

Expression of Interest: UK Microgravity Demonstration Programme

1. Summary of the opportunity

Can microgravity help unlock better products, processes or scientific insight for your organisation?

The Satellite Applications Catapult (Catapult) is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) from UK organisations and consortia interested in conducting research, testing, validation or manufacturing activities in microgravity, on board the International Space Station (ISS) with Voyager Technologies Inc (Voyager). The programme aims to reduce barriers to accessing orbital research and development opportunities by combining technical scoping, ecosystem connections, commercial development support, and access to a flight credit discount.

Selected projects may be supported at an indicative intervention rate of 15-30% of eligible mission costs, subject to technical and commercial assessment, partner contribution, mission feasibility, available flight opportunities and internal approvals.

Submission of an EOI does not guarantee selection, funding, flight allocation or contract award. Please see the Terms and Conditions and General Notices for more information. The EOI process is intended to identify demand, assess feasibility and shape a small portfolio of high-potential demonstration projects. The level of discount applied to any selected project will be determined following technical and commercial assessment and may vary between projects.

Key information	Detail
Opportunity type	Expression of Interest for potential microgravity demonstration support on the International Space Station
Support available	Technical support, ecosystem connections, mission scoping and potential access to flight credit intervention
Indicative intervention rate	15-30% of eligible mission costs, to be confirmed following assessment, may vary between projects
Match funding	Applicants or partners should expect to cover remaining mission costs
Target portfolio	2-3 flagship demonstration projects, subject to quality and feasibility of submissions
Priority areas	Life sciences, biotechnology, advanced materials, semiconductors, photonics, manufacturing, defence/dual-use and other high-potential applications
EOI submission dates	14 October 2026 to 11 December 2026 FAQ Webinar to be held on 29 October 2026. Click here to join
Flight timing	Indicatively 12 months from relevant contract signature or mission slot booking, subject to provider manifest and technical readiness

2. Context

Introduction

As one of Innovate UK's network of nine Catapults, the work we do at the [Satellite Applications Catapult](#) (Catapult) aligns with UK government priorities for economic growth. We support our best companies to accelerate the invention and adoption of space data and technology. We work closely with businesses to reduce and remove the technical, business development, commercial, financial, or regulatory challenges and barriers that can block their growth.

UK government has highlighted In-orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing (ISAM) as [one of four priority subsectors](#), but we still see low awareness of the technology, inconsistent demand signals, and unclear revenue models. We aim to support UK companies to thrive in this evolving market. Our [Beyond Earth mission](#) addresses these barriers by bridging technology gaps, clarifying regulatory pathways, and providing access to state-of-the-art facilities for validation and testing. In doing so, it enables UK organisations to scale their capabilities and compete globally within the in-space economy.

One of the mission's focus areas, [In-Space Manufacturing and R&D](#), seeks to support businesses looking at producing materials such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals in space and drive the adoption of space-based R&D and manufacturing services across non-space sectors. Microgravity offers a distinct research and manufacturing environment that can enable biological, physical and materials processes to behave differently from terrestrial systems. This can be valuable where gravity-driven effects such as sedimentation, convection, buoyancy or structural loading limit performance, reproducibility or scientific insight on Earth.

For many UK organisations, the challenge is turning a credible microgravity hypothesis into a fundable, safe and technically feasible orbital demonstration. Organisations may lack clear access routes to flight opportunities, early mission costings, payload readiness support, end-user engagement or the confidence to commit match funding to first-of-a-kind demonstrations.

Programme aims

The Catapult wants to use this programme to create a small number of high-quality UK demonstration projects that generate credible evidence, strengthen commercial use cases and stimulate future demand for orbital R&D and manufacturing services. The ambition is not to support the largest number of small experiments, but to develop a portfolio of flagship projects with clear strategic and commercial value.

