks, access to future programme partners, investors and more.
- Due to the new partnership, the application deadline has been extended to 12 pm BST on the 8th of October 2021.

London, UK. 24 September 2021: [Aerospace Xelerated](#) has today announced that MOD has joined as a programme partner. Applications are currently open for its third cohort, with the programme being led by industry partner [Boeing](#).

DASA finds and funds innovation to support UK national security quickly and effectively, and support UK prosperity. On behalf of the MOD, DASA will support startups by providing insights from and access to front line commands, aligning them with the MOD's interest in national security and innovation priorities.

"The MOD is keen to understand how early engagement between start-ups and MOD in programmes such as this can lead to improved outcomes for Defence and for the companies involved. By partnering in Aerospace Xelerated and helping the companies understand the needs and opportunities provided by Defence, we hope to accelerate our own learning as well as theirs."

Nichola Bates, Managing Partner at Aerospace Xelerated and Head of Global Accelerators and Innovation Programs at Boeing commented:

"As a programme, we've already been fortunate enough to work with the DASA team as mentors and experts, and I'm delighted they've joined as the lead for MOD's partnership in our third year. They bring not only their expertise to our cohort but also provide access to wider MOD capabilities. There is a great opportunity for startups applying to our programme to learn from the team and make valuable connections that will make a difference to their businesses. We've had applications from all over the world so far, and we're encouraging startups to get applications in early before they close on October 8th!"

Aerospace Xelerated will be investing in startups building autonomous and AI solutions that advance the way aircraft are built, from the factory floor all the way to the passenger journey.

The two previous cohorts have gone on to raise £20M in additional funding and create over 100 jobs across the UK. Organisations to work with past cohorts as partners or mentors include GKN Aerospace, Rolls-Royce, PWC, Chevron Technology Ventures and EasyJet. Further programme partners will be announced in the coming weeks.

Startups accepted on the programme will benefit from an optional £100k equity investment from Boeing. They will also have access to strategists and technical experts from the industry and support in developing proof of concept opportunities.

Through Aerospace Xelerated, startups will be introduced to a network of angels, venture capitalists and the wider aerospace industry, throughout the 12-week programme and wider ecosystem events. Successful companies will also receive mentoring from a global network of experienced entrepreneurs, mentors and investors, plus over £100k in programme perks from partners including startup providers Google, Amazon, Stripe, Digital Ocean and many more.

Aerospace Xelerated is looking for startups across the following areas; assured autonomy; autonomous navigation; generative design; smart maintenance; adaptive learning; reduced workload and Aerospace AI Applications. Companies must be late seed-stage, software only, and working with AI or autonomous technology.

For more information and to apply go to <https://xelerated.aero>

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Key Dates:

- 8th October 2021: Applications close
- January – March 2022: Programme to run

Press Kit: [Available here](#) Twitter: [@aeroxelated](#)

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Key Programme Themes Startups working on the following sectors are welcome to apply:

Assured Autonomy

- Develop technologies assuring safe operation of autonomous flight functionality, including but not limited to AI/ML functions, on autonomous vehicles.
- Assurance technologies include design-time techniques for more robust neural nets, run-time monitoring, and tools for building assurance cases

to provide evidence of system safety to certification authorities.

Autonomous Navigation

- AI applied to autonomous navigation using perception algorithm solutions for unpiloted/unmanned/driverless environments.

Generative Design

- AI applied to generative design to explore all the possible permutations of a solution, learning from each iteration to quickly generate design alternatives.

Smart Maintenance

- AI applied to predictive analytics on maintenance data to develop smart maintenance solutions.

Adaptive Learning

- AI applied to predictive and prescriptive analytics for training of learners based on their role and performance history. Learners have a diverse set of skills, abilities and backgrounds and include pilots and mechanics.

Reduced Workload

- Flight automation technologies that reduce crew workload by providing robustness and reliability to automate routine flight tasks
- (Not public: Cognitive, physical, onboard processing)

Novel Aerospace AI Applications

- AI applied to aerospace applications other than those described herein

Selection Criteria:

- Late seed-stage
- Software
- Traction-stage with Proof of Concepts or contracts already in place
- Not necessarily already in the aerospace sector
- Working on AI or Autonomy

Startups can apply [here](#).

Quotes from Previous Cohort Members:

Andre Wegner, Founder and CEO, Authentise

“We’ve had some really engaged corporate mentors, as well as people from industry lobbies and of course the accelerator team themselves. Several of them have gone beyond their call of duty and will stay on important sounding boards for a long time to come.”

Veera Johnson, Co-Founder, Circulor

“The biggest highlight is the introduction into direct, potential clients and our conversations within GKN Aerospace and Boeing. We’ve also gained new insights around how to consider investment options. There have been some great sessions that reminded us what good teams look like and on that note, there are many activities happening around the programme like team socials and ongoing cohort support after the 12-week programme finishes.”

“It’s been great to introduce some of our personal contacts to the accelerator to benefit the wider ecosystem. I have not seen a programme in the last 4–5 years that is quite like this and we want to show our contacts, particularly in the government, that this is what good looks like.”

Andy Hakes, Founder and CEO, AireXpert

“When we started the programme, we knew that there were a number of persistent problems for us across the business – from finance and investment, to product, to marketing etc. It became very obvious, very quickly, that the programme team understood those challenges from the perspective of the entrepreneur and early stage businesses. That was reflected in the quality and quantity of the people they brought in to help us resolve those challenges. All of the programme content was immensely helpful in guiding us through those problems. Coming out of the accelerator, we were much better placed to raise capital, the energy level around what we do has increased significantly in a short amount of time and most importantly, we feel like we’ve got a good grip on the challenges we faced pre-programme.”

Gianmaria Bullegas, Co-Founder and CEO, Perpetual Labs

“In addition to the pre-seed investment from Boeing, the accelerator has been great in providing the industry connections we needed. Being an industry-specific accelerator programme with industry sponsors, we got the opportunity to both learn from aerospace experts as well as explore collaborative product development projects with both Boeing and GKN Aerospace.”

Dr. John Waite, Co-Founder and CEO, Phycobloom

“The programme team can turn good companies into great companies. If that’s not acceleration, I don’t know what is. They brought in mentors and expertise – to help to develop culture, strategy, hiring plans etc. – that made our company a more enjoyable place to work, as well as a more productive and successful business. The advice the programme team gave was truly first class.”

About Boeing

As a leading global aerospace company, Boeing develops, manufactures and services commercial airplanes, defense products and space systems for customers in more than 150 countries. As a top U.S. exporter, the company leverages the talents of a global supplier base to advance economic opportunity, sustainability and community impact. Boeing’s diverse team is committed to innovating for the future and living the company’s core values

of safety, quality and integrity. Learn more at www.Boeing.com

About DASA

DASA finds and funds exploitable innovation to support UK defence and security quickly and effectively, and support UK prosperity. Our vision is for the UK to have strategic advantage through the most innovative defence and security capabilities in the world. We achieve this by welcoming ideas from innovators small and large, providing support to those who have not previously worked with Government.