

Press release: Lift off for new investment in UK SMEs to develop new aerospace technology

- Business Minister launches £24 million research & development fund to back pioneering aerospace SMEs developing new solutions to UK aerospace challenges
- separate programme worth almost £14 million also unveiled – boosting global competitiveness of UK aerospace SMEs
- new commitments are part of the modern Industrial Strategy and joint government-industry Aerospace Sector Deal

Government today backed pioneering aerospace SMEs with the launch of a new £24 million fund for collaborative research and development (R&D) projects.

The new funding opportunity, announced by Business Minister Andrew Stephenson at the Paris Airshow, will help keep UK aerospace suppliers at the forefront of aerospace manufacturing.

Through the programme up to £12 million government funding, matched by industry, will be available as part of the Open Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D) competition, supported by the Aerospace Technology Institute Programme.

The Business Minister also announced the opening of the new round of the National Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (NATEP 3) to help SMEs develop innovative technology, including, virtual reality training for cabin crew and 3D aerospace structures to lighten aircraft, and bring it to market quickly to boost their global competitiveness.

In a speech, Business Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

Innovation and R&D are crucial for the UK aerospace sector and I am delighted that we have today launched two programmes to support R&D for SMEs.

Through our Industrial Strategy we are ensuring the UK remains a world-leader by boosting R&D activity, developing new technology and increasing the UK's share of the growing aerospace market.

To boost UK aerospace R&D activity, develop new technology and increase the UK's share of the growing aerospace market, industry and government made a total joint funding commitment of £3.9 billion for civil aerospace research from 2013 to 2026. Of that funding, today's announcements include:

- Open Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D): a £24 million

programme to support and accelerate industry investment focused on small and medium sized supply chain companies. This competition seeks high risk, high impact projects that demonstrate future-thinking, revolutionary and disruptive solutions to UK aerospace challenges. The call will open in October 2019 and potential applicants should now contact the Aerospace Technology Institute to discuss the preparation of their bids.

- National Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme 3 (NATEP 3): a £13.7 million programme aimed at small and medium sized suppliers to help them develop their own innovative technologies to enhance their capabilities and increase their ability to win new business. It is primarily aimed at small and medium sized businesses that are new to R&D or are restarting R&D activity. The programme builds upon the successful NATEP 1 and 2 programmes. The first call for NATEP 3 will open in September 2019 and companies wanting to participate are encouraged to speak to ADS.

ADS Chief Executive Paul Everitt said:

The UK's successful Aerospace Industrial Strategy is helping companies in this innovative sector to develop advanced new technology, raise their productivity and create high value jobs in every part of the country.

Programmes like these are generating new R&D investment at every level of the industry. This investment is vital to boosting our international competitiveness and to developing the technologies of the future that will deliver improved fuel efficiency and significant reductions in the environmental impact of aviation worldwide.

During the Paris Airshow, the Business Minister also met small, medium and large companies exhibiting from across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.