

[News story: UK Space Agency backs Spire as ESA space mission provider](#)

Artist's impression of an ARTES programme mission. Credit: ESA.

Today's announcement by UK Government ministers Lord Henley and Lord Duncan, gives the green light to missions designed to showcase the technology and put UK companies into orbit faster and at a lower cost. The UK is the largest funder of the European Space Agency's Advanced Research in Telecommunications Satellites (ARTES) programme, which transforms research into successful commercial projects.

The funding from the UK Space Agency was announced by Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on a visit to the satellite powered data company's UK base in Glasgow, where Spire intends to create new jobs to add to its existing workforce.

Business Minister, the Rt. Hon. Lord Henley, said:

"Thanks to this new funding, Spire will be able to cement its activities in the UK, develop new technologies and use space data to provide new services to consumers that will allow businesses to access space quicker and at a lower cost – offering an exciting opportunity for the UK to thrive in the commercial space age.

"Through the government's Industrial Strategy, we are encouraging other high-tech British businesses to pursue more commercial opportunities with the aim of growing the UK's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030."

UK Government Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan said:

"Spire Global is at the cutting edge of technology, using satellite data to track ships, planes and weather in some of the world's most remote regions. They're also an important employer in Glasgow, investing in the area and recognising the talent of Scotland's world class engineers and scientists. We know that the space industry is important to Scotland's economy and this UK Government funding will help companies like Spire stay at the forefront of this field."

The ARTES Pioneer programme is designed to support industry by funding the demonstration of advanced technologies, systems, services and applications in a representative space environment. Part of this is to support one or more Space Mission Providers, which could provide commercial services to private companies or public bodies.

"Spire's infrastructure, capabilities, and competencies all support our submission to this program. For the launch of our 50+ satellite constellation, we quickly became our own best customer," said Theresa Condor,

Spire's EVP of Corporate Development. "We're looking forward to demonstrating our end-to-end service and infrastructure on this series of validation missions. 'Space as a Service' means going from mission technical architecture to customer data/service verification, along with the ongoing development of critical enabling technologies."

One validation mission will develop parallel super-computing in space – a core component for future computationally intensive missions. A second, exploitation of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) for weather applications, will leverage Galileo signals for GNSS Radio Occultation. Radio occultation is a key data input for the improvement of weather forecasts. Upon completion, the GNSS-RO technology can be immediately commercialized.

The UK Space Agency is also supporting a space incubation centre in Glasgow and has provided support over several years to the Scottish Centre of Excellence in Satellite Applications, based at the University of Strathclyde and working across the whole of Scotland. The Centre's role is to raise awareness of the potential of satellite services and data to be used in new and improved products and services in other "space enabled" markets – including, for example, offshore renewable energy and aquaculture.

Examples of other ARTES funded projects include

Company	Project
Cobham Technical Services	£1.5 million funding for MIDAS. This is a demonstration project to provide a range of tools that support the clearance of Land Mine and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). This includes the use of Earth Observation and Satnav services to support the training of operators, planning clearance campaigns, real time monitoring of clearance in progress, through to post operation analysis and reporting.
Rezatec	£720,000 funding for Map, Measure, Monitor Information (MBI). This is a demonstration project following on from Rezatec's successful Peat Spotter feasibility study to deliver intelligence about areas of interest using Earth Observation, Satnav, and Satcom. The scope for MBI was increased from Peat Spotter to include additional land based assets including water, forestry, conservation and agribusiness sectors.
Beinn Bike	£130,000 funding for Mountain Bike Route Planning. This is a mobile app that uses Satnav to provide tailored mountain biking routes based on the users desired requirements. This project has just completed the feasibility study phase and is moving into the demonstration phase. Beinn Bike are based in Scotland.
Avanti	£439,000 funding for iFishSat. This is a feasibility study to investigate commercialisation of seafood while still at sea, directly from the fishing vessels using Earth Observation, Satnav, and Satcom services, as well as improving the traceability of fish.

Speech: Ending the ivory trade: Foreign Secretary's speech

Good afternoon everybody, good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

It's one of my themes at the moment that we don't do enough to celebrate good news and today particularly is a moment for celebration. Because China has struck a blow against elephant poachers by closing down its domestic ivory market, which is currently the largest in the world.

And provided that ban is fully enforced, and provided the ivory trade isn't allowed simply to relocate to Vietnam or Laos or Burma or indeed anywhere else – and I'm afraid there are warning signs that that is already happening – then China's enlightened and far-sighted decision will give humanity a better chance of halting and eventually reversing the tragic decline of the African elephant.

And this has really come in the nick of time. I first went to Africa 40 years ago as a child, and I remember seeing great herds in the Serengeti and the Maasai Mara and I was even trapped in a latrine I seem to remember for about an hour.

Closing ivory markets

Anyway, more than 2 thirds of those animals are now gone. Africa is down to 415,000, even at the most generous count, and in the last 12 years the pace of slaughter has accelerated. We have lost 110,000 since 2006, including half of all the elephants in East Africa; 2 thirds in Tanzania.

It would be absolutely unconscionable to sit back and watch, as though we were powerless or indifferent to the disappearance of charismatic megafauna in Africa.

If we do nothing, there really is a risk that our grandchildren will grow up in a world without wild elephants and if that calamity were to come about, they will look at these photographs of giant herds, and they will point accusing fingers at all of us and ask you and me – why we were so careless and neglectful as to let this happen. And why we failed to save the African elephant from extirpation?

And it is a terrible fact that our planet is now enduring what may be the sixth mass extinction of species. Unlike previous extinctions – homo sapiens were not around for the previous 5, so we can't take the blame for those – but this particular one.

