

[Press release: New projects see UK space firms tackle global challenges](#)

Improved disaster response in Commonwealth states and tropical disease control are among the goals of 10 new projects involving British space organisations, Science Minister Sam Gyimah announced today. The Industrial Strategy highlights the importance of bringing together the UK's world-class research with business investment to develop technologies and industries of the future that benefit society, as well as our economy. The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme uses UK space expertise to deliver innovative solutions to real world problems across the globe. This helps some of the world's poorest countries, while building effective partnerships that can lead to growth opportunities for British companies. The successful projects, worth £38 million in total, are led by a diverse range of organisations from the UK's growing space sector, from large companies such as Inmarsat and CGI, to start-ups such as Guildford-based Earth-i. The UK Space Agency and industry are working together to grow the UK's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030. Science Minister Sam Gyimah said: "The UK's space sector is going from strength to strength. It pioneers new technology and provides jobs for 40,000. Today I can announce that the space sector's capabilities are being put to use to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges. "The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme will help developing countries tackle big issues like disaster relief and disease control, while showcasing the services and technology on offer from our leading space businesses." The International Partnership Programme is part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF): a £1.5 billion fund from the UK Government, which supports cutting-edge research and innovation on global issues affecting developing countries. There are 22 existing projects already delivering benefits, including a partnership between Inmarsat and the Philippine government to reduce the impact of natural disasters using satellite communications, which was called into action in December and January when tropical storms killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands more to evacuation centres. The project used British technology and expertise to help relief workers get information in and out of the disaster zones which greatly increase the effectiveness of the response effort, helping them save lives and restore critical infrastructure. Rupert Pearce, CEO of Inmarsat, said: "Inmarsat was originally founded to save lives at sea and we are proud that, almost 40 years later, our robust, reliable satellite communication services are deployed throughout the world to assist following natural disasters and humanitarian crises, wherever they occur. "With the invaluable support of the UK Space Agency, we have been able to pre-equip disaster response teams in the Philippines with vital satellite communications solutions. This meant that when two deadly cyclones hit the country over a two week period, resulting in loss of life and serious damage to terrestrial communications infrastructure, Philippine authorities were able to utilise Inmarsat's mobile connectivity services to assess the damage and identify the needs of those regions most affected." All IPP projects are

match-funded by consortium members and international partners to ensure maximum value for money. The programme is fully compliant with Official Development Assistance (ODA) with the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recently reporting that the UK Space Agency had developed robust procedures for ensuring ODA eligibility and was thorough in its ODA compliance screening. The UK Space Agency is also funding five Business Applications Ambassadors to work with industry across the UK. The Agency already supports a network of business incubators and the new ambassadors will advise on business applications and other opportunities in the UK.

Full list of new projects:

1) British Geological Survey, Nottingham: Modelling Exposure Through Earth Observation Routines (METEOR): EO-based Exposure, Nepal and Tanzania Grant: £2.8 million Target countries: Nepal and Tanzania (test countries), rolling out to all 48 Least Developed ODA countries Theme: Disaster Management

At present, there is a poor understanding of population exposure in developing countries, which causes major challenges when making Disaster Risk Management decisions. METEOR takes a step-change in the application of Earth Observation exposure data by developing and delivering more accurate levels of population exposure to natural hazards. Providing new consistent data to governments, town planners and insurance providers will promote welfare and economic development in these countries and better enable them to respond to the hazards when they do occur.

2) Satellite Applications Catapult, Didcot: Space Enabled Monitoring of Illegal Gold Mining Grant: £3.3 million Target country: Colombia Theme: Mining

This project is about improving detection and efficiency in monitoring illegal gold mining in remote forested areas in Colombia. The project will make use of freely available Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data, and incorporate machine-learning techniques to show suspected areas of illegal mining, in a user-friendly web portal. The project will support the promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers, and a reduction in the health-related effects from the high rates of mercury contamination associated with illegal mining.

