

THE NATIONAL SPACE STRATEGY IN ACTION

HAMPSHIRE, SURREY AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT



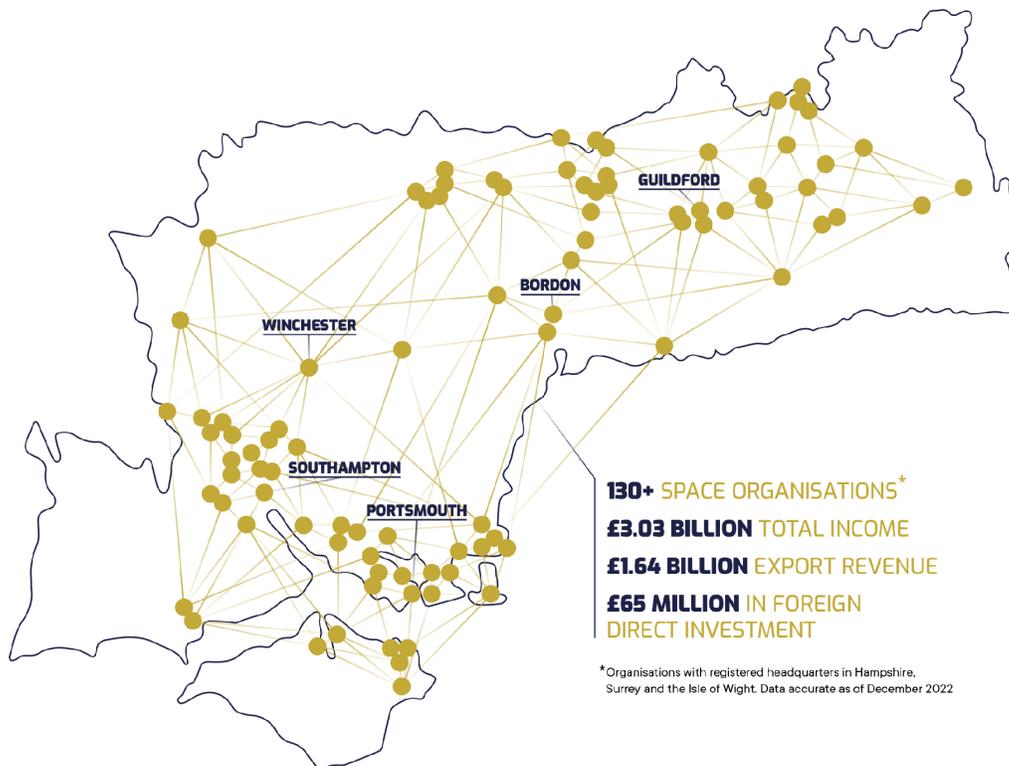


Introduction

As we approach the second anniversary of the launch of the [National Space Strategy \(NSS\)](#), the government has published [The National Space Strategy in Action \(NSSiA\)](#), reporting on the progress and priorities of the first-ever combined civil-defence strategy for space.

The 2021 NSS highlighted the importance of 'space clusters' to fuel UK space industry growth. Funded by the [UK Space Agency \(UKSA\)](#), these are regional hubs, bringing together their area's space sector expertise to boost collaboration, innovation and investment.

[Space South Central](#) is the UK's largest space cluster, championing the space industry across Hampshire, Surrey and the Isle of Wight and representing more than 130 companies and our three partner universities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Surrey.



The NSSiA report provides a timely update on the government's plans at a UK level. Here, we look at some of the key commitments from a regional perspective, and how Space South Central helps support and deliver them.



Developing World-Class Space Clusters

To date, not all parts of the UK have a space cluster, and some regions are starting from scratch, formally joining together space-related businesses and academic institutions for the first time. Hampshire, Surrey and the Isle of Wight, however, have a seven-year headstart.

Although the Space South Central cluster was only launched in April 2023, our work connecting and supporting the region's space sector began in 2016 as the South Coast Centre of Excellence in Satellite Applications (SCCoE). Since then, the SCCoE partnered with organisations like the [Enterprise M3 LEP](#) and the universities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Surrey – now founding partners of Space South Central – forging strong relationships with local space businesses, the UKSA and other national government and industry bodies. This [timeline](#) highlights the key milestones that led to the SCCoE becoming the UK's largest regional space cluster.