This programme is being delivered through a collaboration between the Catapult and Voyager Technologies, combining the Catapult's UK ecosystem development, commercial support and applicant engagement role with Voyager's orbital infrastructure, mission expertise and access to International Space Station (ISS) opportunities. Together, the partners aim to help UK organisations translate promising microgravity ideas into credible, scoped and deliverable demonstrations with clearer routes to flight and follow-on impact.

Example use case

A UK biotechnology SME is developing a therapeutic formulation with clear commercial potential, such as improved stability, manufacturability or delivery performance for a product targeting a sizeable obtainable market. The company has evidence suggesting that microgravity could improve or enhance product development compared with Earth-based approaches. However, it does not yet know whether an orbital demonstration is technically feasible, what it would cost, or which partners are needed to prepare a payload for flight.

Through the programme, the company submits an EOI focused on an application-led R&D objective. It receives an initial mission scoping review and works with the Catapult and relevant delivery partners to understand payload requirements, mission costs, evidence requirements, and routes to commercial follow-on. If selected, Catapult support may be applied as a partial intervention against eligible mission costs, with the remaining costs covered by the applicant, end user, sponsor, grant or consortium partners.

3. Expression of Interest

Programme scope

This opportunity focuses on potential microgravity research, validation and demonstration projects that could benefit from access to orbital infrastructure.

In scope:

- Research experiments that require access to microgravity to test a clear hypothesis.
- Application or product demonstrations where microgravity could enable improved performance, quality or commercialisation.
- Validation activities for life sciences, materials, semiconductors, manufacturing, defence/dual-use or other strategically relevant applications.
- Projects led by UK organisations or UK-based consortia with credible routes to match funding and follow-on impact.
- Projects that can provide enough early payload information to support initial mission costing and feasibility assessment.

Desirable features:

- Clear microgravity rationale compared with terrestrial approaches.
- Evidence from previous laboratory, analogue, parabolic flight, drop tower, clinostat, random positioning machine or other relevant work.
- A plausible route to payload readiness within the expected programme timeframe.
- A credible commercial, industrial, scientific or strategic customer need.
- Willingness from the applicant or partners to contribute financially to mission costs.
- Potential to create a compelling UK case study and follow-on activity.
- Development of applications with commercial potential.

Not in scope:

- Desk studies or fundamental research projects with no route to demonstration activity.
- Projects with no clear explanation of why microgravity is required.
- Projects seeking full mission funding with no applicant, sponsor, or partner contribution.
- Payloads that cannot provide basic mass, volume, power, safety or operations information at EOI stage.

Eligibility

- This opportunity is open to UK organisations and UK-led consortia, including SMEs, large companies, universities, research organisations, or charities.
- International collaboration may be considered where it supports a UK-led project and complies with applicable legal, export control, security and contractual requirements.
- Applicants must be able to participate in follow-up discussions with the Catapult and, where appropriate, relevant mission partners or service providers.
- Applicants should be willing to share enough technical and commercial information to support assessment, subject to appropriate confidentiality arrangements.

4. Indicative timeline

Activity	Date	Time
Pre-market engagement activity launch	1 July 2026	12:00 BST
Expression of Interest opens	14 October 2026	12:00 BST
Briefing webinar for applicants. Click here to join	29 October 2026	13:00 GMT
Receipt of clarification questions relating to this EOI	5 November 2026	12:00 GMT
Issue of all answers relating to clarification questions	10 November 2026	12:00 GMT
EOI submission deadline	11 December 2026	12:00 GMT
Initial evaluation period, assessment and shortlisting	January-March 2027	
Mission scoping and indicative costing	January-March 2027	
Funding and partner development	January-March 2027	
Final selection and contracting (subject to mission readiness and internal approvals)	March 2027 onwards	
Indicative flight opportunity (subject to contract signature, manifest availability and payload readiness)	Summer 2027 onwards	

5. How to apply

Expression of Interest form

Applicants should submit their EOI [using this online form](#) provided by the Catapult. The form is structured around the following sections:

- A. Applicant Information
- B. Project Overview
- C. Project Readiness
- D. Mission Information
- E. Funding and Commercial Opportunity

Responses should be concise, within the character count specified on each field of the form and written in English. Applicants should avoid submitting confidential information unless necessary for assessment and clearly marked as such.

