Dstl and UKSA plan closer collaboration

News story

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the UK Space Agency will investigate ways to collaborate more closely.

Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead (left) and UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate at Portsdown West.

The initiative follows the first visit by the UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate to Dstl's space facilities at its Portsdown West site near Portsmouth, where he met Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead and senior members of its Space Systems Programme.

The 2 organisations are responsible for separate but complementary UK government activities in space under the National Space Strategy. Dstl's Space Systems Programme has expanded significantly in recent years, supporting UK Space Command and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) more generally with research and development (R&D), particularly in space domain awareness (SDA) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

The first satellite launch from the UK later this year by Virgin Orbit from Spaceport Cornwall has resulted in increased contact across many levels of both organisations, which is expected to continue as the UK grows its commercial satellite launch market and builds additional capabilities.

There are benefits to working together to develop new technologies and deepen the specialist expertise found across Dstl and the UK Space Agency, which were discussed at the meeting.

Dr Paul Hollinshead, Dstl Chief Executive, said:

> This is an ideal time to deepen the collaboration between two of the UK's leading space research organisations. Many of the space

> innovations being developed today will have dual-use application for both the defence and civil sectors.
>
> Pooling our expertise could widen the adoption of these technologies to bring them into use faster and cheaper while fuelling the growth of our specialist suppliers.

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

> It was a privilege to visit the advanced facilities at Dstl and discuss areas of mutual collaboration, to inform the development of new space capabilites.
>
> The National Space Strategy recognises the huge potential for dual-use applications in areas such as secure communications and Earth observation, and we value the support of our defence partners in the preparations for the first satellite launches from the UK.
>
> We also share a common desire to inspire the next generation to reach for the stars and support the talent of tomorrow.

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Overspeeds in weather-related Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions

News story

Overspeeds in weather-related Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions on Western and Wales routes, 18 and 19 July 2022.

NOTICE TO TRAIN CREWS

BLANKET SPEED RESTRICTION IMPOSED

Depot* _____ Date/Time: 19:00 Sunday 17th July 2022

Routes: ALL LINES ON WESTERN ROUTE NORTH AND EAST OF COGLOAD JUNCTION (TAUNTON)

THE FOLLOWING BLANKET SPEED RESTRICTION HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON MONDAY 18th JULY 2022 BETWEEN LOCATIONS SHOWN BELOW FOR THE TIME PERIOD 12:00 TO 22:00 MONDAY 18th JULY 2022. DURING THIS PERIOD THE SPEED OF ALL TRAINS MUST NOT EXCEED: -

30
60
MPH OR

THIRTY OVER SIXTY

Has this speed been imposed as a result of severe or adverse weather conditions? YES

Lines of Route:	ALL LINES
At or between:	PADDINGTON TO COGLOAD JUNCTION (VIA FORDGATE & ATHELNEY). INCLUDING ALL WESTERN ROUTE LINES NORTH AND EAST OF COGLOAD JN (TAUNTON) TO REGIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH NORTH WEST & CENTRAL / WALES & WESSEX

Extract from the BESR notices issued by the Western route (courtesy of Network Rail)

During 18 and 19 July 2022, a number of trains were involved in incidents relating to the Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions (BESRs) which had been imposed due to the extremely hot weather.

RAIB has identified that two of these incidents led to overspeeding and took place on the Western Route during 18 July. A further two incidents involving overspeeding and two incidents where drivers had not clearly understood BESRs occurred on the Wales route on 19 July.

We have undertaken a preliminary examination into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a safety digest.

The safety digest will be made available on our website in the next few weeks.

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Matthew Lawson, British Ambassador to North Macedonia presents credentials

World news story

Matthew Lawson presented his Letters of Credence to the President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski on 27 July 2022.

Matthew Lawson with President Stevo Pendarovski.

On Wednesday (27 July), Mr Matthew Lawson presented his Letters of Credence

to Mr Stevo Pendarovski, accrediting him as Her Majesty's Ambassador to North Macedonia.

