

Press release: UK Space Agency and CNES join forces to curb climate change

The Agency's Director of Growth, Catherine Mealing-Jones, and CNES President, Jean-Yves Le Gall, signed the MicroCarb cooperation agreement this morning (19th April) at the French Ambassador's Residence in London, witnessed by Jo Johnson, the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, and France's Ambassador to the UK, Sylvie Bermann.

MicroCarb is a satellite mission which will measure sources and sinks of carbon, the principal greenhouse gas driving global warming. It is the first European mission intended to characterise greenhouse gas fluxes on Earth's surface and gauge how much carbon is being absorbed by oceans and forests, the main sinks on the planet.

Credit: French Embassy Press Office.

The mission, scheduled to launch in 2020, will also contribute to international efforts to measure how much carbon gas is being emitted by natural processes and human activities. MicroCarb will enable the UK Space Agency and CNES to pave the way for a longer term operational system in response to the Paris Agreement.

The UK space sector is already thriving, employing more than 38,000 people all over the country and supporting over £250 billion of output across the wider economy. With its £10 million investment, the UK will provide key components and services for the MicroCarb satellite, securing and growing vital capability in understanding climate change. The University of Leicester and University of Edinburgh will also represent the UK on the joint science team.

Universities and Science Minister, Jo Johnson, said:

"UK collaboration with France on MicroCarb provides an excellent platform to demonstrate cutting-edge British science, our commitment to climate policy, and a productive relationship with a key European partner.

"The UK space sector is alive with talent and opportunity and through our modern Industrial Strategy we are ensuring the UK remains a vital contributor to international space research."

CNES President, Jean-Yves Le Gall, added:

"CNES is working with the UK Space Agency to curb climate change, and MicroCarb is a fine example of spacefaring Europe's commitment to this global effort and a further illustration of our ability to 'invent the future of space'."