



News and Events #12, December 2025

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

1. News

a. Four Midlands Companies Awarded Grants on SECP!

We are pleased to share that four of our Midlands Space Cluster companies have been awarded grants on the Space Ecosystem Commercialisation Programme (SECP).

- Third Planet Orbital will be expanding their TPOD (Third Planet Orbital Deployer) Capabilities with the development of a SmallSat 16U size Deployer Design, and designing an entirely new Release Sequencer Test Kit (RSTK) that simplifies validation activity.
- PGM Reball will develop a 3D Printed Unitary Ball Nut, enabling geometry that only additive manufacturing can achieve, opening a new design space beyond traditional machining limits and representing a step change in reliability and resilience for space grade motion systems.
- Future Aerospace Engineering will identify and test fluoropolymer films and ceramic/sol-gel coatings capable of withstanding highly acidic, ultraviolet-rich, abrasive, and tensile stress conditions to support next-generation spacecraft and habitat design.
- NDE Clarke Pitchline will design and test a ground-based mechanical driveline system and electrical control to manipulate a ground based portable rocket launcher tower with a rocket attached, in the vertical and horizontal vectors, and lower and rotate the launch tower.

These sprint projects will complete in February 2026 and we look forward to seeing the outcomes and next steps in these brilliant developments.

The SECP is part-funded by the UK Space Agency and designed to help smaller companies accelerate capability development and unlock commercial opportunities in the UK space sector.

- b. Government needs to take action if UK is to be a winner in new race for space

The House of Lords UK Engagement with Space Committee has released its report, 'The Space Economy: Act Now or Lose Out'.

- [Report: The Space Economy: Act Now or Lose Out \(PDF\)](#)
- [Shorthand story: How can the UK be a winner in the new global space race?](#)
- [Inquiry: UK Engagement with Space](#)

The report finds that the global space economy is primed for growth and that the UK possesses the potential to take advantage of the economic and security benefits brought by satellite technology.

2. Events and Networking - Midlands

- a. Return of the Resilience: Securing the Galaxy of Data, Space Park Leicester, 14:00-15:00, Thursday 4th December

This Space Park Conversation explores how government, academia and industry can unite to defend the data that underpins our daily lives.

Book a place [here](#).

- b. From Industry to Orbit: New Pathways for UK Technology in Space, Webinar, 11:00-12:00, Tuesday 9th December

This webinar will introduce the ESA Technology Broker programme and explain how UK companies can access ESA support to transfer innovative terrestrial technologies into commercial and institutional space applications.

Topics covered will include:

- Introduction to TWI
- Introduction to the ESA Technology Broker network
- Technology transfer pathways from industry into space
- Success stories and examples from industry sectors
- Prepare for Space Programme
- How to engage with the UK Technology Broker team

Whether you're an established aerospace manufacturer, an advanced engineering SME, or a technology innovator looking to diversify, this session will help you understand pragmatic routes into the rapidly expanding global space market.

Register for this event [here](#).

- c. Midlands Space Cluster Collaboration Day: Connecting Academia and Industry, University of Nottingham, 09:30-13:30, Friday 12th December

This one-day event brings together leading researchers, industry professionals, and regional stakeholders to strengthen collaboration across the Midlands space ecosystem.

Focused on fostering meaningful partnerships between academia and industry, the programme will feature networking sessions, project showcases, and strategic discussions aimed at accelerating innovation in satellite technologies, AI applications, and sustainable space solutions.

Book your place [here](#).

- d. Space Security Roadshow – Midlands, University of Nottingham, 13:30-16:30, Friday 12th December

As space becomes an increasingly vital domain for society, the economy, and national security, it is also becoming more congested, contested, and competitive. Innovation continues to expand the capabilities of space systems, making them essential - but also more vulnerable to a range of risks.

To address these challenges, the UK Space Agency's Security & Resilience Team is hosting a series of workshops across the UK's cluster networks and regions. These events aim to raise awareness of the risks associated with operating in the space ecosystem and to foster a stronger security mindset among space organisations.

The Midlands event will immediately follow our collaboration event at the Winter Gardens in Nottingham. Register here [Space Security Roadshow Registration | Midlands | NCCUK](#)

3. Events and Networking - UK

- a. Space-Comm Expo Scotland, 3-4 December, SEC Glasgow

With ADS, ESA, and UKSA supporting you can gain unparalleled access to the powerbrokers shaping government, defence, and military policy and access seminars and roundtables discussing the future of European space. All the leading Space primes will be here and you can discover how Europe plans to become more sovereign in space capability.

Register Today using the [Online Form](#)

- b. 21st Appleton Space Conference, Thursday 4th December, Rutherford Appleton Labs (RAL)

This major space conference returns to celebrate the latest advancements in space science, Earth observation and technology development.

The Appleton Space Conference invites academic and industry leaders from across the space sector to celebrate the latest research and developments and explore future opportunities.

Read more [here](#).

c. **GeoAI Festival: Unleash Innovation at the Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Geospatial Satellite Data**

Defra are working with Innovate UK Business Connect (and several other partners) to organise a 3-day hackathon running in January 2026 in Leeds.

