

Search is on for young space entrepreneurs ahead of first UK rocket launches

With Britain's first satellite launches set to take place this year, the SatelLife Competition is looking for the best new ideas for how to use data collected from space to benefit daily life, from supporting local communities and the NHS, to monitoring the environment and tackling climate change.

The competition is now in its fifth year, with previous winning ideas including drones carrying medical supplies, a pin badge to monitor air pollution and an app to track abandoned shopping trolleys.

This year will see the first satellite launches taking place from UK spaceports, with the first horizontal launch from a carrier aircraft expected from Spaceport Cornwall, followed by vertical launch from Shetland's SaxaVord Spaceport and Space Hub Sutherland.

Satellites support the economy and everyday life, and this competition gives people aged 11-22 the chance to test their ideas with space experts and perhaps one day become part of one of the UK's fastest growing industries which already employs 45,000 people.

Science Minister George Freeman said:

Britain is set to become the first nation in Europe to offer small satellite launch, building on our world-leading satellite manufacturing industry. Seeing satellites launch from the UK for the first time will be a huge moment for the UK space tech sector.

The SatelLife Competition is designed to inspire the next generation of British space scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs, by helping our young innovators unleash their imaginations and turn their ideas into real-life proposals that could eventually transform our lives – from supporting our transition to Net Zero, to improving local healthcare services.

The UK Space Agency is committed to championing the power of space to inspire people and to offer greener, smarter solutions for businesses, supporting a more sustainable future.

British ESA astronaut Tim Peake said:

It has been amazing to see so many people inspired by my mission to the International Space Station and I hope that when satellites launch from the UK, it will help to show young people that there

are all sorts of jobs in the space sector, including developing new applications for the data we get from space.

Satellites are playing a huge role in our daily lives, from monitoring climate change, to watching television and I know that young people will have some fantastic ideas for new ways they can improve our lives. I can't wait to see what they come up with, the possibilities are endless!

Previous winners include Lowena Hull, from Portsmouth, who, in 2019, had an idea to track abandoned supermarket trolleys using satellites.

Lowena Hull said:

The SatelliLife competition was an amazing chance to research into all the different ways satellite data can be implemented to help tackle a whole host of problems in both the local community and nationwide.

My advice for anyone looking to get involved with the SatelliLife Competition is to take a good look around and think: are there any problems either locally or globally I would like to try and solve? How might I be able to use satellite data to come up with a solution? Take your time with research and consider both feasibility and how might you implement your solution. Good luck!

There is a total of £50,000 prize money up for grabs which will be shared across three age groups; 11-14, 15-18 and 19-22.

The judging panel will be made up of experts including industry representatives and the UK Space Agency, Satellite Applications Catapult and European Space Agency (ESA). The UK is the leading investor in ESA's business applications programme and hosts the European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications in Harwell, Oxfordshire.

All winners will go on to pitch their ideas to a panel of 'dragons' at the Harwell Space Cluster in June for the chance to win further prizes. Previous prizes have included further funding, patent advice and invitations to discuss job opportunities as well as introductions to the other relevant experts for further help.