

[News story: New projects see UK space firms tackle global challenges](#)

Malaysia pictured from space. Credit: ESA.

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.

[International Partnership Programme](#)

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 (ISAIIF) 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.

[News story: Third party puppy sales: Michael Gove launches call for evidence on ban](#)

A ban on third party puppy sales is to be explored by the government as part of a package of reforms to drive up animal welfare standards, the Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced today.

A [call for evidence](#) is launched today 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.

A [raft of measures to crack down on unscrupulous puppy breeders](#) set out by the Prime Minister in December have also been laid in Parliament today.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We need to do everything we can to make sure the nation's much

loved pets get the right start in life. From banning the sale of underage puppies to tackling the breeding of dogs with severe genetic disorders, we are cracking down on sellers who have a total disregard for their dogs' welfare.

This is a further step to raise the bar on animal welfare standards. We are also introducing mandatory CCTV in all slaughterhouses and increasing maximum prison sentences tenfold for animal abusers.

The legislation being put before parliament today will come into force later this year, including:

- Banning licensed sellers from dealing in puppies and kittens under the age of eight weeks;
- Ensuring that licensed dog breeders show puppies alongside their mother before a sale is made;
- Tackling the sale of weak underage puppies and the breeding of unhealthy dogs and dogs with severe genetic disorders;
- Introducing compulsory licensing for anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs;
- Requiring puppy sales to be completed in the presence of the new owner, preventing online sales where prospective buyers have not seen the animal first;
- Insisting licensed dog breeders can only sell puppies they have bred themselves.

These plans have been widely welcomed by charities.

RSPCA deputy chief executive Chris Wainwright said:

We are delighted that Defra is considering a ban on third party sales of puppies. We believe that cracking down on unscrupulous traders, who put profit ahead of animal welfare, will provide much-needed protection for prospective pet owners and puppies.

We have always said that an end to third party sales alone would not be enough to end the puppy trade crisis and we are pleased that this is being looked at alongside enhanced licensing conditions for breeders which will come into force later this year.

Together, we hope these moves will offer better protection to puppies and their parents and also reduce the number of families duped by rogue traders in this illegal multi-million-pound trade.

Mayhew rehoming centre's CEO Caroline Yates said:

We are really pleased today to hear that there will be a call for evidence on banning third party sales of animals. It is a real issue that animal welfare organisations are very concerned about. Getting a dog or cat is not a commercial business and these big puppy farms have no regard for their health or welfare.

Owners are being duped into buying animals from these places and the resulting sickness and poor treatment means there is also an additional burden on animal welfare charities that are mopping up the problem.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said:

The Kennel Club welcomes Defra's announcement as a crucial step forward to tackle the cruel puppy farming industry. The Kennel Club, whose own regulations explicitly ban the sale of puppies to third parties, has long called for an end to the sale of puppies in pet shops and by other third party retailers.

Third party sales are an underhand practice designed to protect puppy farmers with terrible consequences for dog welfare. Puppy buyers unknowingly purchase a puppy from a seemingly nice dealer in pleasant surroundings, who would in fact have purchased the puppy from a backstreet dealer who has given no thought to their health and welfare.

There is simply no way that a responsible breeder would ever sell a puppy to a pet shop or a pet dealer and we are delighted to see this issue getting the attention that it deserves. Good breeders, such as Kennel Club Assured Breeders, always insist on speaking at length to potential puppy buyers to ensure their pups will be given good homes.

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

The government recently consulted on plans to increase maximum prison sentences for animal abusers to five years and recognise animal sentience in domestic law. The [consultation](#) closed on 31 January and we are now considering the responses. We will set out next steps in due course.

1. For further information on this press release, please contact the Defra press office on 020 8225 7318.

Speech: Reflection on Progress and Challenges in Kosovo

Thank you Mr President

And thank you Special Representative Tanin for your briefing and the Secretary-General's report.

Mr President, as Ambassador Çitaku reminded us, this month marks ten years since Kosovo became a sovereign state. Let us reflect on the progress that has been achieved in this time. The people of Kosovo have participated in three Parliamentary elections since declaring independence in 2008, as well as two country-wide mayoral and municipal elections. Kosovo has also shown solid economic growth, and is now among the top ten countries for starting a business according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 report, jumping from 60th to 40th place in that same report's ranking for ease of doing business. And recent action towards full integration of Kosovo's judiciary within the EU-facilitated dialogue underscores a real commitment to progress and stability. This is not the same country it was 10 years ago when UNMIK was first established.

This is not to say Kosovo is without its challenges: building a democracy takes time. The genuinely competitive local elections in the majority of municipalities in Kosovo were a welcome sign of healthy democratic competition, but we continue to be concerned by allegations of intimidation in Kosovan-Serb municipalities.

Additionally, we welcome the public statement by President Hashim Thaçi on February 1st that the Kosovo Specialist Chambers "cannot and will not be abrogated", and we hope to see the initiative in the Kosovo Assembly formally removed in the coming days, ensuring that the Chambers' important work to maintain justice and the rule of law will continue.