Clarifying questions

Clarifying questions or general requests for assistance should be submitted to procurement@sa.catapult.org.uk by the stated deadline. To maintain fairness and transparency, the Catapult may publish responses to clarification questions where appropriate. Commercially sensitive information should not be included in clarification questions.

A briefing and FAQ webinar will be held on 29 October 2026 at 13:00 GMT. [Click here to join](#)

6. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of this Expression of Interest (EOI) will take place in two stages:

Stage 1 – EOI Assessment and Shortlisting:

All eligible EOIs will be reviewed to identify a shortlist of projects that demonstrate strong potential for technical feasibility, commercial impact and strategic fit.

Stage 2 – Discussion, Scoping and Final Selection:

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to participate in a structured discussion phase with the Catapult and, where appropriate, relevant technical, commercial and mission delivery partners. Final selection decisions and any award of support will be made following this stage.

Stage 1: Quality Criteria

The shortlist will be selected based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Requirement	Weighting
Q1 – B. Project Overview	Clarity of the challenge, the project idea and the rationale for using microgravity, expected advantage compared with terrestrial approaches, and whether prior evidence supports the hypothesis. Alignment with programme priorities, relevance to UK economic, scientific, industrial, health, sustainability, defence/dual-use or space capability outcomes, and potential to create a strong UK case study.	30%
Q2 – C. Project Readiness	Current stage of development, TRL, work already completed, evidence supporting the hypothesis, defined success measures, technical dependencies, assumptions, risks, and readiness to progress towards payload integration or flight.	25%
Q3 – D. Mission Information	Quality and completeness of payload definition, estimated mass and dimensions, power requirements, data generation, thermal requirements, operational requirements, safety considerations, and overall feasibility of preparing the payload for a microgravity mission.	20%
Q4 – E. Funding and Commercial Opportunity	Strength of the commercial opportunity, identified customers or beneficiaries, potential economic impact, willingness and ability to contribute financially, identified funding sources, and need for additional technical, academic, investor, end-user or space delivery partners.	25%
Total		100%

Stage 1: Indicative cost information

Applications are expected to provide indicative cost information including any assumptions, prior experience or early estimates. The applicant should identify all fixed costs and estimates for any variable costs.

The Catapult reserves the right to discount any application that:

- Is not credible, affordable or is incomplete;
- Requires too great a level of Catapult intervention; and/or
- Does not provide adequate detail to inform and satisfy likely mission complexity and funding requirements.

While no fixed budget is defined per application, the Catapult expects most applications to fall within a typical range of approximately £200-500k. Higher-cost applications will be considered where they demonstrate exceptional strategic value, impact or deliverability. Our focus is on selecting the right combination of applications to form a high-quality, balanced portfolio, rather than simply selecting the highest-scoring or lowest-cost applications. Catapult may support selected projects at an indicative intervention rate of 15-30% of eligible mission costs, subject

to technical and commercial assessment, partner contribution, mission feasibility, available flight opportunities and internal approvals.

Stage 1: Marking Scheme

Applications will be scored against the following marking scheme:

