

UK Launches Space-based Response to Covid-19 Pandemic



A £2.6 million initiative to develop space-enabled technology and services that can strengthen the NHS's response to coronavirus has been launched today by the UK Space Agency in collaboration with ESA.

The UK government has called on industry and universities to help develop technology and equipment – from hand sanitisers to ventilators – to support the NHS.

Space-enabled solutions could include satellite communications, satellite navigation, Earth observation satellites or technology derived from human spaceflight.

Amanda Solloway, science minister, commented: "The UK space sector is a world leader in applying satellite and data technology to challenges we face on Earth, from responding to natural disasters to managing outbreaks of infectious disease. We are all in this together and this new funding will help develop practical solutions from one of our most innovative industrial sectors to support our brilliant NHS."

Challenging the space business community

Nick Appleyard, Head of Downstream Business Applications at ESA's European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications in Harwell, Oxfordshire, said: "Even in normal times, satellites and space technology offer solutions to our needs in connectivity and inclusion, in resilience and logistics, and to support healthcare provision in even the most extreme situations.

"The current circumstances challenge the space business community to show just how much it can offer, to help us through this once-in-a-century event."

The [funding is being made available](#) to support projects to develop hi-tech solutions that address logistics within the health delivery system; for example, drone deliveries, managing infectious disease outbreaks, population health and well-being, recovering health system function and handling backlogs after the crisis, and preparedness for future epidemics.

Source: ESA.