

Government investing almost £1 million in transport tech start-ups

- competition launched for new round of grants for UK transport technology start-ups
- celebrating its 10th round of funding, the Transport-Technology Research and Innovation Grant attracts £5 in investment for every £1 of grant allocated
- government looking for innovative projects to tackle carbon emissions, further improve air quality, increase infrastructure resilience and make the transport system more accessible for all

Innovative and tech-focused transport start-ups can, from today (Tuesday 24 September 2019), [bid for a share of almost £1 million](#) (£960,000) in Department for Transport funding.

The grant – called the Transport-Technology Research and Innovation Grant (T-TRIG) – is available for entrepreneurs and innovators pioneering new ways of creating a better transport system.

Issuing targeted investments of up to £30,000 for each project, the fund aims to help start-ups and academics propel their ideas to market quicker.

The Minister for the Future of Transport, George Freeman MP, will launch the competition at a roundtable with UK transport technology businesses. George Freeman, said:

This government is committed to improving the UK's transport network, from tackling air pollution to fixing potholes for good.

We now have an exciting opportunity to stimulate the brightest thinkers in our universities and small business networks to try out novel solutions to fix legacy problems across our transport system and realise their visions for the future.

Schemes like this grant will ensure the UK retains its reputation as a world-leading innovator, and I encourage early-stage businesses in the transport sector to apply for the funds available.

Now in its 10th round of funding, government has provided £4.6 million via this grant over the past five years to more than 140 technology and innovation projects, with successful winners including [Wayfindr](#) and [Flit](#).

Alex Murray, Managing Director and Co-Founder of e-bike company FLIT, previous recipients of the T-TRIG, said:

Early support from the Department for Transport was crucial for getting our first e-bike off the ground. The grant allowed us to build our first prototype with a specialist in Essex. We learnt an enormous amount from this process, and these lessons have carried over to the FLIT-16, the first folding e-bike that we successfully launched through a crowdfunding campaign in the summer of 2019.

Investment from this fund has often been a precursor to funding from private investors, and over £25 million in additional investment, largely from the private sector, has been secured off the back of successful projects awarded funding since the scheme began.

Nicola Yates OBE, CEO of the [Connected Places Catapult](#), said:

We're excited to be using our expertise to manage the latest T-TRIG competition for one of our key partners the Department for Transport.

Early stage funding is a vital component to driving great solutions from the drawing board to reality and the areas covered in this competition, including decarbonisation and accessible transport, are key areas to tackle in the UK today. We're looking forward to working with the winners to ensure T-TRIG leads to tangible benefits for transport users.

The funding is a key part of the UK's [Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#) strategy, which is taking advantage of the extraordinary innovation in UK engineering and technology happening today to help the government deliver better journeys for all.

Unique to this year's grant, the competition has 3 themed elements: Decarbonisation, Age-friendly and Accessible Transport, and Potholes and Resilient Infrastructure, reflecting the [Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges](#) and core issues facing the UK's transport network.

[Science Minister hails 'incredible strength' of UK space industry](#)

- New funding for UK business ideas to fly to the International Space Station
- UK Space Agency to support one million STEM interactions with young people.
- £20 million from government's [Strategic Priorities Fund](#) to upgrade UK capabilities in space weather modelling and measurement and £1.3 million

for horizontal spaceport plans in England, Scotland and Wales.

A new package of space funding was unveiled by Science Minister Chris Skidmore at the [UK Space Conference](#) in Newport today (Tuesday 24 September).

The government is committed to developing the UK's national space capabilities while stepping up international collaborations, including through the European Space Agency.

The UK Space Agency will provide up to £1 million, matched by industry, for innovative new business ideas that could benefit from a flight to the International Space Station. These could be anything from medicines and innovative materials developed in the low gravity environment, to space-flown consumer products.

