



News and Events #22, October 2026

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

1. News

a. **New UK Space Strategy Sets Out Ambition for Growth, Security and Sovereign Capability**

The Government has published a new **UK Space Strategy**, bringing together its plans for growth, defence and national security under a single cross-government approach. Backed by £7.8 billion of investment to 2030, the Strategy identifies four priority areas for developing UK capability: Satellite Communications; In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly and Manufacturing (ISAM); Space Domain Awareness; and Assured Access to Space. Major commitments include £2.8 billion towards connectivity, £880 million for space control and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, and £40 million to support ISAM technologies.

The UK's space sector plays a pivotal role in underpinning vital civil and defence capabilities – from precision timing for financial services and navigation for transport to secure communications – while new technologies are opening opportunities to manufacture products in the unique environment of space. The new Strategy sets out an integrated, one-government vision and plan to grow the UK's £18.6 billion space sector, strengthen sovereign capability and security, and support more than 55,000 skilled jobs. It also introduces a single government approach to buying and developing space technology, initially focused on satellite communications, with the intention of creating greater opportunities for UK businesses and supply chains.

Working with industry, academia and public and private-sector partners, the UK Space Cluster network stands ready to support delivery of the Strategy. The Midlands Space Cluster will continue working with our cluster colleagues across the country to connect Midlands organisations with opportunities, partnerships and capabilities that support our collective national ambition. If you would like to find out how your organisation can engage, please get in touch with the Midlands Space Cluster.

Read the full government announcement [here](#).

b. New UK Space Agency ‘One Stop Shop’ Helps Businesses Navigate Civil and Defence Space

The UK Space Agency has updated its Unlocking Space One Stop Shop, bringing together practical information to help organisations navigate opportunities across the UK’s civil and defence space sectors. The guidance covers areas including government customers and procurement, security requirements, regulation, export controls, funding and investment, and routes for engaging with organisations such as UK Space Command, Dstl and UK Defence Innovation.

Of particular interest to businesses, the guidance explains the Enterprise Space Category (ESC), the cross-government approach coordinating space-related procurement. The ESC manages more than £573 million of annual expenditure, including £526 million associated with MOD programmes, principally the SKYNET portfolio, across areas ranging from spacecraft and ground-segment manufacturing to space operations, applications and enabling services. The One Stop Shop also provides guidance on routes into government procurement, including the RM6370 Space Technology Solutions Dynamic Market, alongside information on security clearances, secure working and export controls.

[Explore the Unlocking Space One Stop Shop](#)

c. Midlands Expertise Heads Towards Mercury as BepiColombo Enters Arrival Phase

The Midlands Space Cluster congratulates everyone involved in the ESA/JAXA BepiColombo mission following the successful separation of the Mercury Transfer Module on 3rd September. After almost eight years and billions of kilometres travelling through the Solar System, the milestone marks the beginning of BepiColombo's complex Mercury Arrival Phase. The two science orbiters – ESA's Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) and JAXA's Mio – will enter orbit around Mercury together in November before separating in December, with full science operations due to begin in April 2027.

It is a particularly proud moment for the Midlands. On board the MPO is MIXS (Mercury Imaging X-ray Spectrometer), the mission's only UK-led science instrument, developed by a European consortium led by the University of Leicester and supported by the UK Space Agency. MIXS will analyse Mercury's surface composition and interactions between its surface and space environment, contributing to a much more detailed understanding of the planet. The separation also means MIXS can finally see into deep space, with its first-light observations and calibration due to begin shortly.

BepiColombo also showcases wider UK and European industrial capability: Airbus was prime contractor for the system design and manufacture of the MPO, Mercury Transfer Module and Mio's protective sunshield. Read more about the Leicester contribution [here](#).

d. University of Nottingham Joins £2.1m Next-Generation Satellite Communications Project

Experts from the University of Nottingham's Faculty of Engineering are partnering with Exobotics Ltd and Archangel Lightworks on STARS, a £2.1 million project developing next-generation optical satellite communications. The project will demonstrate ultra-fast, resilient and near real-time connectivity between satellites and the ground, delivering the first satellites in a planned future data-relay network for rapid transfer of mission-critical data.

STARS was selected through the Connectivity in Low Earth Orbit (C-LEO) Programme and is one of 16 projects benefiting from a wider £13 million UK Government investment, delivered through the European Space Agency's ARTES programme. The award highlights the contribution of Midlands research expertise to the UK's growing satellite communications capability and the development of faster and more resilient space connectivity.

Read the full story [here](#).

e. NASA 4-D Executive Space Programme, Space Park Leicester

Space Park Leicester is launching the NASA 4-D Executive Space Programme, an intensive five-day programme combining leadership and team performance with an executive-level understanding of the space sector. Running from 9th – 13th November, the programme brings together the two-day NASA 4-D Leadership programme – based on the human performance system developed by NASA – and Space Park Leicester's three-day Executive Guide to Space.

Designed for senior leaders, programme and project managers, technical leaders and professionals working across space, aerospace, engineering, defence and technology, the programme will provide practical approaches for building and leading high-performing teams, alongside an understanding of space missions, technologies, regulation, markets and the strategic importance of the global space sector. Participants will learn on-site at Space Park Leicester, drawing on the University of Leicester's extensive ESA, NASA and JAXA mission heritage and connecting with other leaders working across the sector.