Following the Audience, HM Ambassador Lawson said:

> I was honoured to present my Credentials to President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski this morning. During my ambassadorial mandate I look forward to building further on the excellent relations between the United Kingdom and North Macedonia.
>
> The United Kingdom is a proven friend of the Republic of North Macedonia and a strong supporter of the strategic goals for the country's progress. Together with our partners in the Government, the Parliament, civil society and business sector, we will work on strengthening trade between the United Kingdom and North Macedonia, and support key areas such as good governance, transparency and accountability, security sector reform, judiciary, diversity, freedom of expression and socio-economic development.

Follow British Embassy Skopje on Facebook and Twitter.

Published 4 August 2022

Guidance to support public sector investments in location data

The Geospatial Commission today publishes appraisal guidance to help public sector organisations make more effective cases for investing in location data.

Location data is a strategic national asset, delivering significant value for people, organisations and wider society. It supports key government priorities such as Net Zero, Levelling Up and had an important role in managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Public sector investments have previously struggled to understand, assess and articulate the economic, social and environmental value of location data coherently, constraining their ability to unlock funding.

By providing a more structured and practical approach to assessing value that is based on best-practice methods, existing research and the experiences of stakeholders, we aim to drive greater consistency in the way that these benefits are routinely captured, improving the quality of investment cases presented to decision makers.

Thalia Baldwin, Commissioner of the Geospatial Commission said:

> Linking data to location improves analysis, decisions and outcomes. It is vital that the public sector invests to maintain our strategic national geospatial assets. Our guidance will support organisations to make a coherent and persuasive case for improved geospatial data.

The seven-step framework presented in the guidance sets out an approach to understanding, assessing and articulating the value of a location data project, from the inception stage to the presentation of benefits. Many of the principles set out in this guidance are also relevant for data investments more generally and support commitments to improve the use of digital and data, as set out in the National Data Strategy and the Roadmap to Digital and Data 2022-2025.

David Henderson, Chief Geospatial Officer at Ordnance Survey said:

> We all know the practical value of maps and location data in supporting our everyday life. But expressing that value in a way that supports future investment in geospatial data and services by government and business remains a challenge. This work provides a valuable foundation on how to express those benefits and a more consistent approach to making the case for geospatial data.

The guidance was developed in conjunction with Frontier Economics, with contributions from a wide range of location data users and suppliers. It includes case studies where the framework has been applied to past investments, acting as a helpful reference and learning tool for users.

Sarah Snelson, Director of Public Policy Practice at Frontier Economics said:

> Geospatial data has the potential to unlock a variety of important use cases across the UK economy but there are challenges to valuation that can inhibit their application. We have worked closely with stakeholders to develop a practical valuation approach that public sector organisations can apply. We are excited to see how the framework is used.

Renewable energy innovation boosted by

£37 million government funding across the UK

- £32 million government funding to increase UK production of sustainable biomass, which can be used as a renewable energy source
- further £5 million to support innovative new technologies that will generate hydrogen from biomass and waste
- biomass can be used for low carbon energy, and will play a key role as the UK scales up renewables to end dependency on expensive fossil fuels

Innovative biomass projects across the UK have today (Thursday 4 August) been awarded £37 million in funding, as the government drives forward its plan to scale up domestic renewable energy, including from biomass.

Increasing the growth of elephant grass (miscanthus), farming seaweed off the North Yorkshire coast, and increasing the harvesting capacity for willow are among 12 projects receiving a share of £32 million funding under Phase 2 of the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme, which aims to find new ways to increase biomass production in the UK.

Also announced today are 22 winners of the first stage of the Hydrogen BECCS programme, with £5 million funding to help develop innovative technologies to produce hydrogen, a clean fuel that emits only water vapour when combusted, from sustainable biomass and waste.

Biomass, a sustainable plant material, can be used to produce biofuels and sustainable aviation fuels, or to create chemicals for household cleaning products and bio-plastics. Biomass' ability to deliver at scale has already been proven, having generated 12.6% of total UK electricity in 2020, forming an important part of our plans to generate more home-grown power and strengthen Britain's energy security.

Energy Minister, Greg Hands, said:

> Accelerating home-grown renewables like biomass is a key part of ending our dependency on expensive and volatile fossil fuels.
>
> This £37 million of government investment will support innovation across the UK, boosting jobs whilst ensuring greater energy security for years to come.

Backed by the independent Climate Change Committee, biomass will form an important part of the UK's future renewable energy mix, which will be vital for ensuring the UK's energy security and reducing reliance on expensive fossil fuels.