The Science Minister also announced a new STEM education programme which will see the UK Space Agency supporting the space sector to engage with one million young people each year. The new programme aims to recruit more professionals to enthuse and inspire young people, providing training and matching them up to opportunities in schools and colleges.

This follows the announcement earlier today that [the government is investing £20 million](#) to predict severe space weather events, improving systems at the [Met Office Space Weather Operations Centre](#) and building the UK's knowledge on how to forecast and better prepare for space weather.

The UK Space Agency will also award £1.3 million to help further develop plans for horizontal spaceports in Wales, Scotland and England: * £499,811 to Snowdonia Aerospace for the Snowdonia Spaceport Development Plan, which aims to create a centre for space R&D, training and satellite launch. * £488,000 to Machrihanish Airbase Community Company for the spaceport cluster plan in Argyle, Scotland, centred on an aerodrome with the longest runway in Scotland. * £306,480 to Cornwall Council for an Accelerated Business Development and Research Project at Spaceport Cornwall, supporting its ambition to be a centre for future flight technologies.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

I'm consistently blown away by the incredible strength of the UK space industry and the contribution it makes to life across the country, providing us with innovative solutions to complex problems and creating high-skilled jobs for more than 40,000 people.

There are huge opportunities as space becomes more commercial, and to meet them we must harness the inspirational effect space has on young people and bring even more people into this fast-growing sector.

It's also vital that we both build our national capability and forge new international partnerships, while strengthening our commitment to the European Space Agency, which delivers world-leading science and a significant return on investment, benefiting

people and businesses across the country.

This morning, the UK Space Agency and [Australian Space Agency](#) signalled their intent to develop a 'SpaceBridge' agreement, which will unlock greater collaboration between the two nation's governments, regulators and space industries.

There are further opportunities to increase international space collaboration at the European Space Agency Council of Ministers meeting in November, where science, space weather and exploration will be key priorities for the UK.

The government has also confirmed it will establish the UK's first National Space Council, with further details of the chair and membership of the Council to follow in the coming weeks.

The Science Minister will meet key international partners such as the European Space Agency and NASA during the UK Space Conference, which is expected to attract up to 1,800 people to the new International Convention Centre Wales.

He will also engage with representatives from across the UK's thriving space sector to discuss a potential boost to national investments in key technologies and priority missions.

[New UK aid support for Venezuelans in desperate need](#)

The UK is significantly increasing its support for vulnerable Venezuelans suffering in the wake of their country's economic collapse.

Today's announcement of additional UK aid support will help aid organisations in Venezuela deliver life-saving medicine and clean water to those suffering from the dire humanitarian crisis. It will also provide longer-term support in neighbouring countries, which are hosting millions of Venezuelans.

This new funding builds on existing UK support which is helping malnourished children and providing vaccinations and clean water to some of the most vulnerable communities. Inflation in Venezuela remains dangerously high at well over one million percent, leaving many Venezuelans unable to afford basics, such as food and medicines. Poverty in Venezuela has almost doubled since 2014 and there has been a stark increase in disease outbreaks such as measles and diphtheria.

This is forcing Venezuelans to flee neighbouring countries and increasing the threat of human trafficking.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The people of Venezuela are needlessly suffering as a direct result of Maduro's refusal to accept the scale of his country's worsening humanitarian crisis.

This new UK aid will help provide immediate life-saving support to the millions of Venezuelans in need inside the country and to those forced to flee.

Neighbouring countries have already shown immense generosity, and other donors must now step up or this crisis will deepen further.

Today's allocation of up to £30 million comes shortly after the United Nations called on donors to give US\$223 million to support a bigger humanitarian response this year.

Notes to editors

- Today's announcement of UK aid is in addition to the £14.5 million announced by DFID earlier this year, taking the UK's total response to £44.5 million.
- It will support humanitarian agencies across the region. We are not disclosing which specific agencies we are funding inside Venezuela for security reasons. No UK funding goes to the Government of Venezuela.
- In addition to today's new support, DFID already gives core funding to multilateral organisations on the ground, which are providing emergency humanitarian aid in the region.
- The UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, to which the UK was the largest donor in 2018, has allocated a total of US\$32 million to the region for this crisis, including US\$19 million for use within Venezuela.