3) EARTH-i Ltd, Guildford: ACCORD Grant: £2.7 million Target countries: Kenya and Rwanda Theme: Agriculture

Coffee is the second most traded commodity globally, with revenues directly benefitting farmers in developing countries. Despite this, in Kenya and Rwanda 67% and 80% of people respectively live in poverty, including most smallholder coffee farmers. Unpredictable weather, pests, diseases, nutrient depletion and other factors limit earning potential by hitting coffee quality and quantity. ACCORD will deliver advice from satellite Earth Observation to help smallholder coffee farmers make significant improvements to crop quality and yield, providing them with access to timely, geo-targeted advice through a simple mobile application. This will allow smallholder farmers to achieve higher incomes for their work, improving quality of life for their families.

4) Rothamsted Research, Harpenden: EcoProMIS Grant: £3.9 million Target Country: Colombia Theme: Agriculture

The EcoProMIS project aims to help Colombian rice and oil palm farmers to improve productivity and stabilise incomes, allowing them to compete globally whilst responding to climate change and producing responsibly. The project uses satellite Earth Observation alongside environmental and crop data to research the impact of crop and ecosystem management on biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and productivity. The outcome will be a partnership of farmers, research institutes and industry experts that creates comprehensive sets of crop and ecosystem data. This data will be made freely available for the Colombian partners to improve the environmental, technical and financial efficiency of their processes. It will also provide information to insurance firms, government food processors and further beneficiaries to create income for sustainable knowledge.

5) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: An integrated dengue early warning system driven by Earth Observations in Vietnam Grant: £4.1 million Target Country: Vietnam Theme: Health

This work will provide a tool that enables advance warning of likely dengue outbreaks, allowing public health authorities to mobilise resources to those most in need. The project will also provide forecasts of dengue fever under a range of climate change scenarios. The system will link Earth Observation data with climate forecasting and a land-surface model to predict for the first time the impacts of various elements (such as water availability, land-use, climate), on the likelihood of future dengue epidemics. The dengue forecasting tool will also include a water assessment module, delivering the additional benefit of improving water management in Vietnam's transboundary river basins.

6) Janus TCD, Stourbridge: Improved Situational Awareness In Fisheries (ISAIF) Grant: £5.5 million Target Country: The Philippines Theme: Illegal Fishing

The ISAIF project will use satellite technology to help the Philippine government tackle Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in its waters. This project aims to halt the decline of a fisheries sector that employs more than 4 million people. The project will use a wide variety of data sources, including satellite data to understand the location, time and behaviour of specific vessels at sea. This will be combined with a satellite navigation application with an authentication tool through which Philippine fisherfolk confirm their compliance, creating a new digital barrier to IUU fishers within the supply chain. Outcomes will include better monitoring and enforcement of IUU by the Philippine government, improved safety, security and economic productivity for Philippine fisherfolk, benefits to the Philippine economy, and an improvement in the international reputation of Philippine fisheries.

7) CGI, Leatherhead: Peatland Assessment in SE Asia by Satellite (PASSES) Grant: £2 million Target Countries: Indonesia, Malaysia Theme: Forestry

Tropical forest fires affect over 20 million people in South East Asia, leading to significant deteriorations in public health and premature mortalities as well as contributing to global CO2 emissions and other negative environmental impacts. Many fires occur over drained peatland areas. This project will use satellite observations and measurements to map peat condition, even when under a forest canopy. By monitoring water levels and improving hydrology in the peatland areas, the risk of fire can be dramatically reduced. By using freely available observations from satellites through the EU Copernicus programme and use of emerging industrial hosted processing capabilities, PASSES will prove that peatland monitoring is a cost effective way to reduce forest fires.

8) e0sphere Limited, Didcot: SIBELIUs: Improved resilience for Mongolian herding communities using satellite derived services Grant: £1.6 million Target Country: Mongolia Theme: Disaster Management / Insurance

Mongolia is a large country with around 30% of its population dependant on livestock herding who are exposed to extreme weather events (dzuds). Dzuds are increasingly exacerbated by climate change and are highly damaging to Mongolia's economy and devastating for the poorest herders. A typical dzud can impact tens of thousands of herders, many of who will lose all their livestock leaving them in extreme poverty, with associated impacts for the wider economy. The SIBELIUs project will provide greater dzud-resilience for herders by providing the Mongolian Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment with new sources of satellite data, plus a geo-spatial database for distributing new and upgraded environmental products to key stakeholders supporting herding communities.

9) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): CommonSensing Grant: £9.6 million Target Countries: Fiji, The Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

The overall aim of CommonSensing is to improve resilience towards climate change, including disaster risk reduction, and contribute to sustainable development in three selected Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The project will combine earth observation data to provide stakeholders with access to important information regarding disaster risks (including disaster risk planning, food security, climate risk and other environmental concerns). This information will be accessible to beneficiaries through a web portal and mobile applications. CommonSensing project will create long-term investment loops, define priorities for future climate funds proposals and ensure a sustainable service-platform, running three years after IPP project end.

10) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: Minimising the risk of tailings dams failures through the use of remote sensing data Grant: £2.7 million Target Country: Peru Theme: Mining

Tailing dams are earth embankments used to store toxic mine waste and effluent which can be more than 100m high. Their rate of failure is high, due to poor design regulations and less rigorous construction methods than for normal water-retaining dams, especially in low-income countries. This project will use Earth Observation and Global Navigation Satellite System

technologies to allow for more effective monitoring of the dams and therefore quicker action can be taken to avoid the tailings dams failures. The project will help to reduce damage to ecosystem services downstream of mines upon which many vulnerable communities rely for both their source of water and their livelihoods.

Press release: Local authorities should offer NHS Health Check to all eligible

Speaking at Public Health England 's Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Prevention Conference today (Thursday 8 February 2018), Chief Executive Duncan Selbie has called on local authorities to ensure that all local residents eligible for a free NHS Health Check get an invite – to help tackle the one in four premature deaths in the country caused by CVD.

The NHS Health Check is free for all adults in England aged 40 to 74, who have not yet developed CVD. It's one of the largest health prevention programmes in the world, helping to detect and prevent early signs of cardiovascular diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and dementia.

CVD is a leading cause of disability and death in the UK, affecting around 7 million people and being responsible for 26% of all deaths in England – estimated to cost the NHS around £9 billion a year.

Duncan Selbie, chief executive of Public Health England, said:

Since 2013, over 6.1 million people have taken an NHS Health Check. The programme is a cornerstone in England for the prevention of conditions such as CVD, which causes one in four premature deaths and places a huge strain on individuals, families and our healthcare system. We also know that it is the same risk factors causing many cancers and other preventable illnesses, so this is a hugely important programme.

The NHS Health Check has had much success and has the potential to prevent many thousands of premature deaths and ill health in England, but there is still much to be done. Every local authority in the country is required by law to ensure that all eligible people in their area are offered a check every 5 years. We must work together to increase numbers taking up the offer, in particular targeting our efforts to those at greatest risk.

There is good evidence that the programme is successful in identifying those at high risk of cardiovascular disease, but we also need to follow up with effective care and support for them.

The Conference, with over 500 health professionals expected to attend, including GPs and NHS Health Check providers, will focus on a number of ways that CVD risk can be reduced, including:

- ensuring equity and reducing inequality through CVD prevention programmes highlighting the importance of health care professionals in delivering behaviour change messaging for CVD risk reduction
- learning from a range of international CVD prevention projects

PHE has also recently published two documents focusing on CVD prevention:

- [Size of the Prize](#) provides region-specific statistics on the opportunity to prevent many thousands of heart attacks and strokes by improving the follow-up care given to those found to be at risk following an NHS Health Check
 - the [stocktake and action plan](#) sets out how to further improve the impact of the programme over the next 5 years
1. PHE's [CVD Prevention Conference 2018](#) is taking place on 8 February at the Kia Oval, Surrey Cricket Club in London
 2. View national [comparison data on NHS Health Check uptake](#)
 3. The [Heart Age Test](#) is an innovative online tool to check your risk of having a heart attack or stroke – it tells you your heart age compared to your real age, explains why it's important to know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers and gives advice on how to reduce your heart age. The tool is a collaboration between PHE, NHS Choices, UCL and the British Heart Foundation.

