



MIDLANDS SPACE CLUSTER

News and Events #15, March 2026

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

1. News

- a. Places are still available on the Space Park Leicester professional development course **Space Missions: The Executive Guide to Space**

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. Three **Earth Observation Missions** looking for **Advisory Group Members**

As a result of several EO missions moving into their next development phases, calls for the renewal of Mission Advisory Groups' (MAG) memberships have been opened for:

- Copernicus Sentinel-1 Next Generation (S1NG) Mission, Phase B2/C
- Radar Observing System over Europe in L-Band (ROSE-L) Mission, Phase D/E1
- Next Generation Gravity Mission (NGGM), Phase B2/C

The MAG calls are open until 17 March 2026 with all details provided on ESA's Earth Observation Advisory Group Application homepage:
<https://missionadvice.esa.int/>

The UK Space Agency invites you to researchers and scientists to apply for the MAGs of the three missions.

- c. The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) invites UK-based companies to express their interest in a prospective trade mission to **Tokyo, Japan**, for **SPACETIDE 2026**, Monday 6th to Friday 10th July.

If you are interested in taking part, please complete this [form](#) no later than Friday 27 March 2026. You will be contacted in April if your application to join the UK trade mission is successful.

Demand for places on this trade mission is expected to be very high. To maximise your chances of selection, applicants should clearly articulate their company's unique selling point, export potential, and any wider benefits for the UK that participation in the mission could unlock.

If you have any questions, please reach out to space@businessandtrade.gov.uk or Lewis.Mcgettigan@businessandtrade.gov.uk

2. Events and Networking - Midlands

- a. **Midlands Space Cluster Careers Day: Routes into the Space Sector**, National Space Centre, 09:5-15:45, Monday 16th 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

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.

b. **ESA 101 Workshop**, Fairspace MK, Milton Keynes, 09:30-14:00, Thursday 26th March

Are you interested in exploring business with the European Space Agency? Do you want to learn the basics about ESA? Then join us for a practical and informative event designed to help businesses like yours engage with ESA and the UK Space Agency.

Delivered by UK Space Agency in collaboration with ESA and the Space Clusters, this event covers essential topics such as ESA's industrial policy, current activity and programmes, basics of ESA procurement and how to navigate through ESA STAR.

Don't miss this chance to connect with industry peers, hear first-hand experiences from businesses that have successfully collaborated with ESA, and ask questions to the UK Space Agency, Space Cluster and ESA Ambassador teams. Secure your spot today and come and spend a fantastic day with us with lunch included.

Find details and register [here](#).

c. The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) **Planetary Sunshade Workshop**, University of Nottingham, 13th – 15th 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. **2026 GSTP Industry Day**, One Birdcage Walk - IMechE: Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 09:00-17:00, Thursday 19th March

Bringing together organisations from across the UK's space sector for a dedicated event on **ESA's General Support Technology Programme (GSTP)**.

This is a great chance to connect, collaborate, and hear more about exciting new opportunities in 2026.

This event is designed to give you:

- Insight into the GSTP programme
- A chance to meet UK Space Agency and ESA colleagues
- Opportunities to network with industry and academic partners
- Practical guidance on engaging with our initiatives and funding routes

Register [here](#).

- b. 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 7th 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. 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)

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](#)

c. 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](#)

d. 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](#).

e. 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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