There is a 20% early-bird discount available when booking at least six weeks before the course begins. The NASA 4-D Leadership and Executive Guide to Space elements can also be booked separately. Read more [here](#).

f. ASD-Eurospace GALAXY Report Examines the Future of Europe's Space Industry

ASD-Eurospace has published the GALAXY Report – Governance, Autonomy and Leadership Analysis in the European Space Industry, the first independent, industry-led assessment of the strategic challenges and future prospects facing Europe's space sector. The report draws on in-depth interviews with 15 CEOs from leading European space companies, ranging from major system integrators to mid-

caps and start-ups, to provide an industry perspective on Europe's position in an increasingly competitive global space market.

The report highlights concerns including fragmented European demand, constrained budgets, weak industry profitability and growing competition from the USA and China, while setting out recommendations for how European institutional demand and policy could strengthen industrial capability, competitiveness and strategic autonomy. With space increasingly recognised as a sovereign and defence priority, the report provides useful insight for organisations interested in the direction of the European space industry and the policy and market environment in which it operates.

Read the full report [here](#).

g. Explore the EU Space Programme

The EU Space Programme website provides a useful central resource for organisations wanting to understand European space policy, programmes and opportunities. It brings together information on Copernicus and Earth observation, Galileo and EGNOS satellite navigation, IRIS² and GOVSATCOM secure connectivity, Space Situational Awareness and Space Traffic Management, alongside European activity in access to space, technology and innovation, skills and the wider space economy.

Members can also use the site to keep up with EU space news and events, explore resources and use cases, and access the Digital Space Ecosystem, which helps European space organisations find partners, events and opportunities. Find the page with onward links [here](#).

h. SpaceSec 2027 Opens Call for Papers on Space and Satellite Security

SpaceSec 2027 – the 5th Workshop on the Security of Space and Satellite Systems has opened its Call for Papers. The workshop brings together researchers, industry and government to address cybersecurity and resilience across satellite and space systems, including spacecraft, launch vehicles, ground infrastructure and satellite communications. It will take place alongside the NDSS Symposium in March 2027 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Topics include small satellite and CubeSat security, GNSS attack and defence, space situational awareness, secure satellite hardware and software, in-orbit intrusion detection, jamming and spoofing, optical communications security, post-quantum cryptography and space supply-chain security. This makes the call potentially relevant to Midlands organisations working across space systems, communications, cyber security, electronics and resilient supply chains. SpaceSec welcomes research, position, experience and preliminary-work papers, with both short and long-paper formats available.

The **submission deadline is 6th December 2026**, with accepted papers published alongside the NDSS 2027 proceedings. Find out more [here](#).

i. **UK expertise helps launch two major Earth observation missions**

Two European satellites featuring significant UK contributions have successfully launched into orbit, strengthening the UK's position in the global Earth observation sector.

Sentinel-3C and ESA's FLEX mission will work together to provide new insights into ocean conditions, land temperatures, vegetation health and the effects of drought and climate change. UK organisations played important roles across both missions, contributing satellite assembly and testing, detectors, batteries, propulsion hardware, calibration equipment and scientific instruments.

Thales Alenia Space UK assembled and tested the FLEX platform, with further contributions from Teledyne e2v, ABSL and Nammo Westcott. For Sentinel-3C, RAL Space and Airbus Defence & Space helped develop its Sea and Land Surface Temperature Radiometer.

The successful launch demonstrates the breadth of UK capability across spacecraft engineering, instrumentation, propulsion and Earth observation. It also creates new opportunities for UK businesses and researchers to develop environmental, agricultural and climate services using the missions' data.

[Read the UK Space Agency article](#)

j. **UK Space Agency Seeks New Members for Space Exploration Advisory Committee**

The UK Space Agency is seeking nominations for five new members of its Space Exploration Advisory Committee (SEAC), which advises the Agency on UK priorities for human and robotic space exploration. The Committee provides advice on UK participation in European exploration programmes covering areas such as Mars and lunar exploration and microgravity, as well as related national activities. Its membership brings together expertise from academia and industry.

The current call is seeking specialists in Mars Research, Lunar Research and Microgravity, including several positions specifically for Early Career Researchers. Members serve a two-year term and normally meet three times a year. Candidates should be UK-based with relevant scientific expertise, with experience of international programmes such as ESA or NASA and an understanding of the UK academic and/or industrial landscape particularly valuable.

Nominations must be submitted by 4:00pm on **Friday 30th October 2026**, accompanied by the SEAC application template and a CV of no more than two pages.

[Find out more and access the nomination template](#)

2. Events and Networking - Midlands

- a. **Engineering Design Show 2026**, 7th – 8th October, Coventry Building Society Arena, Coventry

The Engineering Design Show (EDS) brings together more than 4,500 design engineers and 200+ exhibitors across electronic, embedded and mechanical design. The event covers technologies relevant to every stage of product development, including electronics and PCBs, sensors and connectivity, CAD and simulation, materials, manufacturing, motion control, prototyping and production.