We continue to urge Kosovo authorities to take all possible steps to swiftly resolve the murder of Oliver Ivanović, which has increased the local tensions in North Mitrovica.

However, these concerns should not diminish the progress that has been made by Kosovo. Kosovo can continue to build on its progress by transitioning UNMIK institutions to Kosovan institutions or other international organizations. While we appreciate UNMIK's years of work in Kosovo, it is time for a leaner, more efficient Mission to focus on more tightly defined priorities that take into account all of the progress Kosovo has made in the

last ten years.

Kosovo's challenges are far less severe than those of the fledgling nation that UNMIK first arrived to. And thus, it does not require a UN Mission of this size. Moreover, yesterday in the open debate in this Council which you chaired, the UK called for a Security Council that focuses on present and future challenges; with all of the world's pressing challenges, checking in on Kosovo's good progress every three months with these meetings is simply not a good use of this Council's time. In closing, let me reiterate the longstanding UK position that it is past time for this Council to meet less frequently on this issue.

Thank you.

[News story: Counter-terror policing awarded funds for Parsons Green response](#)

This move comes in addition to the [£24 million of new money for this financial year already announced](#) for the forces across the country that responded to the other attacks in London and Manchester in 2017.

The Minister for Policing, Nick Hurd announced the funding as the 2018/19 police funding settlement was debated in Parliament.

He said:

The tragedy of 5 terrorist attacks in 2017 has sadly reinforced the threat we face from terrorism so it is right that we are increasing funding for counter-terrorism policing both this year and next.

In September we announced £24 million of new money this year going to forces across the country to meet the costs relating to the tragic terror attacks.

I am also pleased to confirm that the Government has agreed to provide a further £4 million this year to meet the costs arising from the attack at Parsons Green.

Separately, in recognition of the unprecedented terrorist threat we currently face, [the government announced in December a £50 million increase to counter terrorism policing budget](#) for next year. This brings the budget to £757 million and will help ensure counter-terrorism policing has the resources it needs to respond and keep people safe.

[The government has already committed to increase spending on counter-terrorism](#) by 30% over five years from £11.7 billion to £15.1 billion and has also provided £144 million over the spending review period for a national uplift in armed policing capability and funding for an additional 1,900 officers at the security and intelligence agencies.

It is also reviewing its counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST to ensure that the government is responding to the threat from terrorism both now and in the future.

[Press release: Parliament approves real terms increase in funding for local authorities](#)

Parliament has today (7 February 2018) approved the funding settlement for English local authorities that will see a real terms increase in available resources over the next 2 years and give them access to over £200 billion from 2015 to 2020 to deliver the high-quality services their local communities need.

Ahead of today's Parliamentary debate Communities Secretary announced extra funding to help local authorities meet the needs of vulnerable people and support services in rural areas.

A further £150 million will be available to those councils providing adult social care. In addition, £16 million will be made available to councils providing services in rural areas, taking the total rural services grant to £81 million – the highest it has ever been.

This follows consultation with local government on the funding plans announced in December that included giving councils additional financial freedoms to deliver services for their most vulnerable residents while protecting Council Tax payers from excessive increases in their bills. The threshold at which councils must hold a referendum before raising Council Tax has been set in line with inflation at 3%.

Ten additional business retention rates pilots – for areas of varying sizes and location – were also confirmed. These areas will keep 100% of growth in business rates, which will stay in communities and be spent on local priorities.

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid said:

Parliament has today approved a settlement that strikes a balance between relieving growing pressure on local government whilst ensuring that hard-pressed taxpayers do not face excessive bills.

We have listened to representations made and delivered on these requests: a real terms increase in resources over the next 2 years, more freedom and fairness, and greater certainty to plan and secure value for money.

Government has also launched a review of local authorities' needs and resources to enable a new funding system to be devised. Ministers are encouraging local authorities to respond to the [consultation](#) ahead of the deadline on 12 March 2018.

The settlement for local government sees a real terms increase in resources to local government over the next 2 years (£44.3 billion in 2017 to 2018 to £45.6 billion in 2019 to 2020)

In December the threshold at which local authorities must hold a referendum in order to raise Council Tax was confirmed in line with inflation (3%). This change, combined with the additional flexibility on the Adult Social Care precept confirmed last year, gives local authorities support in relieving pressure on local services – including adults and children's social care.

Following feedback from the sector as part of the consultation, the government has today also announced some additional measures:

- £150 million Adult Social Care Support Grant in 2018 to 2019
- a further £16 million for Rural Services Delivery Grant in 2018 to 2019 to allow for funding commensurate with 2016 to 2017 levels

In December, 10 additional business retention rates pilots – for areas of varying sizes and location – were confirmed. It is expected that combined these will raise over £150 million in 2018 to 2019, which will stay in communities and be spent on local priorities.

The Communities Secretary also published a [consultation on need and resources](#) in December that aims to implement a new system based on its findings in 2020 to 2021.