

News story: Dstl Seeks SMEs for Additional £40M Research and Partnership Opportunities

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the science and technology sectors could benefit from an additional £40 million to £45 million of external investment opportunities from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). The organisation is seeking supply chain partners for a series of research projects across the defence spectrum due to start this year.

Representatives from Dstl will be available to meet potential SME partners at Venturefest South at the Ageas Bowl on 29 March. Venturefest South brings together top talent from the region to demonstrate technologies and innovations, allow start-ups to pitch for investment, and match entrepreneurs with the right organisations to take their businesses to the next level.

Dstl works with a range of start-up and SMEs, providing funding and guidance to develop new and innovative ideas to help protect the UK's armed forces; helping companies grow and boosting the regional economy. Defence is a hugely important sector in the South East, employing more than 39,000 people, with a further 18,000 in aerospace and space.

By working with investors Dstl also helps companies to commercialise the impact and bring new technologies to market. Licensing agreements have been signed for 125 technologies across defence and security, biometrics, life sciences, and diagnostics which have created 580 jobs.

Gary Aitkenhead, Dstl Chief Executive said:

Venturefest is a terrific opportunity to meet potential suppliers and explore ways we can work together. We're especially interested in companies who have not traditionally worked in defence but have specialist expertise and fresh ideas. SMEs need rapid decisions and it can take as little as a week for a new supplier to be approved.

Venturefest South is a not for-profit initiative that has been created and developed by a group of partners within the regional innovation economy including: Carswell Gould, Solent LEP, Innovate UK, the Knowledge Transfer Network, University of Portsmouth, Southampton City Council, Solent University, The University of Southampton, Portsmouth City Council, and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

The fast-growing innovation network in the south is supported by a number of corporate sponsors including BDO, Natwest and Dstl. All the money raised from sponsorship and ticket sales will go towards creating opportunities for early-stage business start-ups to exhibit for free at the conference.

Venturefest South is part of the wider Venturefest network, which works nationally to draw local innovation eco-systems together through a number of local events around the country, working closely with the Knowledge Transfer Network, Innovate UK and other national partners.

[Find out more and to apply to take part in any of the pitching sessions, showcase an innovation in the exhibition or sponsor Venturefest South 2019](#)

A host of opportunities exist for SMEs to work across Dstl's portfolio over the next 12 months, and through the SME Searchlight programme there will be a series of events, workshops and consultations to develop a broader supplier ecosystem, particularly in the fields of radio frequency engineering, artificial intelligence, synthetic biology and wargaming. The team can be contacted by emailing searchlight@dstl.gov.uk

[**Press release: Inquiry into Save the Needy Worldwide finds trustees failed to protect charity funds**](#)

Charity dissolved and trustees removed and disqualified following investigation involving cash couriering

[**Press release: Highways England funding brings more cycling and heritage benefits**](#)

Highways England announces multi-million pound boost for cycling, heritage and wildlife projects for communities along the A30 in Cornwall.

[**Press release: Sentenced: bankrupt**](#)

claimed he burnt £70,000 owed to creditors

A bankrupt has received a suspended prison term after he tried to avoid paying his creditors, claiming he had burned nearly £70,000.

Press release: Businesses urged to sign up for Latin America and Caribbean Roadshow

UK businesses are being urged to register for the 2019 Latin America and Caribbean (LATAC) Roadshow organised by the Department for International Trade (DIT) to identify new export opportunities in the region.

The LATAC Roadshow will be held at various locations across the UK including Glasgow, London, Reading, Leeds and the East Midlands. Businesses can register [here](#) before 28 February 2019 to attend.

These events will provide businesses with insight into the latest exporting opportunities in vibrant markets such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

Joanna Crellin, HM Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean, will lead the events alongside senior trade experts from DIT to give companies the latest advice and insights into new markets.

Businesses will also hear first-hand the experiences of companies which are already successfully exporting to LATAC, including JCB, Whittaker Engineering, Concept Smoke Screen and ABI electronics.

International Trade Secretary and President of the Board of Trade Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The Latin America and Caribbean region is home to more than 650 million people, where growing economies are demanding high-quality products and services. Companies that take advantage of this demand will flourish as the UK leaves the European Union and as the world looks to a time beyond Brexit.

Each year, my international economic department helps thousands of companies of every size to break into global markets. Engagement

with business roadshows such as LATAC will help companies to make the most of these export opportunities and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Latin America and the Caribbean combined is equivalent to the world's third largest economy after China and the USA, offering vast potential for UK businesses across sectors such as food and drink, oil and gas, infrastructure and financial services.

HM Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean, Joanna Crellin, said:

Latin America and the Caribbean have vibrant and dynamic economies, so the roadshow presents a valuable opportunity for UK businesses to develop stronger trade links outside Europe.

"In the year to September 2018, £12.8 billion worth of UK goods and services were exported to LATAC – but there is potential for so much more, which is why DIT is dedicated to promoting UK trade and prosperity globally and improving market access for businesses. I look forward to attending the roadshow and meeting innovative British businesses ready to make their mark across the world."

Home to over 650 million people, LATAC includes 48 countries and territories with a growing middle-class population, resulting in greater demand for high-quality products and services.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

A number of Scottish companies are already working in and exporting to South America very successfully. I have visited South America in recent years to promote Scottish business interests and to help launch Innes and Gunn in the Paraguay market.

I know from speaking to businesses out there that Scotland's skills, products and services are highly regarded, and I've seen first-hand the opportunities that exist. I've also witnessed the support on offer from DIT and our diplomatic networks.

So I would encourage businesses in Scotland to attend the LATAC Roadshow to identify new export opportunities and meet the demand for high-quality Scottish products and services worldwide.

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports for the Midlands at DIT, said:

There is an untapped demand across Latin America and the Caribbean for UK goods and services in these high value sectors, and our mission is to showcase the prospects in the region. I highly

encourage businesses to sign up and take advantage of this opportunity.

Ben Raby, Head of South East, Department for International Trade, said:

The Latin America and Caribbean regions provide numerous trade opportunities for the UK, and there is no better time for UK businesses to explore these emerging markets.

I encourage businesses across the South East to attend the LATAC Roadshow and take advantage of the expert advice on offer and learn about the demand for high-quality British products and services in Latin America and the Caribbean.