The event also features 50+ conference sessions and workshops, with speakers from organisations including Airbus, Rolls-Royce, IBM and Formula 1, plus new Tech Tours and a dedicated Meet the Buyer programme connecting engineers and buyers with manufacturing suppliers. With strong crossover into aerospace and defence, EDS should be particularly relevant to Midlands Space Cluster members involved in space hardware, electronics, embedded systems, advanced manufacturing and engineering design.

Register your free place [here](#).

- b. **Digital Manufacturing 2Day 2026**, 13th October, Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC), Coventry

This event features manufacturers, technology providers and industry experts exploring how data, automation and AI can improve productivity, strengthen resilience and accelerate growth. The programme focuses on practical implementation and real-world case studies, including connecting manufacturing systems, making better use of data, scaling automation and achieving measurable business outcomes.

Alongside the conference programme, delegates can explore technologies including robotics, IoT, digital twins and additive manufacturing, with demonstrations and opportunities to meet potential technology partners and suppliers.

Register your free place [here](#).

- c. **Birmingham Tech Week 2026**, 19th – 23rd October, Birmingham

Birmingham Tech Week returns for five days of events bringing together technology companies, investors, universities, policymakers and international delegations from across the UK and overseas. While not specifically a space event, several elements of this year's programme are relevant to Midlands Space Cluster members, with activity covering advanced manufacturing, AI, quantum, DeepTech, cybersecurity, investment and international growth.

Of particular interest is the **Global Growth showcase on 21st October**, which will explore advanced manufacturing, AI, DeepTech, robotics and quantum alongside

defence, sovereign capability and future industries, with international investors, businesses and innovation ecosystems participating. Other sessions during the week cover scaling and investment, applied AI and engineering technologies, offering opportunities for space and aerospace businesses to connect into the wider West Midlands technology ecosystem.

The **ScaleUp Summit on 22nd October** at The Studio, is another element of interest - aimed at founders and leadership teams scaling beyond startup mode. It focuses on practical growth issues including investment readiness, leadership, scaling operations, AI-enabled growth, industrial innovation, international expansion and attracting talent. The programme is split into an Investment Zone and a Growth Zone, with investor access, founder showcases, curated networking and practical guidance for companies preparing for Series A and beyond.

Explore the full programme [here](#).

d. **Leverhulme Centre for Humanity & Space Autumn Symposium**, 27th October, Space Park Leicester

This event will showcase the work of the Leverhulme Centre for Humanity & Space (LCHS)'s incoming doctoral researchers, partner organisations and researchers from across the University of Leicester exploring the relationship between outer space and society.

Research being presented spans a particularly broad range of topics, including space heritage, legal and political frameworks for outer space, nuclear strategy, global commons and the relationship between humans, their environments and space.

[Find out more and register](#)

e. **Cosmic Coffee: Curated Conversations**, as part of French Space & Aerospace Delegation, 29th October, Space Park Leicester

Space Park Leicester will welcome a major French space and aerospace delegation on 29th October, with representatives expected from organisations including Airbus, Thales Alenia Space and Safran, alongside a wider group of French aerospace and engineering companies.

As part of the visit, Midlands organisations are invited to join a special networking session from 2.45 – 3.45pm. Rather than general networking, participating UK and French organisations will be matched according to their capabilities, interests and potential opportunities for collaboration, with introductions curated in advance. The session should be particularly valuable for Midlands space, aerospace and advanced engineering businesses looking to develop commercial, technology and supply-chain relationships with French organisations.

Places will be curated according to the interests and capabilities of participants, so early [registration](#) is encouraged.

f. **Advanced Engineering 2026**, 4th – 5th November, NEC Birmingham

Advanced Engineering returns to the NEC Birmingham on 4th – 5th November, bringing together the UK engineering and manufacturing community across aerospace, space, defence, automotive, energy, electronics and other high-value sectors. The free-to-attend exhibition features 400+ suppliers alongside live demonstrations, networking and conference sessions covering advanced manufacturing, R&D and design engineering, AI and automation, skills, and supply chains.

The Midlands Space Cluster will also be hosting a dedicated speaker session at the event, exploring opportunities and capabilities within the space sector. Further details of the session and speakers will be shared soon.

Register for the event [now](#).

g. **ESA 101 Workshop**, date tbc, Birmingham, venue tbc

Arrangements are being finalised for a half-day ESA 101 workshop in the Midlands. Delivered by UK Space Agency in collaboration with ESA and the Space Cluster, 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.

We will inform you of details and how to register closer to the date.

3. Events and Networking – UK and Europe

a. **ESA Open Day**, 10th October, ESA ECSAT, Harwell Campus

This free public event offers a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes of ESA's UK centre, meet space scientists and engineers, and discover the missions and technologies shaping the future of space exploration. Visitors will be able to enjoy interactive exhibits, talks, demonstrations and family-friendly activities covering everything from Earth observation and telecommunications to planetary science and human spaceflight. In Harwell, find out how satellite telecommunications and integrated applications power the technologies we rely on every day.

Register [now](#).

b. **From Space to Place**, 13th October, The Building Centre, London

Space4Climate and the Digital Task Force for Planning are bringing together the space technology and spatial planning communities for From Space to Place: Connecting Space Technology and Spatial Planning for a Resilient Future. The event will explore how Earth Observation, satellite technology and climate intelligence can support spatial planning and the development of more resilient places.