Score	Marking Scheme	Score	Marking Scheme
0 (FAIL)	No answer given or Non-Compliant Either no submission or an unacceptable submission has been provided. It leaves the Catapult with no confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal not acceptable.	3	Fair, meeting the criteria The submission meets expectations but there is at least one significant issue or several smaller issues. These would require some further clarification and may have arisen through a lack of demonstrated capability, clarity, and/or appropriate evidence. It leaves the Catapult with some confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal meets expectations with at least one significant issue or several smaller issues.
1 (FAIL)	Very poor, meeting very little of the criteria The submission only partially satisfies the criteria, with significant deficiencies, either lacking in detail, clarity or with multiple/significant weaknesses and meets very little of what is expected. It leaves the Catapult with low confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal not acceptable.	4	Good, meeting the criteria The submission meets all that is expected but has some limited or minor issues or ambiguity that may need further exploration or attention. It includes a full description of techniques and measurements that will be employed in the final solution (where appropriate). It leaves the Catapult with a high level of confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal meets expectations with limited/minor issues.
2 (FAIL)	Poor, meeting some of the criteria The submission meets elements of the criteria but gives concern in several areas. This could be due to the response lacking in detail, failing to understand and meet the need of the EOI, lacking in clarity or providing insufficient evidence. These areas of concern would require immediate attention. It leaves the Catapult with some but limited confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal contains significant issues.	5	Excellent, fully meeting the criteria The submission meets all that is expected, providing a high level of detail and demonstrates a very high understanding of the criteria. The submission includes a full description of mission information. If there is ambiguity in the response, it is deemed as manageable and not impacting on the overall delivery and approach. It leaves the Catapult with complete confidence in the applicant's capability and commitment to deliver. Proposal fully meets expectations.

If you fail on any of the criteria you will receive an overall score of failed and will not be progressed into the next stage.

Stage 1: Short listing

The Catapult will shortlist applications that:

- Receive a quality score of 70% or higher;
- Demonstrate a compelling microgravity application;
- Indicate potential to secure match funding; and
- Show a realistic path to delivery.

The Catapult reserves the right not to shortlist any application that does not meet minimum expectations or programme objectives.

Stage 2: Cost validation

Once the shortlist has been created the Catapult will work with Voyager to:

- Develop more reliable and substantiated cost estimates;
- Ensure costs are justified, transparent and realistic; and
- Assess affordability in the context of available programme budget.

As part of this process the applicant will be required to work with the Catapult to agree a final cost and if a shortfall has been identified, to confirm they can cover the match funding.

Stage 2: Final Selection

Selection will not be based solely on Stage 1 scores. The Catapult will seek to develop a balanced portfolio of projects, taking into account:

- Sector diversity and range of applications;
- Strategic importance and UK impact;
- Technical feasibility and readiness;
- Total cost and overall programme affordability;
- Balance of risk across the portfolio; and
- Strength of commercial opportunity and follow-on potential.

The Catapult does not commit to selecting the highest-scoring EOIs and may prioritise projects that best contribute to the overall programme objectives when considered collectively.

The Catapult reserves the right not to proceed with any shortlisted project where:

- Technical feasibility cannot be confirmed;
- Costs cannot be agreed or substantiated;
- Funding or partner contribution is not secured;
- The project does not fit within the final portfolio balance; and/or
- Discussions do not result in a viable or deliverable outcome.

7. Terms and Conditions

This EOI is intended to identify and scope potential UK-led microgravity demonstration projects. Submission does not guarantee selection, Catapult support, access to flight credit discount, mission funding, contracting, launch or flight opportunity. Any support will be subject to due diligence, contractual arrangements, technical feasibility, safety review, manifest availability and internal approvals. The level of discount applied to any selected project will be determined following technical and commercial assessment and may vary between projects. Any future support, agreement, contract or purchase order arising from this EOI process will be governed by the Catapult Terms & Conditions which are available on our website [here](#).

Any queries or concerns with these terms and conditions must be raised before or with the EOI submission. Any matters which arise after this time may not be considered and the Catapult may choose to remove an organisation from the process on this basis. By submitting an EOI, applicants acknowledge that this process is exploratory and does not create any obligation on the Catapult to provide funding, award a contract, allocate flight credit discount, enter into an agreement or proceed with any mission activity.

In addition, applicants will be required to agree to Voyager's terms and conditions in connection with the provision of facilities on board the ISS and attendant flight services. The Catapult's requirements are set out in the [Heads of Terms here](#) which you are required to sign. These Heads of Terms are not binding, but they are intended to set the applicant's expectations appropriately. If selected, the applicant will be asked to contract with Voyager (either directly

or via the Catapult) on terms matching the applicant's EOI. The applicant may at that point withdraw from its EOI without penalty if it is unwilling or unable to meet Voyager's terms as then presented and the Catapult will be released from any obligation arising out of the EOI.