About Public Health England

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

[Speech: British High Commissioner comments on media shutdown and opposition 'swearing in' in Kenya](#)

I have made clear, as have many international friends of Kenya for some time, that what we would like to see is a full, transparent, open dialogue between politicians and between others – business leaders, religious leaders, civil society – designed to heal some of the very deep divisions that were clearly exposed during the election campaign.

I do not believe that any parallel inauguration helps to create such a dialogue, I think that the UK has been very clear that our support is for the constitution and for the law, and that those acting outside those things should not be doing so, but should be acting in the spirit of promoting dialogue.

I will continue to call on both sides, and indeed on Kenyans of good will from all parts of the country, to find ways of talking to each other about how the institutions of the country can be strengthened and about how everybody can feel included in the future of the country. That is an exercise for Kenyans to lead, but I stand ready to support that as I know do my international friends.

On the question of the media, I would just say that one of the strongest things about this country, one of the reasons that so many investors are headquartered here, that so many people come here, that this country's capital is seen as the hub of the region and one of the hubs of the continent, is because of the open, democratic, free media; that sense that means people from country's like mine feel at home, that sense that people can have open debates in public.

I would urge the government, as I have done, to allow the media to operate freely, not simply because it's the right thing to do, but because it contributes very strongly to the positive image that Kenya has in the world.

[Watch the British High Commissioner speak to the Kenyan press](#)

[Press release: Welsh Secretary calls on Welsh Government to take further](#)

steps to drive up animal welfare standards

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is calling on Welsh Ministers in Cardiff Bay to follow Westminster's lead and explore the potential of implementing a ban on third party puppy sales in Wales.

It comes as the UK Government today (8 Feb) launches a call for evidence in England, seeking views on a possible ban on third party sales, which would mean anyone looking to buy or adopt a dog will either deal directly with the breeder or with one of the nation's many animal rehousing centres.

It forms part of a package of reforms implemented by the UK Government designed to drive up welfare standards.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

Wales is a nation of animal lovers and it is vital that we maintain the highest standards of animal welfare. The UK Government is serious about improving welfare in breeding establishments and at the point of sale to ensure our much loved pets get the right start in life.

The call for evidence launched today marks a further step in the UK Government's aim to raise the bar standards in England. I would encourage the Welsh Government to carefully consider the evidence that is submitted and to explore the potential of implementing the same measures in Wales.

Launching the call for evidence on a ban in England, UK Government Environment Secretary Michael Gove invited all interested parties to share their views by 2 May 2018 on how this could best be introduced.

News story: Enforcement Undertakings accepted from United Utilities

United Utilities have paid £155,000 to environmental charities as part of two Enforcement Undertakings (EUs). The EUs were offered to the Environment Agency after the company admitted causing sewage to pollute two watercourses in the summer of 2016.

EUs are a new kind of restorative enforcement sanction. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable.

In July 2016, a blockage in a sewage detention tank in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, caused sewage to overflow to the River Goyt, resulting in discoloration to the river downstream to New Mills, and sewage fungus being deposited on the river bed for at least a kilometre. Although no fish were found to have been killed, there was a short-term but significant impact on invertebrate life and the river habitat, in which fish such as trout and bullhead normally thrive.

In August 2016, a blockage in a sewer in Millbrook, Tameside, caused an overflow through a dislodged hatch cover, resulting in a similar impact on a shorter stretch of Swineshaw Brook which runs to the River Tame.

The EU offers were accepted by the Environment Agency in October 2017 and were completed in January 2018. United Utilities made a total of £155,000 in donations to the Wild Trout Trust, the Ramblers Association and the Healthy Rivers Trust. This money will be used to fund environmental improvements and research in the affected catchments and to restore endangered footpaths.

The company also spent a further £10,000 removing rubbish from Swineshaw Brook and also paid the Environment Agency's incident response and investigation costs in full. In response to both incidents United Utilities had acted quickly to stop the pollution and resolve the cause. As part of the EUs the company also committed to improving their infrastructure and asset maintenance schedules in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

Mike Higgins, an Environment Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

They offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to voluntarily make things right. We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.