Running from 3:00–7:00pm, the programme includes an exhibition and knowledge exchange showcasing technologies, services and practical demonstrations,

followed by talks and networking. The event also marks a new partnership between Space4Climate and the Digital Task Force for Planning, intended to encourage knowledge sharing and new collaborations between the two communities.

[Find out more and register](#)

c. **Horizon Europe Cluster 4 Info Days – Digital, Industry and Space, 14th & 15th October, Online**

These information days will provide an early look at the 2027 Digital, Industry and Space Work Programme and its forthcoming funding opportunities. Topics include space and Earth observation, advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, quantum technologies, AI and robotics, emerging technologies, advanced computing and big data, as well as circular and low-carbon industries.

The first day will cover the plenary, digital and space topics, while the second focuses on industry and practical guidance for applicants. The sessions will include topic-by-topic presentations on the planned 2027 calls, policy context and advice on preparing proposals.

[Find out more and register](#)

d. **Franco-British Aerospace & Space Industry Seminar, 27th October 2026, London**

GIFAS, the French Aerospace Industries Association, is bringing a major industrial delegation to the UK in October, led by GIFAS Chairman and SAFRAN CEO Olivier Andries. More than 60 French companies will participate, representing the full civil aerospace, defence and space ecosystem, from major prime contractors to suppliers, SMEs and start-ups. French government representatives, including the DGA – France’s defence procurement agency, will also join the delegation.

As part of the visit, GIFAS and ADS will host a Franco-British bilateral seminar in London. The programme will include senior-level keynotes, roundtable discussions and an extensive B2B matchmaking session, providing UK companies with an excellent opportunity to build relationships with potential French customers, suppliers and partners. Participation is free but subject to validation and availability. [Register now](#)

e. **Defence in Space Conference 2026, 27th – 28th October, The Brewery, London**

The Defence in Space Conference returns to London in October, bringing together government, defence, industry, academia and the wider space community. The free-to-attend two-day event features more than 20 talks and panels covering military satellite communications, space-based ISR and Earth observation, PNT, Space Domain Awareness, national space programmes, cyber security and resilient space capabilities.

The programme includes speakers from UK Space Command, UK MOD/Defence Digital, Dstl, NATO, US Space Force, Airbus Defence and Space, Lockheed Martin

Space, Eutelsat, Open Cosmos, Viasat and MDA Space UK, alongside a dedicated panel exploring the role of SMEs in space and defence. This should make the event particularly relevant to Midlands companies developing dual-use technologies, secure communications, PNT, electronics, cyber capabilities, autonomous systems and other technologies with defence-space applications.

[Find out more and book a place](#)

f. Introduction to Horizon Europe, 10:00–11:00, 29th October, Online

Innovate UK Business Connect is running a free one-hour introductory webinar on Horizon Europe, aimed at organisations with little or no recent experience of the programme. The session will explain how Horizon Europe works, the different funding mechanisms, how to identify relevant calls and understand Work Programmes, find potential partners and access the support available to UK applicants.

The webinar is relevant to businesses, universities, research organisations and others interested in international research and innovation collaboration. Register [here](#).

g. Global MilSatCom 2026, 2nd – 5th November, Riverbank Park Plaza, London

Global MilSatCom 2026 will bring together more than 700 senior military, government and industry representatives from over 45 nations to discuss the future of secure military satellite communications. Now in its 28th year, the conference provides a major international forum for engagement between defence customers and the satellite communications industry, with more than 80 speakers covering topics including COMSATCOM, hybrid networks, spectrum, resilience, emerging threats and international cooperation. (asdevents.com)

The four-day event begins with a dedicated SATCOM On-The-Move Focus Day, followed by the three-day main conference and exhibition. Find out more and register [here](#).

h. Innovate UK National Quantum Technologies Showcase 2026, 6th November, Business Design Centre, London

The UK National Quantum Technologies Showcase returns to London as the UK's largest quantum event and one of the largest events of its kind globally. The showcase will bring together thousands of representatives from industry, government, investment and academia to explore advances in quantum hardware, software, communications, sensing and imaging, alongside their emerging commercial applications.

Featuring live demonstrations, expert panels, industry sessions and networking, with opportunities to explore partnerships, investment and commercialisation, space and defence are specifically identified as relevant sectors. Register [here](#).

i. **NEXT Space**, 9th November, Gothenburg, Sweden

Next Space 2026 will bring together international space industry leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and policymakers for a major new conference focused on the commercial future of space. The inaugural event will examine how nations and businesses can better leverage space technologies and services to create new capabilities, accelerate innovation and strengthen economic competitiveness.

The one-day conference will feature discussions on national strategy, commercialisation opportunities, cross-sector collaboration and emerging business models across the global space economy. Designed to showcase real-world applications of commercial space services while helping build stronger international partnerships and investment opportunities within the rapidly evolving space sector. Read more and register [here](#)

j. **UK Space Composites Technology Forum**, 12th November, NCC, Bristol

The National Composites Centre (NCC) and UK Space Agency are hosting the next UK Space Composites Technology Forum, bringing together industry, academia and the public sector to strengthen collaboration and showcase emerging materials and manufacturing technologies for space. The forum is a national platform designed to champion UK and European capability in composites and space technology and connect organisations with technical experts and potential collaborators.

