



# MIDLANDS SPACE CLUSTER

## News and Events #14, February 2026

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

### 1. News

#### a. Space Park Leicester would like to announce the Launch of **Space Missions: The Executive Guide to Space**

This brand-new **professional development course** is designed for both technical and non-technical professionals looking to support and lead their organisation in the Space Sector.

The programme builds on the 60-year experience the University of Leicester has in designing, building and operating space missions to create the ultimate primer to the space industry. Through taking part in the course participants will:

- Gain an understanding of the Space Sector, its history and ongoing development.
- Develop insight into the space environment and the engineering processes required to build successful hardware.
- Explore the political and regulatory landscape of the space domain.

#### Course Details

Date: 24-26th March 2026

Location: Space Park Leicester, Leicester, LE4 5SP

Price: £850 (Early Bird Price on bookings before 28th February 2026)

If you're looking to gain and develop your insight into the Space Sector, then this course will help give you a strategic understanding of what's required to be successful in this exciting and evolving industry.

To learn more and register, visit: <https://www.space-park.co.uk/space-cpd/>

#### b. **Airbus Launchpad** opens in Stevenage

A new facility designed to help small businesses thrive in the UK space sector has opened at Airbus Defence and Space's Stevenage site, backed by £3.9 million from the UK Space Agency.

The Airbus Launchpad will provide SMEs, start-ups and research organisations with access to laboratories, workspaces and testing facilities through a no-cost residency programme. The facility can accommodate over 50 people and aims to strengthen the UK space supply chain while developing homegrown skills and capabilities.

The UK Space Agency funding comes from the Space Clusters Infrastructure Fund and was match-funded by Airbus. Three companies – Applied Atomics, Spintex and Stars Edge – have taken up residence from early February.

For enquiries about launchpad, or to get in touch with the team that manage the facility, please contact [airbus.launchpad@airbus.com](mailto:airbus.launchpad@airbus.com)

c. GEO Business welcomes speakers

Applications are open for speakers at the **2026 GEO Business Conference for Geospatial Professionals**, being held at Excel, London, 3rd-4th June. The deadline to apply is February 20th. See more details of the conference focus and apply for a speaking space [here](#).

d. Government responds to space economy report recommendations

The Government has published its response to the House of Lords UK Engagement with Space Committee Report, '**The Space Economy: Act Now or Lose Out**'.

It acknowledges that Space is 'fundamental to the UK's prosperity, security and global influence, with space-based services and data underpinning components of the UK's critical national infrastructure' and its pivotal role in national security and underpinning 'essential services across communications, navigation, finance, energy, and emergency response'. And there are specific responses to the recommendations in the report, which was published in November 2025.

Read it in full [here](#).

e. The UK Space Agency **Space Clusters Infrastructure Fund** programme has provided almost £50 million in funding to UK space infrastructure and facilities projects across the UK.

The UK Space Agency, supported by Exotopic, is providing industry, academia and government the opportunity to provide insights and perspectives that will help shape similar future funding calls and maximise the impact and benefit to the UK space sector and wider UK economy.

You can sign up to SCIF engagement events and complete the survey [here](#). We are in the process of organising a webinar event for the Midlands to gather feedback – watch this space. This is your opportunity to have your say. You can also contact the team at [SCIF@exotopic.com](mailto:SCIF@exotopic.com)

## 2. Events and Networking - Midlands

- a. **Midlands Space Cluster Engagement Day: Regional Facilities, Assets, and Opportunity** (Connecting Stakeholders to Capabilities That Support Research, Innovation, and Growth), University of Birmingham, 10:00-15:00, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

Join us for an exciting event focused on building your understanding of Regional Facilities and Assets, and how they can support your Space Sector ambitions. We will be bringing together key stakeholders from academia, industry, organisations and government to explore opportunities for collaboration and innovation in the UK space sector.

Speakers Confirmed:

- Professor Matt Angling, University of Birmingham — Keynote: Collaboration between academia and industry
- Ella Brown, Satellite Applications Catapult — How to Use Resources
- Professor Don Pollacco, University of Warwick — A New and Unique Digital Telescope facility
- Leah-Nani Alconcel, University of Birmingham — Working with Industry

This event will also feature:

- Business Engagement Session: How funding works and spin-out success stories
- Networking opportunities over coffee and lunch with an opportunity for delegates to give a 60 second pitch to the room

Book your place [here](#).

This event is presented by the University of Birmingham as part of the Midlands Space Cluster supported by the UK Space Agency.

- b. **Midlands Space Cluster Careers Day: Routes into the Space Sector**, National Space Centre, 09:5-15:45, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Whether you're a current space sector employee who is looking for a new role, or you're interested in entering the sector, there'll be plenty to discover at the Midlands Space Cluster Careers Conference, delivered by the National Space Academy supported by the Midlands Space Cluster and the UK Space Agency.

All are welcome to attend - from early careers professionals, to students, to those who are simply interested in learning more about how to get into the huge range of careers available in the fast-growing UK space sector.

At the event:

- Attend Relevant talks from space sector workers, ready to share all about their own careers, journeys into them and the realities of a space sector life.

