

[New funding from UK Space Agency will kickstart space technology projects](#)

The call for Grants for Exploratory Ideas, part of the National Space Technology Programme aims to fund short, three-month long projects that support innovative space technology activities, encourage collaboration between industry and academia, and encourage new entrants to the space sector.

Projects could include knowledge transfer, skills development, market studies, and proof of concepts for space technology. The UK Space Agency is encouraging those who are new to space technology to participate in the call. Established businesses, non-profits and academics are also welcome to apply.

Charles McCausland, Head of Major Projects and Technology Development, UK Space Agency, said:

As we recover from the impact of the pandemic, this programme will play an important role in nurturing new collaborations and supporting early-stage ideas which have the power to grow the space sector, create jobs and strengthen the UK's position in the global space market.

Since launching in 2011, the NSTP has supported 277 projects. Previous successful applicants include London-based Rocket Engineering, which invented a magnetic propulsion system the size of a can of coffee, allowing spacecraft to manoeuvre more efficiently in orbit.

Northumberland's NORSS developed and tested a data processing pipeline that could use a novel electro-optical camera system to process Low Earth Orbit Space Surveillance and Tracking data, an improvement upon slower conventional radar observations.

[Figures released by the UK Space Agency in May](#) show strong growth in the UK space sector. Income rising from £14.8 billion in 2016/17 to £16.4 billion in 2018/19, representing a growth of 5.7 per cent in real terms, while employment is up by 3,200 from 41,900 to 45,100. Research and development spending rose 18 per cent in real terms from £595 million in 2016/17 to £702 million in 2018/19.