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Planning

Unlocking Space for Investment - Growth Pathway

UK Space Agency

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-022869

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-05179e

Published 19 May 2025, 4:58pm

Scope

Description

The UK Space Agency delivers against goals set out in the National Space Strategy by 'Catalysing investment', 'Delivering missions and capabilities', and 'Championing space'. The Unlocking Space Programme plays a pivotal role in supporting the role of the Agency in catalysing investment. The programme aims to support the growth of UK space businesses by stimulating investment and demand for space solutions.

Unlocking Space for Investment within the Unlocking Space Programme seeks to address access to finance barriers for growth-stage space businesses. One such barrier is a lack of investor and/or commercial readiness among space companies to secure capital needed to scale.

The Growth Pathway is one of the key initiatives looking to address this barrier through provision of training and educational modules to allow industry to become investor-ready, as well as recent consideration around supporting industry's access to specialist advisory and business consulting services. We are conducting a Request for Information exercise to understand the supplier market appetite, capacity, and capability in delivering this initiative, as well as gathering information that helps with development and design of future tenders for the Growth Pathway.

The UK Space Agency (UKSA) 2022-25 Corporate Plan outlines how the UK space sector, together with wider Government and international partners, will deliver the National Space Strategy (NSS)[1], NSS In Action[2] and the Space Industrial Plan[3]. UKSA's role is defined by three pillars:?

Catalysing investment, by deploying our funding and resources to multiply the value of non-Government contracts and private capital secured by UK space organisations to maximise the space sector's long-term growth. ?

Delivering missions and capabilities, independently and with others that use space science, technology, and applications to meet national needs and help humanity to understand our universe. ?

Championing space, encouraging other sectors to use space, technology, and applications to deliver better services, tackle the climate emergency, inspire STEM education, and advocate for sustainable space activities.

The Unlocking Space Programme aims to support UK space business growth by stimulating investment and demand for space services, data, and technology by new stakeholder groups, including private sector businesses, Government/Defence, and investors. The programme is delivering four priority projects to meet these aims: Business, Government (Civil and Defence), and Investment.

Unlocking Space for Investment (USI) seeks to address the significant investment barriers to investment prevalent in the UK space sector, including limited available growth capital, high perceived risks, and a lack of commercial readiness among space companies. USI aims to improve business readiness, strengthen investor confidence, enhance investor-business connections, and expand financing options, primarily focusing on growth-stage businesses.

These goals are targeted via the following initiatives:

Growth Pathway (formerly known as 'Business Pathway'): [Please note that this RFI is requesting information for this initiative only] This initiative provides training to companies transitioning to the growth-stage, enhancing their pitching, communication, leadership, and business skills to prepare them for gaining Series A+ investment. The support aims to assist businesses in articulating the value of their space solutions to investors effectively. This initiative also covers bespoke and specialist investor-readiness advice and support in the form of tailored advisory services. The intent is for space businesses to pay for these services with part of the cost offset by the UK Space Agency via a subsidy delivered in the form of a Voucher Scheme. This complements the broader ecosystem of business support available to deep tech and space companies in the UK. Whilst initiatives like

Fusion, the Accelerator, National Space Innovation Programme, General Support Technology Programme, Business Applications and Space Solutions, and ESA Business Incubation Centre focus primarily on early-stage innovation and technical development, USI is designing interventions to address the critical gap in accessing growth capital.

Investor Pathway: This initiative creates an education and engagement programme for deep-tech investors interested in space sector. It includes learning interventions on space technology, economics, and investment opportunities, complemented by industry visits and networking opportunities, intended to enhance investor understanding, build confidence in space investments, and foster connections between investors and high-potential space businesses.

Space Investment Network (formerly known as 'USI Network'): This initiative is a network covering strategically important Government departments, industry, and investors. It focuses on delivering engagement through various formats, including events and networking opportunities (e.g., Space Investment Day), Roundtables, Exploration Workshops, newsletters, and a publicly accessible information hub on GOV.UK.

UK Innovation and Science Seed Fund (UKI2S): This is a publicly funded, privately managed venture capital fund. Managed by Future Planet Capital (FPC) and backed by the UK Space Agency, UKI2S invests public R&D funding as equity capital to support early-stage space businesses.

We are seeking external delivery partners to deliver the Growth Pathway. A delivery partner would:

Support UKSA in managing and selecting growth-stage space industry participants. In FY24, 47 applications were submitted for the Business Pathway, of which 10 were selected.

UKSA will form the basis of participant selection criteria - delivery partner support in suggesting and refining the criteria may be required.

UKSA will carry out the primary industry outreach to ensure the opportunity to be a participant in the initiative is visible - delivery partner support in broadcasting the opportunity to a wide range of space industry participants may be required.

UKSA will carry out the assessment and moderation of industry's applications - delivery partner support may be required as an independent moderator or critical friend of the initial results.

Design and deliver tailored training content for growth-stage space companies.

Pre-existing content and modules from previous iterations of this initiative are available to

be tailored and improved (if desired).

In FY24, this was run with 10 industry participants over two cohorts. Each cohort ran for a total of 7 weeks inclusive of a 1-week study break in the middle, and utilised a mixture of in-person and virtual lessons, and networking/insights opportunities. A delivery partner will have access to Lessons Learnt feedback to ensure these lessons are improved, and will have scope to be flexible and innovate to deliver a high quality and relevant product.

Deliver tailored 1:1 advisory services, primarily Sell-side and Corporate Finance advisory, and wider business consulting support for space businesses. These could reflect the educational content and would be the focus of the initiative. UKSA is considering offering a voucher scheme to support towards the cost of these services for industry - as an example, each participant may be given 10 vouchers (illustrative figure) where each voucher is the equivalent to 1 hour of time with a subject matter expert / advisory specialist, or cost equivalent. The participants can then choose to use these vouchers against several areas or one particular area of support. Pre-work from delivery partners will be required to ensure appropriate understanding of the businesses, beyond participant application assessment, depending on which specialist advisory areas the businesses want to utilise their vouchers on. Potential themes for advisory support and consulting include, but are not limited to:

Brand Building

Leadership and Pitch Coaching

Management Team Development

Finances and Valuations

Insurance

Deal Preparation and Execution

Legal Support

Collaborate with other UKSA delivery partners on identifying and supporting collaboration opportunities. In previous iterations of this programme, a consortium has delivered on this collaboration in the form of the Space Investment Day and the Space Investment Pitch Day.

Provide ongoing support and feedback to participants to ensure they are 'investor-ready'. This includes pitch coaching and general soft support, all integrated with the module content. This would be informal and ad-hoc discussions alongside learning modules, rather than formal industry-paid services as with the specialist advisory and business

consulting services.

[1] - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-space-strategy>

[2] - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-space-strategy-in-action>

[3] - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/space-industrial-plan>

Contract dates (estimated)

- 24 July 2025 to 31 March 2026
- 8 months, 8 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services
- 79900000 - Miscellaneous business and business-related services
- 80000000 - Education and training services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

9 June 2025

Engagement process description

This RFI consists of a Market Sounding Questionnaire - hosted through Microsoft Forms - please ensure that responses are made ahead of the deadline of 23:59 GMT on 9th June 2025.

<https://forms.office.com/e/P9dfxExbk9>

Contracting authority

UK Space Agency

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