Even with the worldwide impact of COVID, in 2022 the UK space industry was worth nearly £4 billion more, and employed around 10,000 more people, than in 2016 – and we've been able to support our region's space sector as it followed the same trajectory of growth.

Our evolution into a space cluster, and a share of £6.5 million UKSA funding, means that we can further develop and scale our existing services and the impact they have on boosting space investment, jobs and skills across Hampshire, Surrey and the Isle of Wight. It's also enabled us to expand our team to include a [Business Development Manager](#) and a recently-recruited International Partnerships Manager.

We've been able to commission research to address our region's needs, and develop projects like [SpaceCraft](#), helping SMEs develop and test new products with access to specialist facilities, space engineers and hands-on training.

Unlocking Growth

Boosting growth in our region's space sector is core to Space South Central's remit. Some of the main ways we do this are by identifying funding and investment opportunities for our members, supporting academic/industry partnerships, promoting sector successes, and connecting organisations locally, nationally and internationally.



Since the NSS launched, the government has announced more than £10 billion of funding for space activities over the coming decade, including £1.75 billion for the UKSA in the current spending review period.

Combined with further billions committed to funding and incentives for R&D and science and technology as part of government initiatives like the [UK Innovation Strategy](#), it means that many companies and projects in our region could be eligible for a financial boost.

We help with queries about funding bids and can offer tailored one-to-one advice, support or signposting. Through our social media, email newsletters and regular Funding Flash updates on our website's [news page](#), we make space-related organisations in our region aware of funding and investment opportunities.

We also use these channels and press releases to promote our members' news and raise their profile. This is particularly helpful for start-ups and SMEs that have little or no resources for marketing or PR.

Earlier this year, we became one of the [first cluster members of the official trade body, UKSpace](#), representing our members to a national industry audience.

Our monthly, free in-person networking events, [Orbit South Central](#), help attendees make new contacts, hear from high-profile industry speakers and discover the latest funding and business opportunities.

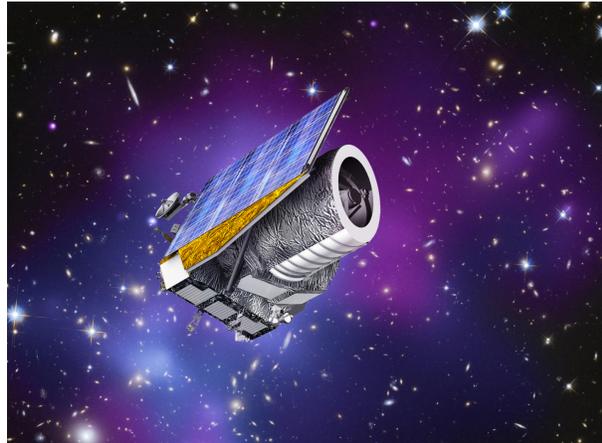




We've started promoting the region's extensive range of space [facilities](#), helping companies access resources that will enable faster innovation, and increasing revenue for the facility's owner.

Collaborating Internationally

The NSS identified international collaboration as an essential component for UK space industry growth, and this is reiterated in the NSSiA update. Our universities and many of our businesses have worked on high-profile projects around the world, recent examples being [Euclid](#) and [Lunar Pathfinder](#).



We're committed to creating more opportunities for more organisations to grow through global collaborations and investment, recently recruiting an International Partnerships Manager and developing a suite of targeted marketing materials.



Around the time of our 2023 launch, we secured funding from the UKSA to develop resources to promote the expertise and capabilities of the Space South Central region internationally.

Under the banner *UK Space: In One Place* – capitalising on the rare mix of end-to-end capabilities in our small part of the country – we produced a video and brochure that are available for organisations to use as part of their international promotions. Both are available on our new web page, spacesouthcentral.com/global, and we can supply printed copies of the brochure for use in meetings, foreign visits and exhibitions.



The video features interviews with Space South Central businesses and universities, and the project drew support from organisations such as [DP World](#), [Portsmouth City Council](#) and the Royal Aeronautical Society's [National Aerospace Library](#), who were among those who contributed photographs and footage.

We've arranged two international delegations so far, hosting the Taiwan Space Agency (TASA) and a Space South Central university delegation to Singapore – both of which led to investment for project development. We're working on plans to host and visit other space nations in the near future, and commissioned the Satellite Applications Catapult to map the space ecosystems of Singapore and Japan.