This session will focus on Materials for Extreme Environments. The forum forms part of a series of focused one-day sessions aligned with the ESA Harmonisation Report, supporting the development of UK capabilities in space manufacturing, materials and systems.

See more [here](#).

k. **Space Tech Expo Europe 2026**, 17th - 19th November, Bremen, Germany

Space Tech Expo Europe, Europe's largest B2B space event, returns to Bremen this November, bringing together the international space supply chain to showcase technologies, source solutions and develop new partnerships. The exhibition covers the breadth of the sector, including satellite operations, launch services, communications and ground systems, manufacturing, materials, subsystems, components, software, optics and engineering services, alongside a programme of conferences exploring the latest industry trends, technologies and challenges.

Register [here](#).

If Midlands companies are attending and would be interested in taking part in a pitching session, please get in touch.

l. **Beyond the Moon 2026**, 19th - 20th November, London & Online

The British Interplanetary Society's 6th Beyond the Moon Symposium will explore the challenges and opportunities involved in expanding human activity beyond lunar bases and into the wider Solar System. Bringing together scientists, engineers, policymakers and other space professionals, the two-day event will consider both technical and societal challenges, including radiation protection, sustainable habitats, advanced propulsion and governance, while exploring the technologies and long-term strategies needed to enable a sustained human presence beyond Earth.

The symposium takes place at BIS HQ in London, with online participation also available via Zoom. A Call for Papers is also open, inviting researchers and industry experts to submit abstracts covering relevant projects, ideas and perspectives for consideration by the programme committee. See more [here](#).

m. GNOSIS26 – Global Conference on Space Sustainability, 24th–25th November, Online

The Global Network on Sustainability in Space (GNOSIS) is hosting GNOSIS26, a free 24-hour virtual conference bringing together international perspectives on the challenges of keeping space safe and sustainable. The event will “follow the sun”, with consecutive sessions covering Europe, the Middle East and Africa; North and South America; and Asia-Pacific, providing opportunities for the global space community to share knowledge and develop new collaborations.

The programme will explore Space Situational Awareness, Space Traffic Management, space weather, standards, data sharing and policy, alongside technology developments and practical approaches to tackling congestion, debris and other sustainability challenges. Sessions will examine knowledge and capability gaps, regional priorities, international collaboration and the solutions needed over the next decade.

[Find out more and register](#)

n. SpaceCom 2027, 13th–14th January, Orlando, Florida

SpaceCom 2027, held in collaboration with NASA, will bring together leaders from government, defence, commercial and international space to develop partnerships, explore procurement and investment opportunities and accelerate the commercialisation of new space technologies. The event expects 5,000+ attendees, 200+ speakers and 250+ exhibitors from more than 80 countries, with the programme covering priorities including lunar and cislunar exploration, commercial LEO, orbital manufacturing, robotics, space traffic management, resilient supply chains and future power and propulsion.

SpaceCom forms part of Commercial Space Week 2027 at the Orange County Convention Center, alongside the Space Mobility Conference and Global Spaceport Alliance Spaceport Summit. The wider exhibition runs from 12th–14th January.

Learn more [here](#).

o. Advanced Technology & Manufacturing Summit (ATMS), 2nd – 3rd February 2027, ICC, Belfast

The summit brings together the space, aerospace, defence and maritime sectors around advanced manufacturing, technology innovation and resilient supply chains. Rather than treating space in isolation, the event is deliberately focused on the opportunities created by cross-sector collaboration, with themes including advanced manufacturing, materials, cybersecurity, digitalisation & AI and technology innovation. The programme combines a conference and workshops with an exhibition and structured B2B matchmaking meetings with industry decision-makers, OEMs, Tier 1s and supply-chain companies.

Belfast is particularly relevant for this approach because Northern Ireland has a significant concentration of major aerospace and defence businesses alongside a well-established advanced-engineering supply chain. These include Short Brothers (now a Boeing company), Airbus and Thales, whose Belfast operation is a centre of excellence for air defence, surface-attack systems and space propulsion.

Importantly for smaller businesses, the organisers are offering lower-cost participation rates for small companies, making the B2B programme more accessible to SMEs as well as larger organisations.

Read more and register [here](#).

p. Small Satellites & Services International Forum (SSSIF 2027), 16th – 18th February 2027, Málaga, Spain

The 8th Small Satellites & Services International Forum (SSSIF) will bring together the international small satellite community in Málaga for three days of technical discussion, knowledge exchange and networking. The forum attracts designers, engineers, scientists, developers, suppliers and launch providers, with panels and technical sessions exploring the latest technologies, market developments and future trends shaping the small satellite sector.

Opportunities are available to participate as an exhibitor, sponsor or speaker, as well as to attend the forum. Find out more [here](#).

q. In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly & Manufacturing (ISAM) Conference, 23rd February 2027, ExCel London

One day before Space-Comm Expo, the ISAM Conference 2027 will bring together industry, academia, government and the wider space community to explore the technologies and capabilities enabling the next generation of activity in orbit. The conference provides a forum for discussion and collaboration around in-orbit servicing, assembly and manufacturing, including the technologies, applications, regulation and commercial opportunities that will support a more sustainable and capable space economy.

