



MIDLANDS SPACE CLUSTER

News and Events #9, September 2025

Welcome to our September update on Space sector news, events and funding opportunities.

Visit the Midlands Space Cluster website [Welcome to the Midlands Space Cluster](#) for more, including our business directory and send us your news stories for sharing.

1. News

a. Farewell to Frank

“We are sorry to announce that our Project Manager, Frank McQuade, is moving onto new pastures. He has been working on an exciting new project that has been occupying more of his time, and he now feels he needs to fully commit to that and will step down from his Midlands Space Cluster role on October 2nd.

Frank has been involved in the Cluster development from the very beginning. He has made an enormous contribution to the success of this project and will be a very hard act to follow. As PI of the programme, I am immensely grateful for his support and have enjoyed working with him very much over the past 2 ½ years. I am sure you will join me in wishing Frank the very best for his future project and I am sure we will continue to see him in the wider space community.

Martin Barstow”

Andrew Mair, Liz Griffiths and Nicola Deards of the MAA will be taking over the running of the Midlands Space Cluster.

b. A message from the UK Space Clusters

You may have seen the recent announcement regarding significant changes to the UK space sector’s administrative structure. The functions of the UK Space Agency will be transferred into the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), with its work continuing within the department.

At this stage, there are no immediate implications for the clusters or our ongoing activities. We remain committed to our mission: supporting and promoting space innovation, economic growth, and collaboration across academia, industry, and government within our regions and across the UK as a collective.

Our relationships with former UKSA teams, now transitioning to DSIT, will continue unchanged in the short term.

We will maintain close engagement with key stakeholders in DSIT, as well as our partner organisations, to ensure that the priorities of the Midlands Space Cluster community are recognised and supported throughout this period of change.

You can see the announcement here: [UK space sector bolstered with government reforms to boost growth and cut red tape - GOV.UK](#)

- c. Official – the Midlands has the largest concentration of space sector organisations in the UK!

The Size and Health of the UK Space Industry 2024 Regional Report has been released by the UK Space Agency and London Economics – one of Europe’s leading specialist economics and policy consultancies.

The report, which looked at the UK’s 14 regional space clusters, revealed there are now 2,888 space industry organisations operating across the country.

The Midlands Space Cluster tops the list with 338 space sector organisations which employ more than 3,850 people and generate £476 million.

You can see the full report here: [LE-UKSA - Size and Health of the UK Space Industry 2024 - Final Summary Report S2C11072025.pdf](#)

- d. UK Space Frontiers 2035: a strategic vision for the future of UK space science

The Frontiers programme, led by the UK Space Agency’s Chief Scientist Professor Adam Amara, sets out to define the UK’s long-term vision for space science, positioning the nation as a global leader in the field.

UK Space Frontiers 2035 arrives at a pivotal moment, following the UK government's recognition of space as a ‘frontier industry’ in its Advanced Manufacturing Sector Plan, an important component of the broader Industrial Strategy.

The initiative draws inspiration from the well-established US Decadal Survey model, aiming to build a UK-specific framework that is both community-led and scientifically robust.

Read more at [UK Space Frontiers 2035: a strategic vision for the future of UK space science – UK Space Agency blog](#)

3. Events and Networking

a. Satellite Ground Segment Conference (SSGS)

The Satellite industry's only exclusively Ground Segment-focused conference and exhibition return to London in October (8th and 9th). Organisers Satellite Evolution Group and TalkSatellite are inviting companies and organisations from Space South Central to get involved.

The conference provided a platform for in-depth discussions on the latest advancements, challenges, and future directions in satellite ground segment technologies. Companies and organisations involved included the Ministry of Defence, Airbus, the European Defence Agency, the European Space Agency, UK Space Agency the GSMA and many more.

Visit [Strategies in Satellite Ground Segment 2025](#) for more information.

b. Your Input Needed: Fit4Space Lecture Session Topics

Airbus Defence and Space are in the early phase of planning another set of Fit4Space Awareness Sessions in a similar format to what has been held in the past.

You are invited to share your input on the upcoming sessions: Your expertise and insights are invaluable in ensuring that these sessions are tailored to your needs and interests.

Please take a few moments to complete this short [Google Form](#)

Your feedback will help determine the topics, formats, and schedules for these sessions. Topics which have already been covered in previous sessions can be found on the CUSP (Community for Space Prosperity) [Space Enterprise Site](#)

4. Funding and Support Opportunities

a. New grant programme led by the Midlands Space Cluster Launching Today!

The Space Ecosystem Commercialisation Programme (SECP) is a vehicle for Rapid R&D Grants underpinned by Expert Support, with £720 000 of funding from the UK Space Agency to be offered across 6 regional clusters.

Grants of £1,000 to £30,000 at 40% intervention rate will fund sprint projects to help smaller companies to develop capabilities or technologies for application in the space industry and unlock commercial opportunities.

Timescales are short so read more here and get your applications in quickly!

[Activities developed aimed at supporting companies in the region](#)

b. ESA - Future of Retail

Future of Retail is an opportunity for businesses to submit proposals to develop innovative services that leverage space technology for the benefit of the retail sector.

Selected projects can access 75% funding by the European Space Agency, up to €75,000 per activity. Deadline for submissions is Wednesday 1st October 2025.

Read more at [Future of Retail](#)

c. Horizon Europe 2025 work programme Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space

The overarching vision behind the proposed investments under Cluster 4 is that of Europe shaping competitive and trusted technologies for a European industry with global leadership in key areas, enabling production and consumption to respect the boundaries of our planet, and maximising the benefits for all parts of society in the variety of social, economic and territorial contexts in Europe.

Topics available under Horizon Europe's Cluster 4 programme for 2025/26, with up to €75m available for the largest single projects. Deadline: Thursday, 2nd October 2025

See details at [Horizon Europe 2025 work programme Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space - Innovate UK Business Connect](#)

d. Space for monitoring hazardous materials

The Space for Monitoring Hazardous Materials opportunity focuses on supporting innovative space-enabled applications for hazardous materials management.

This includes identifying contaminated sites, monitoring toxic material degradation and providing predictive insights for proactive remediation efforts. The initiative aims to address regulatory mandates and health concerns by leveraging advanced monitoring technologies. Deadline for applications is Thursday, 10th October 2025.

Read more at [Space for monitoring hazardous materials](#)

e. Unlock the Power of Space to Transform Transport

There is a European Space Agency - ESA funding call that presents a unique opportunity for the region. Applications are required by 31st December 2025. Bring space-based solutions to rail infrastructure and operations.

- Manage rail traffic and capacity
- Predict and prevent delays
- Monitor assets and infrastructure

Apply now: [Space4Rail](#)

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