Through Phase 2 of the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme, projects will

be developed from the design stage, which was supported with £4 million government funding, into full demonstration projects, showcasing new methods to grow sustainable biomass materials, which can be used to produce low-carbon energy. The projects will boost biomass productivity in the UK, through breeding, planting, cultivating and harvesting of organic energy materials.

Today's winners include:

- Aberystwyth University, Wales, which is receiving over £2 million for their 'Miscanspeed' project, looking at accelerating the breeding of high-yielding, resilient miscanthus (elephant grass) – grass varieties that are well-suited for biomass use
- SeaGrown Limited in Scarborough, which is receiving over £2.8 million to develop new techniques to farm and harvest seaweed off the North Yorkshire coast, taking advantage of seaweed's qualities as a source of biomass and its ability to remove carbon from the atmosphere
- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in Belfast, which is receiving over £1.5 million for their 'EnviroCrops' project, developing an app to enable farmers and land managers to make informed decisions about planting perennial energy crops, helping to optimise biomass choices for a given land area

The Hydrogen BECCS Innovation Programme supports the development of technologies to produce hydrogen generated via 'BECCS' (bioenergy with carbon capture and storage).

BECCS technology can uniquely offer the ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, as the CO2 absorbed during the growth of the sustainable biomass and the organic content found in waste can then be permanently removed from the atmosphere using carbon capture technologies.

Hydrogen BECCS technologies will support the government's plan to build a hydrogen economy, making hydrogen a clean fuel to use in hard-to-decarbonise sectors such as transport and heavy industry, while also removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

This government backing for innovation in biomass production will help support the government's plans to scale up and accelerate clean, renewable energy in the UK, to protect the UK's domestic energy security. Supporting trailblazing hydrogen BECCS technology will help further the government's ambition to see hydrogen as the clean super-fuel of the future, while also encouraging green investment into the UK and supporting the creation of new jobs.

The Hydrogen BECCS projects receiving funding today include:

- the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, which is receiving £220,239 to develop an innovative and sustainable process to obtain hydrogen from the organic matter present in different types of waste
- the University of Leeds which is receiving £249,984 for their H2-Boost project, which aims to produce biohydrogen for the UK transport sector

- 17Cicada Ltd in Stevenage which is receiving £237,065 to develop technology to produce hydrogen from bacteria

Stuart Fitzgerald, Managing Director of White Horse Energy said:

> White Horse Energy are delighted to proceed into Phase 2 of the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme with our mobile pelletisation innovation. Our technology is going to revolutionise the production of low carbon, domestically produced energy for the UK market, and we can't wait to get started!

Kevin Chown, Chief Operating Officer at Kew Projects said:

> BECCS systems producing hydrogen have huge potential for delivering commercially-viable greenhouse gas removal, whilst supporting the development of the hydrogen economy with low-cost hydrogen supply.
>
> KEW have identified innovative approaches for the separation of the H2 product from the CO2 for sequestration, and the BEIS funding will be instrumental in enabling a more efficient and cost-effective process to be demonstrated and accelerate H2BECCS deployment.

Dr Paul Carver, CEO of New Energy Farms EU Ltd said:

> The BEIS initiative is a key programme to assist UK climate change goals. New Energy Farms EU Ltd is very pleased to be able to contribute its efforts and technologies towards expanding UK biomass feedstock supply.

Paul Willacy, Managing Director of Compact Syngas Solutions said:

> We are delighted to have been successful in obtaining government funding for our Hydrogen BECCS Innovation project. The ability to capture and store the carbon from our gasification process while making hydrogen, takes us one step closer to producing cleaner and greener hydrogen and to support the drive to net zero.

The Biomass Feedstocks and Hydrogen BECCS Innovation Programmes are both funded through the BEIS £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio.

Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme

Hydrogen BECCS Innovation Programme

- The Hydrogen BECCS programme supports the development of core

technologies essential for the generation of hydrogen from biomass and waste with the ability to capture carbon

- Phase 1 will be followed by a second phase, where the Phase 1 winners will be able to apply for further funding to support the demonstration of their hydrogen BECCS technology
- see the list of all the successful Phase 1 winners