Read more and register [here](#).

r. **Space-Comm Expo Europe 2027**, 24th – 25th February 2027, ExCel London

Space-Comm Expo Europe returns to ExCeL London in February 2027, bringing together the commercial space sector with senior representatives from government, defence, international space agencies and investment. More than 6,000 attendees from 50 space nations are expected, providing a major platform for companies to showcase capabilities, understand emerging market and procurement priorities, and build relationships with customers, partners and decision-makers from across the global space sector.

Registration for 2027 opens in December, but organisations can register their interest now to receive updates and early access [here](#).

s. **Inaugural Space Economy Conference 2027**, 25th – 26th March, London

The Inaugural Space Economy Conference 2027 will bring together academics, industry professionals and practitioners to explore the management, commercial and organisational challenges of the growing space economy. The two-day developmental conference will feature academic and professional tracks, paper and poster presentations, expert panels and keynotes, and structured networking designed to encourage collaboration between researchers and industry.

Of particular interest is the Professional Track, which invites challenge-and-solution proposals addressing real managerial and organisational problems facing the space sector. The submission platform is now open, with extended **abstracts due by 30th October 2026**.

Read more [here](#).

4. **Funding and Support Opportunities**

a. **UK Space Agency Growth Pathway Advisory Scheme – Applications Open**

The UK Space Agency has opened applications for its Growth Pathway Advisory Scheme, designed to help ambitious UK space businesses strengthen their investor readiness and secure the capital needed for their next stage of growth. The programme is aimed primarily at UK-registered space businesses expecting to raise Series A or later investment within the next 18 months, or preparing for an exit, although companies in adjacent sectors with strong relevance to the UK space ecosystem may also be considered.

Participants begin with a free investor-readiness diagnostic, followed by the option of tailored specialist support from advisers including PwC and DLA Piper, experienced space founders and fundraising specialists. Support can cover business strategy and go-to-market planning, financial forecasting and valuation, tax, IP and regulatory readiness, governance, leadership and investor materials. UKSA will fund up to 75% of the cost of advisory services, up to a maximum contribution of £100,000 including VAT, with the business contributing the

remaining 25%. Participants will also receive an investor-deck review and an introductory investor meeting following completion of the advisory support.

Applications for the current eligibility window close on **25th October 2026**. Successful businesses must request their chosen advisory services before 1st January 2027, with all services completed by 31st March 2027. Further application windows are planned for 2027, 2028 and 2029.

[Find out more and apply](#)

b. National Materials Innovation Programme – up to £12m for Collaborative R&D

Innovate UK has launched the first collaborative R&D competition under the National Materials Innovation Programme, with up to £12 million available to accelerate advanced materials innovations towards industrial adoption. Projects must address one of four themes: Structural Materials Innovation; Power Electronics & Connectivity; Future Healthcare Solutions; or Metamaterials & Metasurfaces. The structural materials theme includes high-performance metals, composites, ceramics and engineering polymers, while the electronics theme includes semiconductor, photonic, RF, microwave and thermal-management materials.

Projects must be business-led and collaborative, include at least one UK SME claiming funding, and involve a named industrial end user. Grant requests must be between £500,000 and £1 million, with projects lasting 18–30 months. Funding rates are up to 70% for micro and small businesses, 60% for medium-sized businesses and 50% for large businesses. Applications close at 11:00am on **28th October**.

A further online applicant clinic will be held on **7th October, 10:30–12:00**, providing an opportunity to put questions to Innovate UK. The earlier competition briefing is also available to watch online, and Innovate UK Business Connect is supporting organisations seeking collaboration partners.

See more details [here](#).

c. UKSA International Bilateral Fund – Call 3

The UK Space Agency has launched Call 3 of the International Bilateral Fund (IBF), with at least £12 million available to support international collaborative space projects. Individual projects can receive up to £1.5 million and run for up to 18 months, with between 8 and 12 projects expected to be funded. The call aims to strengthen international partnerships while supporting UK economic growth, market access and exports, building priority UK capabilities and protecting national security. Partnerships with Canada, France, Germany, India, Japan and the USA are particularly encouraged, although proposals involving other countries are also welcomed.

Full applications close on **4th November** and successful projects will begin on 1st April 2027. Learn more about the call [here](#).

d. UKSA Space Clusters Infrastructure Fund – Call 2

The UK Space Agency is preparing to launch the competitive funding stage of Space Clusters Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) Call 2, a major investment programme supporting research and development infrastructure across the UK space sector. The programme will provide at least £37 million in grant funding through to 2030 for infrastructure that enables organisations to develop, test, manufacture, qualify and commercialise space technologies. Potential investments include laboratories, test facilities, cleanrooms, specialist equipment, digital manufacturing capability, advanced materials facilities and other infrastructure that strengthens UK space capability and supply chains.

The initial Expression of Interest stage has now closed and was non-mandatory. The formal competitive funding process will open later in 2026, with further details and eligibility requirements to be published with the full call. Midlands organisations considering an application are encouraged to continue developing their proposals and engage with the Midlands Space Cluster, particularly where we can help identify potential collaborators, demonstrate wider regional demand and strengthen the benefits to the local space ecosystem.

