

Press release: UK-France space agreement delivers device to ocean satellite

A device built in the UK by Honeywell, which will form a vital part of the mission to make the first global survey of the world's surface waters and oceans, has been delivered to Thales Alenia Space in France.

The Surface Water and Ocean Topography, or SWOT, mission is led by CNES (the French Space Agency) and NASA with support from the UK Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency. The UK Space Agency and CNES signed a joint statement in January 2018 during the UK-France Summit in Sandhurst to step up co-operation in space, building on 2014's Brize-Norton framework arrangement.

The warming of Earth's climate may profoundly alter the movement of freshwater resources from lakes to rivers to reservoirs, resulting in significant societal impact. The SWOT satellite will use radar technology to measure the features of oceans, coastlines, rivers and lakes across the globe to improve understanding of changes over time and their impact on farming, industry and human populations.

The UK-built device, known as a duplexer, is a vital component that routes radar signals around the satellite and can transmit at a power of 1,500W – a level never before seen in this kind of device.

Speaking in Brussels at the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites Plenary, UK Space Agency Director of Growth Catherine Mealing-Jones said:

Satellites play a major role in understanding our home – planet Earth. Using great British technology, the SWOT mission is a great example of how satellites can take measurements of our environment from the unique vantage point of space, in this case, giving us the first global survey of one of our most precious resources – water. The UK and France are leading space powers in Europe and the delivery of the duplexer for the SWOT mission is a significant milestone in our partnership, which continues to go from strength to strength.

It will now be integrated into a Radio-Frequency Unit by Thales Alenia Space before NASA engineers add it to their KaRin instrument developed at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California. The satellite is due to launch 2021.

CNES is supplying the RFU (Radio-Frequency Unit), which is co-funded with the UK Space Agency UKSA. As well as the duplexer, Thales Alenia Space is developing the 'hyperbox' in Toulouse which will create the radar pulse and receive radar echoes.

Hailing this new milestone, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall said:

This new step forward for the SWOT mission is a product of the close relationship between our space agencies and industries. The joint statement signed by CNES and UKSA in 2018 during the UK-France Summit in Sandhurst is being effectively applied and France and the United Kingdom are pursuing their successful space cooperation.

The UK and France are also teaming up on the MicroCarb programme to monitor and map sources and sinks of carbon gases, as well as supporting the implementation of a Space Climate Observatory, which was set out in the Paris Declaration on Climate Change.

This week is [Green Great Britain Week](#), which is showcasing the leading role of the UK's academic and business communities in tackling climate change while generating economic growth.

Green GB Week celebrates the tenth anniversary of the UK's ground-breaking Climate Change Act. The UK has played a leading role in delivering clean growth – growing the economy by more than two thirds while reducing emissions by over 40% since 1990.

[Clean growth](#) is central to the Government's modern Industrial Strategy, and Green GB Week includes 100 events across the country promoting the opportunities from clean growth and raising awareness of how businesses and the public can contribute to tackling climate change.

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[News story: £2 billion of new investment opportunities launched across the UK](#)

- New £2 billion property investment portfolio launched, creating thousands of jobs and new homes across the country
- Projects set to benefit the creative, life sciences and retail sectors – including a new 12,500 seat stadium built in Gateshead
- Minister for Investment to showcase the projects at the UK's largest property exhibition

The Department for International Trade has today (Wednesday 17 October) launched £2 billion worth of new investment opportunities which will create thousands of new homes and jobs across the UK.

The portfolio includes:

- Liverpool: The construction of more than 2,000 new homes at Festival Park and 1,000 new jobs in a new urban community at Paddington Village
- Gateshead: 5,000 new jobs at Follingsby Max, a new logistics and distribution centre in Gateshead, and a new 12,500 seater stadium at Gateshead Quays
- Edinburgh: A new world-leading bio and life sciences development at Edinburgh BioQuarter, which will make the city a leading hub for stem cell research
- Belfast: 21,000 sqm of new Grade A office space for the creative and technology sector at The Sixth, further enhancing the city's growing reputation as a production centre for film and television
- Sussex: A new science and technology park at Burgess Hill, providing more than 90,000 sq metres of commercial space

The projects will create jobs and drive prosperity in local communities whilst contributing positively to the quality of life for local people.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP, said

It has never been easier to find opportunities for global investment in the UK and these seven projects worth £2 billion give investors the opportunity to do just that.

Not only will these projects promote our vibrant and successful real estate industry, they also create homes and jobs across the country. As an international economic department, our message is loud and clear: the UK is open for business, and we can help find the right investment for you.

Minister for Investment, Graham Stuart MP, said:

It's a privilege for me to launch these new schemes, which will provide new homes and jobs for people across the country.

The UK is the number one destination in Europe for foreign investment, and we will continue to promote opportunities that help people find decent jobs and develop strong communities.

The 7 projects will be unveiled by the Minister for Investment at the [MIPIM UK](#) property conference being held in London this week and will include opportunities for UK and international investors in a range of sectors.

3,000 property professionals and over 300 potential investors and financial

institutions from around the world will be in attendance.

Jake Berry MP, Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth said:

From a transformed waterfront in Liverpool to rival any historic European city, to a new, state-of-the-art Quay in Gateshead, these new developments represent over £1 billion of world-class investment in the Northern Powerhouse.

With Government working hand-in-hand with business and attracting international investment from across the globe, we're delivering transformative regeneration for communities from coast to coast across the North – further evidence that the Northern Powerhouse is one of the most business-friendly regions in the UK.

The portfolio has been put together by the DIT's Capital Investment team which leads the government's drive to attract and support international investment into large scale property, regeneration, infrastructure and energy projects across the UK.

