

Press release: Lift off for new investment in UK SMEs to develop new aerospace technology

- Business Minister launches £24 million research & development fund to back pioneering aerospace SMEs developing new solutions to UK aerospace challenges
- separate programme worth almost £14 million also unveiled – boosting global competitiveness of UK aerospace SMEs
- new commitments are part of the modern Industrial Strategy and joint government-industry Aerospace Sector Deal

Government today backed pioneering aerospace SMEs with the launch of a new £24 million fund for collaborative research and development (R&D) projects.

The new funding opportunity, announced by Business Minister Andrew Stephenson at the Paris Airshow, will help keep UK aerospace suppliers at the forefront of aerospace manufacturing.

Through the programme up to £12 million government funding, matched by industry, will be available as part of the Open Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D) competition, supported by the Aerospace Technology Institute Programme.

The Business Minister also announced the opening of the new round of the National Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (NATEP 3) to help SMEs develop innovate technology, including, virtual reality training for cabin crew and 3D aerospace structures to lighten aircraft, and bring it to market quickly to boost their global competitiveness.

In a speech, Business Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

Innovation and R&D are crucial for the UK aerospace sector and I am delighted that we have today launched two programmes to support R&D for SMEs.

Through our Industrial Strategy we are ensuring the UK remains a world-leader by boosting R&D activity, developing new technology and increasing the UK's share of the growing aerospace market.

To boost UK aerospace R&D activity, develop new technology and increase the UK's share of the growing aerospace market, industry and government made a total joint funding commitment of £3.9 billion for civil aerospace research from 2013 to 2026. Of that funding, today's announcements include:

- Open Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D): a £24 million

programme to support and accelerate industry investment focused on small and medium sized supply chain companies. This competition seeks high risk, high impact projects that demonstrate future-thinking, revolutionary and disruptive solutions to UK aerospace challenges. The call will open in October 2019 and potential applicants should now contact the Aerospace Technology Institute to discuss the preparation of their bids.

- National Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme 3 (NATEP 3): a £13.7 million programme aimed at small and medium sized suppliers to help them develop their own innovative technologies to enhance their capabilities and increase their ability to win new business. It is primarily aimed at small and medium sized businesses that are new to R&D or are restarting R&D activity. The programme builds upon the successful NATEP 1 and 2 programmes. The first call for NATEP 3 will open in September 2019 and companies wanting to participate are encouraged to speak to ADS.

ADS Chief Executive Paul Everitt said:

The UK's successful Aerospace Industrial Strategy is helping companies in this innovative sector to develop advanced new technology, raise their productivity and create high value jobs in every part of the country.

Programmes like these are generating new R&D investment at every level of the industry. This investment is vital to boosting our international competitiveness and to developing the technologies of the future that will deliver improved fuel efficiency and significant reductions in the environmental impact of aviation worldwide.

During the Paris Airshow, the Business Minister also met small, medium and large companies exhibiting from across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

[Press release: Lord Ahmad visits Serbia to promote Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict campaign](#)

Lord Ahmad will brief key members of government, religious communities and

civil society representatives on the UK's work in support of the PSVI, and will encourage Serbia's participation at the forthcoming international conference in London and support of the initiative.

His meetings will include bilateral engagements with Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, and Veljko Odalović, President of the Serbian Commission for Mission Persons.

Lord Ahmad will use a joint meeting with representatives of religious communities to discuss his role as Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence and the UK's commitment to tackling religious discrimination and promoting tolerance. This will be a valuable opportunity to exchange views on the status of religious rights and interfaith dialogue in Serbia.

Following an address to the Regional Military Medical Conference on the role of women in peacekeeping operations, the Minister will also meet with Snežana Stanojković, War Crimes Chief Prosecutor, to discuss the continuing search for justice for the victims of war crimes.

Ahead of the visit, Lord Ahmad said:

This is my first visit to Serbia and I am delighted to be here in my capacity as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict to discuss the important work of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, or PSVI, campaign and to hear of progress being made by Serbia and the wider region on "Missing Persons".

I look forward to discussing regional and bilateral issues with civil society representatives and Government Ministers and to deepening the UK's bilateral and societal cooperation with Serbia.

My message will be that we must acknowledge the role civil society and human rights defenders play in building more open, inclusive and democratic societies in Serbia and the Western Balkans, and the UK stands ready to support you fully to ensure a positive future for the region.

Further information

[Press release: PM's meeting with the President of Afghanistan: 17 June 2019](#)

The Prime Minister hosted Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Downing Street

today as part of his Guest of Government visit to the UK.

They discussed the upcoming Presidential elections in Afghanistan and agreed that these must be credible and transparent.

On regional stability, the Prime Minister welcomed the steps toward peace in Afghanistan that President Ghani has taken, as well as his talks with Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan. The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's support for these efforts.

They also discussed the UK's continued development assistance for Afghanistan, and the Prime Minister highlighted additional humanitarian support over the next five years to help Afghans in urgent need of food, water and medicine.

[Press release: Northern healthcare firms target new opportunities in Africa](#)

Businesses including Yorkshire's Sunflower Medical and Medasil were amongst 16 firms from the north that travelled to trade fair Africa Health 2019 in South Africa as part of a mission organised by DIT and Medilink UK, the UK's largest association of Life Sciences and Medical Technology companies.