[See the latest SCIF Call 2 information](#)

e. ESA BASS Funding Opportunities for UK Organisations

UK organisations can access funding through the ESA Business Applications and Space Solutions (BASS) programme to develop commercially viable products and services that use space assets such as satellite communications, navigation or Earth observation. Current UK-supported routes include the permanently open Proof-of-Concept Studies and Pilot Projects call, alongside selected thematic Calls for Proposals, Enabling Studies and Competitive Invitation to Tender (ITT) opportunities. Proof-of-Concept studies help businesses validate market opportunities and develop an MVP, while Pilot Projects support testing with customers in real operational environments.

Enabling Studies and Competitive ITTs typically support more detailed Proof-of-Concept feasibility studies, generally lasting up to nine months, with ESA budgets typically in the region of €200,000–€300,000. UKSA normally provides up to 50% co-funding, although rates can vary by opportunity. Organisations interested in an Enabling Study or Competitive ITT should contact the UK Space Agency before developing a proposal to confirm that the particular call is supported and to obtain the required Authorisation of Funding.

View the current ESA BASS opportunities supported by the UK Space Agency [here](#).

f. Innovate UK Knowledge Transfer Partnerships – 2026/27 Round 3

Innovate UK has opened the latest Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) competition, with £12.5 million available to support collaborations between innovative UK businesses and universities, further education institutions, RTOs or Catapults. KTPs bring academic expertise and new skills into a business to deliver a strategic innovation project, with projects generally designed to run for up to 24 months.

SMEs can receive up to 67% of eligible project costs, while large companies can receive up to 50%. Applications must be led by an eligible knowledge base working with a UK-registered business and supported by a Knowledge Transfer Adviser. The competition is open now and closes at **11am on 14th October 2026**.

See more [here](#).

g. NSIP Call 3 – Full Proposal Stage Opens

The UK Space Agency's National Space Innovation Programme (NSIP) Call 3 has now moved to its Full Proposal stage, with applicants successful at the earlier Outline Proposal stage being invited to submit detailed applications. Up to £20 million is available through two funding streams: Kick Starter, offering grants of £150,000–£1 million for disruptive, earlier-stage innovations, and Major Projects, offering £150,000–£2 million for projects focused on higher-TRL development, commercialisation and growth. Around 15–30 projects are expected to receive funding.

This stage is only open to applicants invited following the Outline Proposal assessment and is not an opportunity for new applications. Full proposals must demonstrate clear technical and commercial outcomes, with NSIP particularly encouraging projects relevant to Satellite Communications, In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly and Manufacturing (ISAM), Space Domain Awareness and Assured Access to Space. Successful projects are expected to begin from April 2027 and must finish by 30th September 2029. The deadline for Full Proposals is 11:59pm on **Thursday 12th November 2026**.

[Full details and application guidance](#)

h. ESA Funding Call – Space-Enabled Solutions for Road and Traffic Safety

ESA is inviting proposals for new commercially sustainable services and products that use space technologies to improve road and traffic safety. The call covers areas including vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications, road condition monitoring and maintenance, traffic-flow optimisation, protection of vulnerable road users and improved road-safety assessment.

Projects can combine satellite Earth observation, navigation and communications with technologies such as AI, IoT sensors, connected vehicles and autonomous

systems. ESA is supporting both Proof-of-Concept Studies and Pilot Projects, and UK companies are eligible to apply. The call closes on **27th November 2026**.

[Find out more and apply](#)

i. ESA Funding Call – Space-Enabled Solutions for Wildfire Preparedness

ESA has opened a new Wildfire Preparedness call seeking commercially viable services that use space technology and data to improve the prevention and management of wildfires. The call focuses on areas including wildfire risk assessment, fuel-load management, preventative measures and adaptation, with potential solutions drawing on Earth observation, satellite navigation and satellite communications.

The opportunity supports Proof-of-Concept Studies and Pilot Projects, with ESA offering zero-equity funding of 50–80%, depending on SME status and Member State approval, alongside technical and commercial support. Applicants need to demonstrate customer engagement, market potential, technical feasibility and clear added value from using space assets. UK organisations are eligible, although applicants are strongly advised to engage with the UK National Delegation early, as written authorisation for ESA funding is required for a full proposal. The call closes on **1st December 2026**.

[Find out more and apply](#)

j. Innovate UK–Singapore Collaborative R&D 2026 – Up to £3m Available

Innovate UK, working with Enterprise Singapore, has launched a new collaborative R&D competition with up to £3 million available to support innovative projects between UK and Singapore businesses. Projects must focus on Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Life Sciences, or Digital and Technologies, including frontier technologies such as semiconductors, quantum, artificial intelligence, cyber security and advanced connectivity.

UK projects can request between £100,000 and £900,000 in grant funding, covering up to 70% of eligible costs depending on business size, and must run for 24–36 months. Projects must be led by a UK-registered business working with at least one separate Singapore-registered business, with UK universities and RTOs also able to participate as partners. Innovate UK Business Connect is providing matchmaking support for organisations looking for a Singapore partner. **Applications close at 11am on 16th December.**

Learn more and apply [here](#).

k. UK–Florida Space Innovation Partnership Call Now Open

The UK Space Agency and Space Florida have launched a new joint funding call to support collaborative R&D between UK and Florida space companies. A total of £150,000 from UKSA and \$200,000 from Space Florida is available, with up to two

projects expected to be supported. Each project can receive up to £75,000 of UKSA funding for the UK partner and \$100,000 from Space Florida for the Florida partner, subject to applicable match-funding requirements.