Growing As A Science Superpower

Our partner universities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Surrey already have the 'world-class space science research base' envisioned by the government, each with their respective global reputations across fields including engineering, astronomy, electronics and computer science. Academics from all three universities were recently ranked amongst the [world's top 1,000 physicists](#).





Each university has an impressive track record working with industry partners, providing cutting-edge expertise and facilities for businesses – like Portsmouth’s new [Space Mission Incubator](#) – or commercialising their own innovations. University of Surrey spin-out, SSTL, is now a world leader in its field, with the European Space Agency (ESA) among its clients.

Although the Space South Central region already has an established academic/industry relationship, we know that there are more companies who could benefit from academic partnerships. We’re looking forward to seeing how the NSSiA’s ‘science superpower’ goals translate to further incentivising these collaborations.

The NSSiA also emphasises the importance of maintaining the UK’s place ‘at the heart of ESA’. We have ESA at the heart of Space South Central, with the University of Portsmouth hosting one of only four [ESA Ambassadors](#) in the UK.

Upskill And Inspire Our Future Space Workforce And Nurturing Talent: Growing Our Space Workforce

Skills gaps pose one of the biggest threats to space industry growth – nationally and locally – and becoming a cluster has enabled us to scale how we bring together and work with businesses and education providers to tackle the issue.

- Organising and hosting a [Skills Roundtable](#) where Space South Central companies and education providers could discuss their concerns and solutions with Science Minister, George Freeman, who wrote the foreword to The National Space Strategy in Action (June 2023).





- Hosting the first leg of the UKSA's [Space for Everyone](#) national roadshow, aimed at school pupils and their families, in Southampton city centre (June 2023).



- Organising and hosting the first Post-Doctoral Industry Summit ([PICS-Space](#)) with Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd ([SSTL](#)), to introduce post-doctoral researchers of any discipline to space career opportunities. The free, all-day event



attracted interest from more than 100 university students and researchers, and featured speakers and exhibitors from organisations including [Airbus](#), [In-Space Missions](#), the [Satellite Applications Catapult](#) and [Theyr](#) (May 2023).

- [Partnering with SpaceCareers.uk](#) to help our companies find the skilled staff they need and help people find out more about space careers and opportunities in our region (July 2023)
- Influencing the Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- Promoting space industry apprenticeships and apprentice case studies as part of National Apprenticeship Week (February 2023).



We're currently exploring ideas for a campaign to inspire primary school children about careers in space.

The NSSiA mentions £15 million of investment from the UKSA in education, skills and outreach as part of its Inspiration Priority over the next two years, and we're looking forward to seeing how that could impact education and skills projects in our region.

Developing Resilient Capabilities

The NSSiA outlines goals and priorities for civil and defence space capabilities, groups the UK's space capabilities into [five categories](#):

- Space domain awareness
- Space transport
- Earth applications
- In-orbit applications
- Science and exploration

It also outlines goals and priorities for civil and defence space capabilities, and with them, lots of opportunities for Space South Central's businesses and universities. The region's extensive end-to-end capabilities include high-level expertise in some of the NSSiA priority areas, including:

- Earth observation (EO) including applications for managing climate change
- In-orbit servicing and manufacturing
- Space surveillance and tracking
- Space traffic management and coordination
- Designing, building and operating small satellites
- Satellite communications
- Space debris management
- Data capture and analysis

We're exploring how we can leverage our relationships with our region's many defence suppliers, and work more closely with the Ministry of Defence and Royal Navy, which has major bases in Portsmouth and the surrounding area.



Next Steps

As the government and UKSA continue to flesh out their vision for an 'agile, connected space ecosystem that will provide the ideal environment for space business to start-up and flourish', more detailed plans will be published in 2023 and beyond. Among them, we expect to see:

- Publication of the Space Sector Plan.
- Publication of the Space Workforce Action Plan.
- Plans for bigger, high-value, high-impact opportunities, such as large-scale, multi-sector technology clusters.
- Details of how the government plans to work with clusters to scale up their space activities and align local growth strategies with the UK space industry's future needs.
- More details about the UKSA's £15 million investment into education and skills and their Inspiration Priority Initiative

Keep up to date with the latest from Space South Central by subscribing to our [mailing](#) list.