UK and Australian Space Agencies agree to step up cooperation, with the intention to develop a world-first 'Space Bridge'

The agreement, announced this morning at the UK Space Conference will further the ambitions set out in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two agencies in October 2018 and lay the foundations for swift and amicable negotiations for space-related opportunities under any potential future UK-

Australia trading arrangements.

Dr Graham Turnock, CEO of the UK Space Agency said:

The UK's space heritage has strong links to Australia, with the first British rockets lifting off from Woomera in the 1950s, and we are committed to strengthening our friendship and partnership. A Space Bridge agreement will bring significant benefits to both our thriving space industries, facilitating new trade and investment opportunities and the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

It was a pleasure to welcome the Australian Space Agency to the UK Space Conference 2019 and to set out our intent to increase collaboration.

The two national space agencies will work with the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) and Australian Trade & Investment Commission (Austrade), and with industry leaders including the UK's Satellite Applications Catapult, and the new Australian SmartSat Collaborative Research Centre to establish this world-first concept for international space collaboration.

Dr Megan Clark AC, Head of the Australian Space Agency said:

This latest agreement builds on a number of recent international agreements that are positioning Australia to play an increasingly important role in the global space industry.

The Space Bridge will open up new opportunities for Australian space businesses to access the global space sector through future trade agreements. This is an important step in the Agency's goal to transform and grow the Australian space industry.

The UK Space Agency and the Australian Space Agency with DIT and Austrade, will now work with interested stakeholders to develop the Space Bridge Framework Agreement in the coming months, building on the significant industrial engagement from the Satellite Applications Catapult and SmartSat CRC

Joint work is ongoing between the UK and Australia in space, with the launch last year of the Surrey Satellite NovaSAR, which uses radar to view the Earth through cloud cover. The satellite will share 10% of its data with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia.

Top marks as school gets summer makeover from Highways England workers

All labour and materials were donated for the DIY SOS-style project which included a renovated seating area and shelter, a new footpath, redecorating and repairs.

Delighted pupils at English Martyrs Catholic Voluntary Academy Trust in Oakham were over the moon on the first day of term when they arrived to see the work that had been done.

While the children were enjoying their summer break, work was being carried out by a group of volunteers from the East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) team – made up of Highways England and 22 partners including NMCN, Kier, Tarmac and Hanson.

Over three days the team laid a new footpath to the sports area, repaired the Early Years playground fence, refurbished a shelter, renovated flooring and classroom carpet tiles and painted the toilet blocks.

Alison Chambers, head teacher at English Martyrs Catholic Voluntary Academy, said:

The children and staff were delighted to discover when they returned after the summer holidays that there was a new path, painted fences, line markings, painted toilets, a painted hall and new floorings in adult and pupil toilets.

We would like to say a big thank you to all involved, school budgets are tight and this has helped enormously with providing a real lift to our external and internal premises. We are hoping to invite some of the contractors back into school for our Aspirations Week later on in the school year.

The school won the makeover thanks to the artistic talents of 10-year-old pupils Lilly Gerstner and Sophia Rice after a team of road experts from EMAD visited local primary schools. They helped pupils between the ages of eight and 11 to plan, design and build their own road bridges.

The children were challenged to design a poster reflecting the work of Highways England which plans, designs, builds, operates and maintains 4,300 miles of motorways and major A-roads across England.

The best posters were displayed in the Highways England marquee at the Rutland Show in June where the winners were announced.

Highways England assistant collaboration manager for the region, Nicola Tomlinson, said:

Working with our supply chain partners on this great initiative we exceeded all expectations on the improvements we were able to carry out at the school which will benefit both staff and children.

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.