

More than 3,000 jobs created as space sector grows across the UK

The UK's space sector has seen growth in jobs and income while investing more in research and development, leaving it well-placed to grow strongly as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, Science Minister Amanda Solloway announced today.

Findings from the latest 'Size and Health of the UK Space Industry' report, commissioned by the UK Space Agency, show the sector supports a highly skilled and productive workforce that's growing across the country.

The statistics show that in 2018/19, compared to the previous survey from 2016/17:

- Income has risen from £15.6 billion to £16.4 billion, representing growth of 5.7% (or 2.8% per annum) in real terms
- Employment is up by 3,200 from 41,900 to 45,100
- R&D investment now sits at £702m, up 18% and 5 times the national average intensity
- Scotland's thriving sector sees 31% increase in space companies, up from 132 to 173
- Gross Value Added is up from £6 billion to £6.6 billion, representing growth of 10.1% (or 5.0% per annum)
- Over £360 billion worth of wider UK economic activity is now supported by satellites, up from £300 billion

The number of organisations engaged in space-related activity in the UK has increased from 948 to 1,218, which includes 95 new space-related companies established in the UK during the two year period.

Scotland has increased its number of space companies from 132 employing 7,555 to 173 employing 7,703. Other parts of the UK to see a growth in the number of companies and jobs in the space sector are the South East, South West, East of England, East Midlands, West Midlands, North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK space industry is booming and this strong growth is a key part of our plans to level up and build back better from the pandemic, creating thousands of high value space jobs in regions right across the UK.

As we look to fulfil our bold ambitions for space, including the first satellite launches from UK soil next year, I look forward to seeing the sector growing further with more young people pursuing exciting careers in space, all while helping to cement the UK's

status as a global space superpower.

In a boost to the government's target of investing 2.4% of GDP in research and development by 2027, the survey shows the UK space sector investing increasing sums in new ideas and technologies. R&D spending is up 18% in real terms from £595 million in 2016/17 to £702 million in 2018/19. As a proportion of Gross Value Added (GVA), this is 5 times the national average.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

The UK is already a world leader in small satellite technology and applications, telecommunications, robotics and Earth observation, while British universities are some of the best in the world for space science.

It is fantastic to see our innovative space sector investing in the future through increased commitment to research and development – and to see more and more jobs being created in this exciting industry.

The UK Space Agency's Spaceflight Programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports from 2022, providing a further boost for the sector. Growing the UK's launch capability will also help bring new jobs and economic benefits to communities and organisations right across the UK, as well as inspiring the next generation of space scientists and engineers.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

Today's findings highlight the exciting growth we're seeing in the UK space sector, with significant investment and research helping to create thousands of new jobs.

The UK is leading the way in this field with more companies carrying out space-related activity than ever before. We'll continue to do everything we can to support this exciting area, as the Government expands its ambitions for spaceflight.

The space sector also has an exceptionally skilled workforce, with 3 in 4 (77%) employees holding at least a primary degree, while employee productivity remains 2.6 times that of the national average.

For the first time the 'Size and Health of the UK Space Industry' looked at the diversity of the industry. More than one in three employees are female.

As the government continues work to level up the UK economy the figures also show the growth of the sector outside of London, with 27% of space jobs now employed in the capital, down from 29% at the previous survey.

The UK Space Agency is working to embed space as a fundamental part of the UK economy and society, unlocking new markets and technologies for the benefit of everyone in the UK.

The Size and Health of the UK Space Industry is the UK's definitive source of information on the UK space sector, based on a survey of UK organisations who supply or use space or satellite services. All 2016/17 values have been adjusted to bring them in line with 2018/19 prices.