

# Science Minister hails 'incredible strength' of UK space industry

- New funding for UK business ideas to fly to the International Space Station
- UK Space Agency to support one million STEM interactions with young people.
- £20 million from government's [Strategic Priorities Fund](#) to upgrade UK capabilities in space weather modelling and measurement and £1.3 million for horizontal spaceport plans in England, Scotland and Wales.

A new package of space funding was unveiled by Science Minister Chris Skidmore at the [UK Space Conference](#) in Newport today (Tuesday 24 September).

The government is committed to developing the UK's national space capabilities while stepping up international collaborations, including through the European Space Agency.

The UK Space Agency will provide up to £1 million, matched by industry, for innovative new business ideas that could benefit from a flight to the International Space Station. These could be anything from medicines and innovative materials developed in the low gravity environment, to space-flown consumer products.

The Science Minister also announced a new STEM education programme which will see the UK Space Agency supporting the space sector to engage with one million young people each year. The new programme aims to recruit more professionals to enthuse and inspire young people, providing training and matching them up to opportunities in schools and colleges.

This follows the announcement earlier today that [the government is investing £20 million](#) to predict severe space weather events, improving systems at the [Met Office Space Weather Operations Centre](#) and building the UK's knowledge on how to forecast and better prepare for space weather.

The UK Space Agency will also award £1.3 million to help further develop plans for horizontal spaceports in Wales, Scotland and England: \* £499,811 to Snowdonia Aerospace for the Snowdonia Spaceport Development Plan, which aims to create a centre for space R&D, training and satellite launch. \* £488,000 to Machrihanish Airbase Community Company for the spaceport cluster plan in Argyle, Scotland, centred on an aerodrome with the longest runway in Scotland. \* £306,480 to Cornwall Council for an Accelerated Business Development and Research Project at Spaceport Cornwall, supporting its ambition to be a centre for future flight technologies.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

I'm consistently blown away by the incredible strength of the UK space industry and the contribution it makes to life across the

country, providing us with innovative solutions to complex problems and creating high-skilled jobs for more than 40,000 people.

There are huge opportunities as space becomes more commercial, and to meet them we must harness the inspirational effect space has on young people and bring even more people into this fast-growing sector.

It's also vital that we both build our national capability and forge new international partnerships, while strengthening our commitment to the European Space Agency, which delivers world-leading science and a significant return on investment, benefiting people and businesses across the country.

This morning, the UK Space Agency and [Australian Space Agency](#) signalled their intent to develop a 'SpaceBridge' agreement, which will unlock greater collaboration between the two nation's governments, regulators and space industries.

There are further opportunities to increase international space collaboration at the European Space Agency Council of Ministers meeting in November, where science, space weather and exploration will be key priorities for the UK.

The government has also confirmed it will establish the UK's first National Space Council, with further details of the chair and membership of the Council to follow in the coming weeks.

The Science Minister will meet key international partners such as the European Space Agency and NASA during the UK Space Conference, which is expected to attract up to 1,800 people to the new International Convention Centre Wales.

He will also engage with representatives from across the UK's thriving space sector to discuss a potential boost to national investments in key technologies and priority missions.