

News story: Dstl supports new science challenge for girls in Salisbury

As the world marks International Women's Day, staff at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Porton Down have been leading the way in an initiative to inspire girls to take up careers in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The Salisbury Soroptomist STEM challenge put to girls in years 8 and 9 in Salisbury schools was to research, design and develop a sustainable prototype to improve life for people living in poverty in the developing world. The teams entering this first year of the event in Salisbury have produced some innovative ideas for supporting vulnerable communities.

Organisers are part of the Soroptomist International, a global women's voluntary organisation, which is setting up a new club in Salisbury.

Lisa Scandling, who has worked at Dstl as a scientist for 30 years, is one of the organisers of the challenge. She said:

This challenge has been enthusiastically supported by Dstl, and it fits in well with Dstl STEM initiatives. Dstl has provided judges and mentors for the event, and it's a fantastic way of working with the local community to inspire more girls to follow STEM careers.

The Soroptomists focus on transforming the lives of women and girls, locally, nationally and globally, through education, empowerment and enabling initiatives. We hope that the challenge will encourage pupils to look at how they can use their talents and skills to help others too.

The final judging and award ceremony will take place at South Wilts Technical College on March 19, when the winners will be announced by the Mayor of Salisbury.

More information on the event can be found on the [Soroptomist International website](#)