In the last century, 500 species have vanished from the earth, and if nature was allowed to take its course – then the normal rate of extinctions over a hundred years would be only 2 species.

So there is nothing inevitable, nothing biologically preprogrammed, about the

tragedy taking place around us. On the contrary, we can protect our planet from being despoiled, and we can rescue wildlife from destruction. The only question is whether we have the collective will?

And I believe that today is a manifestation of that will.

I think it is great that the UK and China are united in our perspective on this policy – and by the way, I think we're more forward looking and ambitious in our ban than the European Union itself, about which I make no complaint except they have a President called Tusk so you would have thought they would be sympathetic on this ban – the UK and China together are taking this forward.

And we in London, in October, we will be co-hosting with Defra, with other departments, an international conference on combating illegal wildlife trade which threatens the survival of many, many endangered species; pangolins, rhinos, tigers, and many more.

And whilst I'm on the subject of ivory, don't forget, as we work to save the elephant, the threat then moves across to the hippo, and the narwhal, and other bearers of ivory in their jaws.

And so I am very glad to say that earlier today also that the Hong Kong Legislative Council voted to end the Territory's ivory trade by 2021, with no compensation for dealers.

I think we should all be very encouraged from China's decision not only because of the practical impact we hope it will have, but because it demonstrates the birth of a new global consensus – based on the collective will of the United Nations – that buying or selling ivory is no longer acceptable anywhere and human beings, wherever we may live, share the same obligation to do what we must to protect the magnificent animals that are humanity's joint inheritance.

Thank you.

[News story: Charity automatic disqualification rules: you can now apply for a waiver](#)

If the [new automatic disqualification rules](#) affect you, from today (1 February 2018) you can [apply for a waiver](#) from the Charity Commission

The law changes on 1 August 2018. But you can apply for a waiver before then to take up or remain in a trustee or restricted senior manager position.

The new rules add to current regulations that cover automatic disqualification for trustees.

After the 1 August 2018 the rules will also apply to some charity senior manager positions (chief executives and finance directors – and those in equivalent roles).

New reasons for disqualification include being in contempt of court, being named under particular anti-terrorism legislation or being on the sex offenders register.

Our guidance provides all the information about the changes, and whether they affect you or your charity:

If you need to apply for a waiver, you should look at the [criteria we will use to make a decision](#).

We encourage you to apply as soon as possible, ideally by 1 June 2018, to get a decision in good time.

[Press release: Jail term increased for robbers who targeted elderly](#)

A gang of robbers who targeted elderly people will spend longer behind bars after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred their original sentences to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Between the 1st and 4th May 2017, the gang of 5, led by Gerald McCann, 23, committed a series of robberies against elderly victims, specifically targeting them because of their vulnerability. The men used force against the victims upon entering the houses. In one case, an 80 year old man was struck on the head with a metal coffee pot. Valuable items of jewellery and money were taken from the properties.

McCann, who was 22 at the time, was convicted of robbery and possession of a prohibited article at Leeds Crown Court last November. He was jailed for 8 years and 4 months. The Court of Appeal agreed the sentence was too low and increased it to 10 years and 4 months.

The rest of the gang were sentenced to time in a young offenders' institute. The second offender, who was 18 at the time, received 6 years and 9 months. His sentence has been increased to 7 years 8 months. The third offender, who was 17 at the time, received 5 years and 4 months, his sentence has been increased to 6 years 6 months.

The fourth offender, who was 15 at the time, received 4 years, his sentence

has been increased to 5 years. The fifth offender who was also 15, received 4 years and 4 months, his sentence has been increased to 5 years 3 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“This group of young men purposely set out to target vulnerable and elderly people. Many lives have been affected by their actions, and some of the victims no longer feel safe in their own homes. The Court’s decision to increase these sentences show that crimes of this nature will not be tolerated.”

[Press release: Partners work together on day of action along Norfolk river](#)

Following complaints over several months from Norfolk Broads residents living along the River Yare in Norwich about illegal fishing, littering and general anti-social behaviour, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer Nick Beardmore took action. He raised the matter with partners including Norfolk Police and the Broads Authority at the monthly Norfolk Police Broadsbeat Partnership meeting.

As a result a multi-agency day of action was arranged for the Heron Island area, led by the Norfolk Police Broadsbeat team. The day saw new information signs installed, a big clean-up of the area and rod licence checks carried out.

Nick Beardmore said:

The residents were overwhelmed with the support they received and I want to thank everyone who joined us on the day, which was a real success. Hopefully the problems encountered in the past won’t be repeated.

Norfolk Police Broadsbeat officers Derek Rutter, Martin Chapman, Paul Bassham and Amy Barrell used 2 police boats to transport everyone over to the island and carry out hi-visibility patrols along the Rivers Wensum and Yare. They also explained their role to the cadets, who were split into 3 groups and rotated throughout the day.

Broadsbeat officer PC Paul Bassham said:

It was recognised that if we didn’t all pull together to tackle the emerging issues, the problems would continue to escalate once the weather turned warmer. This would take up valuable resource time

and make life miserable for residents around Heron Island.

PC Barrell co-ordinated the follow-up response, supervising North Norfolk and Broadlands Police Cadets, and Officers Tina Wright, Peter Davison, Andy Mason and Ian Kennedy while they cleared the area and installed the new signs. The team worked alongside Broads Authority Rangers, local residents, a tree surgeon and the Environment Agency throughout the day.

Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said:

Working together in this way means we can pool our resources and tackle a number of issues at the same time. I am very pleased that local residents felt supported and urge anyone with information about illegal fishing activities to report it to our 24-hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For updates and pictures, follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyAnglia @Broadsbeat @BroadsAuth