This comes as a new analysis of HMRC data by DIT found that exports of UK medical equipment reached a record high of £1.8 billion in 2018, up by 6% on 2017.

The mission, which saw the delivery of a British pavilion at the exhibition, provided an unrivalled opportunity for the businesses to meet potential new buyers and learn more about overcoming barriers and breaking into new markets in Africa. The businesses were accompanied by life sciences sector specialists from DIT in the north of England.

Bradford's Sunflower Medical, which manufactures contemporary functional furniture for medical use, has experienced growing demand from several African markets over recent years, and has already supplied its medical furniture into Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Morocco and Nigeria.

Sunflower Medical's Export Sales Manager Paul Hampton believes there are still significant opportunities for expansion with new healthcare projects across the continent.

He said:

We're very conscious of the rapidly growing opportunities in African markets, which is why we made the decision to return to Africa Health this year. It's great that DIT and Medilink host these missions, as being on the ground at these events is invaluable to companies like ours".

This year's trip proved incredibly fruitful, with an encouraging quantity and quality of sales leads generated. Just over half of sales leads over the three days came from the South African market, with interest also coming from companies looking to represent Sunflower Medical in Kenya, Ghana and Malawi.

Leeds based Medasil, which has been making devices for a range of medical applications since 1974, was also in attendance on the mission.

Medasil's Christine Casey commented:

While Medasil doesn't currently export to African markets, we're keen to venture into new areas of opportunity, which is why we registered for the DIT mission to Africa Health.

We were hugely encouraged by what we saw, and we gained some valuable insights into the opportunities the continent holds. Our exhibit was received very positively and we have returned to the UK with genuine excitement about the opportunities for expansion into the African continent".

Strengthening the UK's partnership with African nations is a key element of the UK Government's vision for Global Britain.

Last year the Department for International Trade appointed its first HM Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE, who is working closely with HM Ambassadors, High Commissioners and the wider diplomatic network to promote UK trade and prosperity in the region.

Commenting on the recent mission, HM Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE said:

I'm delighted to see Northern Powerhouse businesses exploring the fast-growing opportunities that African markets have to offer.

I've seen for myself how the UK's expertise in the healthcare sector is the envy of many countries around the world. Coupled with our manufacturing heritage and leading innovation, I have every

confidence that British businesses operating in this space will experience strong demand for their products and services over the years ahead.

Press release: £230M boost for British beef as China agrees market access

British beef could be served on Chinese dinner plates by the end of the year, following an agreement reached today between China and the UK.

The move could be worth an estimated £230 million for British producers in the first five years alone, and comes more than 20 years after the Chinese government imposed a ban on UK imports of beef in 1996.

The UK-China Beef Protocol was signed today by Farming Minister Robert Goodwill and the Chinese Ambassador to the UK Liu Xiaoming as part of the tenth Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) between the UK and China, securing market access for UK beef exporters by the end of 2019.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Today's step is welcome progress for our world-leading British beef producers, who will soon be able to export their products to one of the world's largest economies, supporting local jobs and bringing millions of pounds to the UK economy each year.

This comes as a result of years of hard work across Government, including at the Department for International Trade, and marks the next step in realising our global trading ambitions with unbeatable British food.

As we leave the European Union, we will continue to break down market access barriers to make it easier for UK businesses to trade across the world.

Farming Minister Robert Goodwill said:

This is a major coup for our world-class food and farming industry, and a landmark move which could be worth £230 million for British business in the next five years alone.

Today's milestone reflects our ambition to maximise new trading opportunities across the world and become a truly Global Britain as

we leave the EU.

The announcement comes after China recently approved five British pork plants to export products to China, which will build on a market which is already worth £70 million per year. We look forward to further approval of qualified UK pork plants by the end of the 2019.

China is currently the UK's eighth largest export market for food and drink, with more than £610 million worth of products bought by Chinese consumers last year.

The UK-China Beef Protocol is the culmination of several years of site inspections and engagement between UK and Chinese government officials. [China's ban was lifted in June](#) last year when market access engagement for UK beef exports began.

The announcement follows a successful inspection hosted last week by Defra, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the Food Standards Agency, DAERA in Northern Ireland, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP), in conjunction with beef farmers and food business operators. This effort was facilitated by policy and trade teams at the Department for International Trade, both in assisting talks with Chinese officials, and supporting Chinese delegations visiting the UK.

AHDB's International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

Today's announcement is fantastic news for our meat processors, who are set to benefit massively from the opportunities this new agreement presents.

It comes after many years spent working tirelessly to reopen access for our beef exports and it's a real testament to the work of government and other industry bodies to make this happen. We look forward to seeing the first shipments leave the UK bound for China in the near future.

The UK-China Beef Protocol reflects the strength of Britain's relationship with China, and a mutual commitment to trade.

The UK's food exports continue to soar, with food and drink exports worth more than £22 billion last year. Our food and drink businesses are now selling their products to 217 markets.

The Government continues to encourage and support businesses through its ['Food is Great'](#) campaign as they consider launching into overseas markets or expanding their current global customer base.