

UK and Japan commit to greater collaboration on space

Tuesday 10 April, 2012

Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts will today sign an agreement with the Japanese Economy Minister Motohisa Furukawa for greater collaboration on space research and technology, alongside identifying potential commercial opportunities.

One of the key areas for collaboration is on earth observation technology, such as the NovaSAR programme or the Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC) run by Surrey Satellite Technology Limited. In partnership with the UK Space Agency, DMC provided vital data to assist with rescue efforts and damage assessment in the aftermath of the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

Visiting Japan with the Prime Minister and a trade delegation, Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts will say:

The UK space industry is a true success story, employing tens of thousands of highly skilled people and contributing around £7.5 billion to economy annually. However space is a global market and the UKs success is dependent on international collaboration, so its vital we forge strong partnerships with countries like Japan that lead the way in technology.

Today's agreement paves the way for future space research and commercial cooperation between our two countries. This will drive growth by opening up opportunities for both the UKs innovative companies and leading researchers.

The UK already has a record of scientific collaboration with Japan on solar physics. This includes the most recent Japanese solar mission Hinode, on which one of the three science instruments is from the UK.

Today's agreement will help the UK reach ambitious targets to grow its share of the world space market to 10 per cent by 2030. It is part of the wider work by the UK to make satellite data more commercially available, led by the UK Space Agency working closely with International Space Innovation Centre at Harwell in Oxfordshire.

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