- Network with local companies - we'll have a range of exhibition stands featuring people from a variety of Midlands-based companies.
- Explore career routes - you'll learn about some of the different routes into space sector careers and how you can pursue them, including information on relevant skills and qualifications.

For more information, please email [nsa@spacecentre.co.uk](mailto:nsa@spacecentre.co.uk)

You can register for the day [here](#).

This event is presented by the National Space Academy as part of the Midlands Space Cluster supported by the UK Space Agency.

c. Midlands Space Cluster Careers Day: Routes into the Space Sector **Networking Opportunity**, National Space Centre, 16:00-18:00, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Following on from the Careers Day listed previously, a Midlands Space Cluster networking event, hosted by the National Space Academy, will take place in the early evening. The emphasis will be on skills and recruitment for all sizes of company, but SMEs will be especially welcome.

There will be an opportunity for employers to explain their needs to the cluster and for those seeking a career to meet potential employers. *Those attending the earlier careers conference may stay but you can also just attend the networking.*

16:00 Arrival Drinks Reception  
 16:30 Welcome and Introduction  
 16:45 60 Second Pitches  
 17:15 Networking  
 18:00 Optional Planetarium Show ends 18:30

Book your networking only place [here](#).

This event is presented by the National Space Academy as part of the Midlands Space Cluster supported by the UK Space Agency.

d. **ESA 101 Workshop**, Milton Keynes, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March *Placeholder – details to follow*

This workshop is aimed at companies that have little to no knowledge of the European Space Agency, to introduce them to the different funding opportunities.

e. The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) **Planetary Sunshade Workshop**, University of Nottingham, 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026

This event will bring together leading engineers, scientists, and policy experts to advance the emerging field of planetary sunshades. Those working in adjacent fields are also encouraged to attend.

Over three days, participants will:

- Share recent research and technical progress;
- Explore the scientific, engineering, and policy challenges of the planetary sunshade initiative; and
- Shape future proposals with scientific rigour to drive the field forward.

More information including registration can be found [here](#).

### 3. Events and Networking – UK and Europe

a. **Trajectory Manchester**, Core Technology Facility, Manchester, 10:30-17:30, Wednesday 25th February 2026

A practical, insight-led event focused on market access in the space sector, the day is designed to help founders and innovators open doors, break barriers, and reach new markets.

**What's Included:** Opening Keynotes, Interactive Group Challenge, Networking Lunch, Inspirational Founder Talk, Lightning Pitches, Meet the Buyers Roundtables.

More information can be found [here](#).

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

Space-Comm Expo is the UK's leading event for the space industry with over 200 exhibitors, 50 speakers and 5,000 attendees including global leaders and influencers from across government, business, aerospace and defence.

It's the largest event for the UK space industry with international delegations and visitors from NASA, ESA, NATO alongside Primes, SMEs and Start-Ups at the forefront of technology and innovation. Now entering its fifth year, the multi award-winning Space-Comm Expo is dedicated to supporting the space industry with a unique format including UK and international exhibitors, product demonstrations, keynote speakers, multiple conference theatres, roundtables and 1-2-1 networking opportunities.

Details [here](#). Get a 25% discount using our code **CLUSTER25** at the checkout.

c. The **Space Corridor Workshop**, hosted by TWI's Space team and ESA/UKSA Technology Broker colleagues, will be part of **WeldJoinEXPO26**, TWI HQ, Cambridge, 10:00-16:00, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2026

The Workshop will highlight opportunities and capabilities across welding / joining / manufacturing for space applications and include a dedicated “**Meet the Buyer**” block to connect space organisations with UK suppliers and innovators.

See more details and register [here](#).

#### 4. Funding and Support Opportunities

##### a. **NEW! Advanced manufacturing supply chains - Feasibility studies, UKRI**

UK registered businesses and Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) can apply for a share of up to £5m to deliver feasibility studies that will help make supply chains more resource-efficient and resilient.

Funding of £50k - £100k is available for projects up to nine months in duration, supporting the development of cutting-edge technologies with broad cross-sector application and significant potential impact for UK and global industry.

This competition focuses on tackling cross-cutting challenges across six high-growth sectors: Advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, and life sciences. It also covers key advanced manufacturing frontier industries, including automotive, batteries and energy storage, aerospace, advanced materials, agritech, and **space**.

Two interactive drop-in sessions are planned, giving you the chance to discuss your project ideas, clarify requirements and identify potential collaborators:

- **Drop-in session 1: 11:00 – 12:00, 9 February 2026**
- **Drop-in session 2: 10:00 – 11:00, 26 February 2026**

These sessions are open to all potential applicants and offer valuable expert guidance to help you shape a strong, competitive proposal.

[Register your attendance for the briefing event and drop-in sessions here.](#)

[Read the competition guidance here.](#)

##### b. **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.

**c. The ESA Proposal Advice Service (ESA PAS)**

Designed to support UK-based organisations bidding for European Space Agency contracts and 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).

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

**d. UK Innovation Science Seed Fund (UKI2S)**

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](#)

**e. 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](#).

**f. Cyber security consultancy support, plus assessment and certification**

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](#)

Get in touch!

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