This initiative will bring together innovators, businesses, academics, end users, and public bodies to explore and advance the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in geospatial applications with EO data that would create new products and services for Agri-Food Systems, spatial planning, sustainable land and ocean use, and nature-based markets.

The culmination of these activities will result in participation at the GeoAI Showcase at Space-Comm Expo Europe in March 2026 in London, as well as tailored Commercialisation Credits for SAC's Space Commercialisation Engine valued at up to £80k per winning team.

Find out more here - [GeoAI Festival: Unleash Innovation at the Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Geospatial Satellite Data - Innovate UK Business Connect](#)

d. **Space-Comm Expo Europe, 4-5 March 2026, London Excel**

Get ready as Space-Comm returns with more Meet the Buyer events, a dedicated Defence and National Security Zone backed by ADS, Smarter Networking and bigger and broader Symposia.

Details [here](#).

4. Funding and Support Opportunities

a. **Accelerating Investment Export Pathway**

This is a UK Space Agency programme, supported by KPMG, that is specifically designed to support high-potential, early-stage UK space businesses in expanding into international markets.

The programme offers:

- **Targeted Training:** Practical workshops on market entry strategies, international procurement, and export readiness, tailored for the space sector.
- **Expert Guidance:** Support from leading technical experts and international market specialists.

- Global Reach: Preparation for Department for Business and Trade missions and navigating complex international trade landscapes.

Further details on the programme can be found here, including eligibility criteria and how to apply: [Unlock Your Global Potential: Accelerating Investment Export Pathway for UK Space SMEs](#).

Spaces are limited, and the application window is short, so we encourage interested companies to review the information promptly.

b. The ESA Proposal Advice Service (ESA PAS)

ESA PAS is a new initiative from UK Space Agency designed to support UK-based organisations bidding for European Space Agency contracts. It is designed to improve the quality, completeness, strategic alignment and consistency of bids - thereby aiming to strengthen the bidder's application for funding - by providing free, non-technical advice to organisations through a thorough review of their draft bid (before submission).

ESA PAS focuses on improving the clarity, structure, and strategic alignment of proposals by identifying common errors and areas for improvement. This is done by a thorough review of the draft bid submission (all volumes), read alongside the ITT/RFP. Detailed feedback is provided giving recommendations for improvements, for example highlighting inconsistencies and common mistakes.

Organisations should apply as soon as they have taken a decision to bid for a specific opportunity. Read more [here](#).

c. Facilities for Academia, Satellite Applications Catapult

The Facilities for Academia gives UK based academics from PhD level and above the opportunity to access the Satellite Applications Catapult's cutting-edge facilities free of charge. Whether you are testing drones, antennas and RF systems, exploring additive manufacturing or trialling in orbit assembly concepts, this support could help you validate your ideas, accelerate your technology readiness and deliver real world impact.

Deadline to Apply – 1st December 2025. Watch the Launch Webinar and apply [here](#).

d. 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.

Apply now: [Space4Rail](#)

e. Horizon Europe 2025: European Innovation Ecosystems

This funding is designed to create innovation ecosystems that support the scaling of companies and spur innovation across the EU, with up to €8m per project.

The European Innovation Ecosystems work programme aims to create and expand more connected, inclusive, and efficient innovation ecosystems that support the scaling of companies and spur innovation.

The call closes on 20th January 2026. Read more [here](#).

f. UK Innovation Science Seed Fund (UKI2S)

Value added to a company is more than just money. UKI2S focuses on nurturing and adding value to innovative ideas that shape the future alongside investing in groundbreaking technology companies.

UKI2S invests in innovations that are in the UKIS strategic priority areas or from the UK's publicly funded science and knowledge base. They focus on those with high growth potential at pre-seed and seed stages – to get the most groundbreaking technologies and ideas to market.

If you are interested in learning more and applying visit [UKI2S – Investing in innovations that transform our future](#)

g. Made Smarter

The "Made Smarter" program offers funding and support to UK manufacturers, particularly SMEs, to help them adopt digital technologies and improve their operations. This includes match-funded grants of up to 50% (with a maximum of £20,000) for equipment and/or advice to implement projects, as well as access to digital technology advice and workforce development

Read more [here](#).

h. Cyber security consultancy support, plus assessment and certification

The threat to space is real and coming increasingly closer to the UK space industry, as attempted breaches have demonstrated. Ensuring secure, robust and recoverable services can provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace and avoid unnecessary costly retrofitting.

Successful applicants can receive up to 3 days consultation from a cybersecurity professional funded by the UK Space Agency. This can be virtual or at a place of business (UK), depending on requirements.

Find out more at [Cyber security consultancy support, plus assessment and certification - GOV.UK](#)

Sign Off

If you have had a success or reached a milestone in your space sector project or business, we would love to share your news on our website news page:

[Latest News and Newsletters at Midlands Space Cluster](#)

Nicola Deards
Midlands Space Cluster Manager

Mobile: 07713 832217

Midlands Aerospace Alliance Tel: 024 7643 0256

nicola.deards@midlandsaerospace.org.uk