Projects can address any area of the space sector, although particular interests include in-orbit servicing and manufacturing, space transportation, satellite systems, in-space research and advanced exploration technologies. Applications must involve at least one for-profit UK company and one for-profit Florida company, with universities and research organisations also able to participate. Projects are expected to begin on 3rd May 2027 and conclude by the end of March 2028. Applications close at 3:00pm UK time on **11th January 2027**.

[Find out more and apply](#)

l. ESA BSGN Agri-food Industry Accelerator Opens Second Call

The ESA Business in Space Growth Network (BSGN) Agri-food Industry Accelerator has opened its second call for commercially driven R&D projects exploring how microgravity can enable new products, processes and technologies for terrestrial markets. The call is particularly aimed at companies across areas including microbial biomanufacturing, precision fermentation and synthetic biology, plant biology, cellular agriculture, food preservation and bio-based materials and sustainable packaging. Cross-cutting ideas addressing resource efficiency, sustainable manufacturing and the circular bioeconomy are also encouraged.

Selected projects will receive a tailored acceleration programme including technical and commercial support, help designing microgravity experiments, access to commercial space providers, support identifying ESA funding opportunities and assistance securing wider investment and funding. The programme is particularly interesting for Midlands organisations with strong capabilities in biotechnology, advanced materials, manufacturing and agri-tech that may not previously have considered space or microgravity as an R&D environment. Applications are open through ESA's OSIP platform until **15th January 2027**, with successful projects expected to enter the acceleration phase in April 2027.

[Find out more and apply](#)

m. UK National Delegate support for ESA ARTES Invitations to Tender

UK organisations can now apply for National Delegate support to access funding through the European Space Agency's ARTES (Advanced Research in Telecommunications Systems) programme. ARTES supports the development of innovative satellite communications technologies, products and services, with eligible ESA Invitations to Tender (ITTs) offering up to 100% funding for early-stage technology development and innovation.

The opportunity is open to UK companies, universities and research organisations applying to UK Space Agency-supported ESA ARTES calls. Organisations should

first check that their chosen ITT is supported by the UK Space Agency before applying for National Delegate approval, which is a mandatory step before submitting a proposal to ESA. Further details, supported activities and application guidance are available [here](#).

n. ESA General Support Technology Programme (GSTP)

The UK Space Agency is inviting UK organisations to access ESA's GSTP, which supports the development and maturation of innovative space technologies across almost all space domains, from early-stage concepts through to mission-ready hardware. The programme is open to businesses, universities and research organisations developing technologies with strong commercial or strategic potential, helping bridge the gap between research and deployment.

Funding opportunities are available through a range of GSTP activities, with support levels varying depending on the type of project. Organisations wishing to apply should review the current calls and submit a Statement of Interest to the UK Space Agency for National Delegate approval before applying to ESA. Full details, including submission dates and guidance, are available [here](#).

o. ESA NAVISP Supports Next-Generation Navigation Technologies

The UK Space Agency is inviting organisations to apply for funding through ESA's Navigation Innovation and Support Programme (NAVISP), which supports the development of innovative Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) technologies. The programme is open to UK businesses, universities and research organisations developing commercially focused products, services and technologies across the space, ground and user segments, with opportunities ranging from competitive tenders to open calls for proposals.

The programme is open year-round, with funding available across three NAVISP elements. Support can range from up to 100% funding for some early-stage research activities to co-funded commercial innovation projects, depending on the funding route. Organisations must obtain UK Space Agency National Delegate approval before submitting proposals to ESA and are encouraged to engage with the UK Space Agency at the earliest opportunity. Read more [here](#).

p. Horizon Europe work programmes

You can view available work programmes for 2026-27 now at [Horizon Europe work programmes - Research and innovation](#)

Work has been going on behind the scenes to make the opportunities more accessible for SMEs, start-ups and new applicants. Of particular interest are - Cluster 4 which covers Digital, Industry and Space and Cluster 5 which covers Climate, Energy and Mobility.

q. UKSA Accelerating Investment Export Pathway

The Accelerating Investment Export Pathway (AIEP), developed by the UK Space Agency and supported by KPMG, is designed to help high-potential UK space SMEs prepare for international growth and become export-ready. Up to ten businesses will receive targeted training and support covering international market selection and entry, overseas procurement, export regulations and trade barriers, alongside guidance on accessing wider Government export support and Department for Business and Trade missions. Participants will also receive a tailored Export Guide and programme materials.

The programme is aimed at UK-registered and headquartered early-stage space businesses with a market-ready product or service, proven commercial activity and ambitions to grow internationally. Companies should have an existing customer base, sufficient financial capacity to support export activity and be able to commit to the programme's training, mentoring, workshops and networking activities. Applications are currently available through KPMG and spaces are limited.

Find out more and apply [here](#).

r. 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](#)

s. 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 [Space – UKI2S](#)

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 here and on our website news page:

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

Get in touch!

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