

Revolutionising the way we fly: apply for business funding



Flying taxis, drones delivering medical supplies, small electric aircraft, vertical take-off and landing vehicles and autonomous aircraft are some of the innovations that could transform aviation and broader transportation in the future.

New systems and technologies must be developed to allow them to use existing airports and airspace to fly in and around rural and urban environments. New business models must be created, and the public must have confidence in new services.

The government has set aside £125 million as part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Future Flight Challenge to make the UK a world leader in aviation systems, products and markets. The funding supports development of capabilities to enable safe operations of these new modes of air transportation.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £30 million from the fund to support projects that develop and demonstrate integrated aviation systems for new electric and autonomous aircraft.

Projects should help new aircraft to fly in and out

Projects should aim to develop and demonstrate integrated aviation systems that allow drones, urban aircraft or electric regional aircraft to fly in and out of airports, airspace, and rural and urban environments. They should take a 'system of systems' approach and could focus on several areas including:

- air traffic management and unmanned traffic management systems
- physical and digital infrastructure to support future flight
- autonomy
- digital and communications systems
- new business models
- public acceptance
- transport integration
- vehicle technologies enabling integration to new aviation systems
- simulation

- non-aerospace regulation
- viable, challenging, use cases
- total security systems

There are two strands to the competition, one for smaller fast-track projects and the second for larger consortia undertaking more ambitious projects.

Applications are sought from businesses that work in the aviation sector and from businesses outside the sector that can bring in new technologies.

Strand 1

- the competition is open, and the closing date is at midday on 1 July 2020
- projects must be led by an SME working with at least one other business, research organisation, public sector organisation or charity
- we expect projects to range in size between £150,000 and £500,000 and to last between 6 and 18 months
- a briefing event will be held on 19 May 2020

Strand 2

- the competition is open, and the closing date is at midday on 1 July 2020
- projects can be led by businesses of any size but must include at least 1 SME as a project partner
- we expect projects to range in size between £500,000 and £10 million and to last between 6 and 18 months
- a briefing event will be held on 19 May 2020

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