

Space science investment generates income and creates jobs

The study found that £523 million of UK Space Agency funding put into the European Space Agency's Space Science Programme (SSP) has generated £1.4 billion of income for UK industry, with a further £1.1 billion from partially attributed and forecast benefits.

The investment, between 2000-2018, created 306 jobs. The UK industry regularly secures major ESA contracts to provide mission spacecraft platforms, support mission operations and develop major subsystems.

To support UK involvement in the build and data exploitation of the science instruments themselves, the UK Space Agency provides separate funding to the academic community.

One of the missions addressed by the report, Solar Orbiter, is due to launch in February. This will take the most detailed images ever of the Sun and provide crucial information about how our star's volatile activity affects its atmosphere. This knowledge will help improve predictions of space weather events, which can disrupt and damage satellites.

The UK is at the heart of this ESA mission, with Airbus at Stevenage winning the contract to design and build the spacecraft. This could become the template for an operational programme to monitor and warn us of approaching Space Weather. Meanwhile Imperial College London and UCL Mullard Space Science Laboratory are leading international teams to design and build two instruments while the Science and Technology Facilities Council's RAL Space and UCL are major contributors to two more and from which future operational requirements will be defined.

Chris Lee, Chief Scientist at the UK Space Agency, said:

Having a major role in space science programmes is like playing in the Champions League. Technology doesn't get much harder than this and the insights these missions offer and the skills they create permeate the entire UK space economy – supporting our leading role in areas such as telecommunications, Earth observation and weather satellites.

The report, commissioned by the UK Space Agency, also found the UK's investments in space science have led to the development of new skills in the sector and improved facilities, such as clean rooms, computing and mechanical equipment.

In November the UK Space Agency joined all ESA member states in supporting a 10% rise to the overall space science budget, taking the UK's share to around £600 million over a five-year period. This will increase the number and

ambition of space science missions, including missions to use gravitational waves to study black holes and to intercept and study a pristine comet in our solar system.

SSP is designed to undertake scientific research concerning the solar system, our Sun and the Universe beyond. At the same time, the programme is charged with stimulating competitive industrial capability.

In addition to these direct industrial contractual benefits, UK investment aims to facilitate technology transfer, industrial-academic knowledge transfer, and contribute to the UK skills base by attracting and developing young talented scientists and engineers through high profile missions.

The evaluation focused on a sub-set of seven SSP missions: Bepi-Colombo, Gaia, Herschel, James Webb Space Telescope, Lisa Pathfinder, Planck and Solar Orbiter.

[Video footage shows removal of M5 motorway services bridge](#)

Highways England closed the M5 overnight on Saturday between Junction 13 and Junction 14 to enable the dismantling and removal of the well-used and well-worn motorway structure.

[View timelapse footage of the bridge removal.](#)

The footbridge spanning the southbound and northbound areas of the services had reached the end of its life and was closed to pedestrians in 2018.

A 70-strong team were involved in the cutting, dismantling and lifting of the bridge, with a 750-tonne crane positioned on the northbound carriageway to lift and lower the 69-tonne footbridge and two 130-foot cranes to manoeuvre the structure for cutting and removal.

The 60-metre bridge may no longer span the M5 but the metal and concrete, including the ramps and pillars, will now be recycled for future use.

Highways England took the opportunity to carry out other essential maintenance work during the overnight closure, and Project Manager Adrian Simon said:

It was a massive operation for our principal contractor Carnell, we understood the closure would have an effect on journey times and we appreciate people's co-operation and patience during the work.

We carried out additional work between junctions 13 and 14 to

minimise disruption, the removal operation was carried out safely and discussions are ongoing regarding building a replacement footbridge.

As is the case with a lot of our replacement and renewal schemes, another positive will see the materials recycled and put to good use elsewhere.

The scheme experienced some delays, including computer issues with one of the 130-tonne cranes, unseen issues detaching the main span from the piers and additional cutting of the bridge deck.

Mr Simon added:

Due to the complex nature of the operation, we did reopen the M5 a little later than scheduled, and again, we'd like to thank drivers using the diversion routes for their patience.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Peterborough City Council joins HM Land Registry's Local Land Charges Register](#)

From 31 January 2020, anyone requiring local land charges (LLC) searches in the local authority area of Peterborough City Council will need to get them from HM Land Registry rather than going directly to the council.

Karina Singh, Director of Transformation at HM Land Registry, said:

Migrating Peterborough to our national LLC Register is a significant milestone for us as it's the largest number of paper records that we've digitised so far. This will make life easier for property buyers across the area, providing round the clock online

access to the information they need.

Michelle Abbott, senior lawyer for Peterborough City Council, said:

We are proud to be the eighth local authority in the country to transfer its land charges data to HM Land Registry's digital service. Speeding up the property-buying process benefits ourselves, our residents and our businesses. Improving the quality and ease of access to over 30,000 local land charges will improve the experience of buying and selling properties in the Peterborough area.

Local land charges describe restrictions on the use of a property such as planning permissions or listed buildings and are usually required in the property-buying process. A local land charges search will reveal whether a property is subject to a charge, which then informs a buyer's decision to buy that property or land.

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with local authorities in England to migrate their local land charges data to a central, digital register. Once migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results using the [Search for local land charges](#) service.

HM Land Registry's business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access local land charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

For an overview of the service, watch [our short video](#).

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme](#).

[CMO confirms cases of coronavirus in England](#)



We can confirm that two patients in England, who are members of the same family, have tested positive for coronavirus. The patients are receiving specialist NHS care, and we are using tried and tested infection control procedures to prevent further spread of the virus.

The NHS is extremely well-prepared and used to managing infections and we are already working rapidly to identify any contacts the patients had, to prevent further spread.

We have been preparing for UK cases of novel coronavirus and we have robust infection control measures in place to respond immediately. We are continuing to work closely with the World Health Organization and the international community as the outbreak in China develops to ensure we are ready for all eventualities.

Published 31 January 2020

[British Nationals Depart Wuhan on Flight to the UK](#)



At 0945 (local time), a civilian aircraft chartered by the Foreign Office carrying 83 British and 27 foreign nationals left Wuhan for the UK. The charter flight is estimated to land at RAF Brize Norton at 1300 (UK time).

A small number of medics were on the aircraft to provide support to passengers. The flight will continue on to Spain following the stopover in the UK, at which point EU nationals' home countries will take responsibility for them.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

It's welcome news that our evacuation flight has now left Wuhan.

We know how distressing the situation has been for those waiting to leave. We have been working round the clock to clear the way for a safe departure. The welfare of those trapped and public safety have been our overriding priorities.

Published 31 January 2020