This week the department will launch the Perfect Fit Prospectus – which uses technology to create individualised reports for potential investors – based on their country of origin and the sector they operate in – to give them the information they need to make an informed investment decision.

The new tool will help the DIT as it seeks to become the most innovative investment promotion agency in the world.

Further information:

- Further information on all seven new projects can be found on [our investment website](#)
- In the first half of 2017, 14% of global commercial property investment transactions occurred in the UK, second only to the USA
- The UK is also the leading European destination for venture capital investment, helping innovative firms quickly reach their potential, providing jobs and economic benefits across the UK

[News story: Green GB Week sees Magnox's double platinum jubilee](#)

This week marks 90 years since Maentwrog Hydro-electric station began producing carbon-free electricity on 15 October 1928, and 50 years since

Trawsfynydd nuclear power station officially opened on 18 October 1968.

Construction of both sites were incredible feats of pioneering 20th century engineering which, for Maentwrog, included the formation of the second largest man-made lake in Wales with the construction of its 4 concrete dams.

Trawsfynydd stopped generating electricity in 1991 but Maentwrog's 30 megawatt power station has continued to generate carbon-free electricity, supplying around 4,000 gigawatts of to the National Grid over the last 90 years which is enough to power all the homes in Wales for 6 years.

Rainwater is collected from across the Snowdonia National Park through a network of rivers, leats and streams that feed into Trawsfynydd Lake. The water surges down 2 high pressure pipelines, at more than 4,000 gallons per second, to drive 2 turbines generating electricity. Just one inch of rainfall creates 24 hours of electricity generation.



Maentwrog Dam (present day)

Station Manager, Andy McAteer, commented:

Maentwrog has been operating since 1928 and will carry on harnessing this carbon-free energy source long into the future. We've got a close-knit team that has a unique opportunity to work on the site, knowing that we are only stewards of this beautiful and well-designed site looking after it for future generations.

Maentwrog's younger cousin, Trawsfynydd Site, has had a successful year of decommissioning progress with many of the clean-up and hazard reduction projects coming to a successful end:

- hundreds of thousands of litres of radioactive waste have been safely retrieved, packaged and placed in the site's interim term storage facility
- 3,300m² of concrete walls and floors in the site's former cooling ponds complex has been decontaminated
- over 1km of pipework has been removed
- several redundant buildings have been demolished
- 12,000kgs of a radioactive waste material known as 'fuel element debris' – created when the site was generating electricity – has been recovered and placed in safe storage

Trawsfynydd and Maentwrog sites are owned by the government's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), the organisation responsible for cleaning up 17 sites dating back to the earliest days of the nuclear industry.

Nuclear Energy Minister Richard Harrington:

For 90 years Wales has been pioneering the UK's move to a greener, cleaner economy producing low-carbon electricity and during our first ever Green GB Week it's encouraging to see how the UK's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is also leading the world in decommissioning by cleaning up the UK's legacy nuclear sites in Wales.

The NDA's Director of Nuclear Operations, Alan Cumming, said:

Our sites were built by pioneers of the nuclear industry. These sites were 'world's firsts' when they were built and they made a remarkable contribution to this country throughout the 20th century.

Today, the UK is at the leading edge of nuclear decommissioning as we safely pioneer approaches to cleaning up the legacy from the earliest days of the nuclear industry, while delivering value for the UK taxpayer.

[Press release: G7 Foreign Ministers'](#)

Statement on Disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi

The G7 Foreign Ministers said:

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, affirm our commitment to defending freedom of expression and protection of a free press.

We remain very troubled by the disappearance of prominent Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Those bearing responsibility for his disappearance must be held to account.

We encourage Turkish-Saudi collaboration and look forward to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conducting a thorough, credible, transparent, and prompt investigation, as announced.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy_Hunt](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Press release: Making Tax Digital for

VAT pilot open for business

Making Tax Digital for VAT will make it easier for businesses to manage their tax and will save them, and their agents, time which can instead be devoted to maximising business opportunities, encouraging growth and fostering good financial planning.

From 1 April 2019, under Making Tax Digital, around 1 million businesses registered for VAT with a taxable turnover above £85,000 will need to keep their VAT records digitally and file their returns using Making Tax Digital-compatible software.

The pilot opens today for around half a million businesses whose affairs are up to date and straightforward, and will extend to most other business types over the coming months. HMRC has also listened to concerns and will give a small group of customers with more complex requirements a further 6 months to prepare. This will ensure there is sufficient time for testing the service with them in the pilot before they are required to join.

[Mel Stride MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury](#), said:

HMRC is transforming the tax administration so that it's more effective, more efficient and easier for taxpayers. Today's announcement means that around half a million businesses will be able to join Making Tax Digital and start filing their VAT returns online, making it easier to get their tax right first time.

More and more businesses use digital tools every day to help them operate – tax shouldn't be different. This is a major step towards bringing VAT into the 21st century.

Theresa Middleton, Director for Making Tax Digital for Business, said:

Millions of people are already banking, paying bills and interacting with their suppliers and customers online. Using digital tools to help businesses manage their business income and expenses and get their tax right builds on this momentum and will also help them get more control over their finances.

Eligible businesses and agents shouldn't leave preparations to the last minute and are encouraged to join the pilot as soon as they can. Read [more information on Making Tax Digital](#).

Background

HMRC's ambition is to become one of the most digitally advanced tax administrations in the world and Making Tax Digital is making fundamental changes to the way the tax system works – transforming tax administration so that it is:

- more effective
- more efficient
- easier for taxpayers to get their tax right