Any Offer made to an applicant by the Catapult will constitute a subsidy and will therefore be regulated by the Subsidy Control Act 2022. The applicant will be required to provide details to the Catapult of any subsidy received from any other publicly-funded source. The Act requires registration of details of the subsidy on the Government's database, following which there is a one-month period within which a third party can challenge the award in the Competition Appeal Tribunal. The Catapult intends to let that period pass before implementing any Offer. The Catapult reserves the right to withdraw and/or modify any Offer in the event of a successful challenge being made.

8. General Notices

Any expenditure, work or effort undertaken by an applicant prior to any formal award, agreement or contract is a matter solely for the applicant's own commercial judgement.

The Catapult reserves the right to terminate this EOI process at any time and not to enter into any agreement, contract or mission arrangement. The Catapult and/or its advisers shall not be liable for any costs, liabilities or expenses incurred by applicants, advisers, sub-contractors or partners in connection with the preparation of a response or discontinuance of the process.

Applicants should note that the Catapult reserves the right at their sole and absolute discretion to reject any or all proposals, with or without reason. The following reasons may lead the Catapult to consider automatic rejection of a proposal:

- Missed deadline for the response;
- Failure to respond or, having responded, failure to clarify points raised by the Catapult;
- Failure to submit a proposal that complies with the Catapult's requirements;
- Any breach of confidentiality whatsoever;
- Applicant engagement with any employee of the Catapult either pre, during or after the issuing of this EOI that may distort competition or result in a violation of the principles of non-discrimination and transparency;
- Unless specified to the contrary channelling any communications with regard to this project to anyone not specified in the EOI; and/or
- Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to this proposal shall disqualify your proposal from being considered.

The information provided within this document reflects the Catapult's best understanding of the opportunity at the time of publication. The Catapult is not accountable for its accuracy, reasonableness or completeness and shall not be liable for any loss arising as a result of reliance upon information within this document. The Catapult will not accept any claim or extra charge requested by an applicant as a consequence of any error, omission, supposed lack of knowledge or non-compliance with matters detailed within this document.

9. Intellectual Property (IP) and Confidentiality

Applicants retain ownership of their background IP. Any treatment of foreground IP, data rights, publication rights or licensing arrangements will be addressed in any future project-specific agreement where relevant. There might be a requirement for any applicant to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) at any point during this process.

All information provided as part of an EOI will be handled in confidence by the Catapult and any assessment partners engaged under appropriate confidentiality arrangements. Applicants should clearly identify any information that is commercially sensitive or confidential.

All information provided in this document shall remain confidential between the applicant and the Catapult. This document is provided in confidence for the sole purpose of this EOI process and must not be provided to any third party or used for any other purpose without the express written permission of the Catapult.

Bidders may make this document available within their organisation or subcontractors solely for the purposes of preparing a bona fide response. The bidder is to ensure that all such parties are made aware of the confidentiality obligations and take steps to guarantee compliance.

10. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is this a grant competition?

No. This is an Expression of Interest (EOI) to identify and shape potential microgravity demonstration projects. Any support would be subject to assessment, approvals and appropriate agreements.

2. What level of support may be available?

The Catapult may support selected projects at an indicative intervention rate of 15-30% of eligible mission costs. The rate may vary by project and will be confirmed after assessment.

3. Will applicants need match funding?

Yes. Applicants should expect to contribute financially or secure contribution from partners, customers, sponsors, grants or other funding sources.

4. Do we need a flight-ready payload to apply?

No, but applicants should provide enough information to support early feasibility and mission scoping. Projects closer to payload readiness may be easier to progress.

5. Can projects linked to other accelerators or programmes apply?

Yes. Projects may come from other programmes or networks, but selection is not guaranteed and all EOIs will be assessed through this process.

6. Will the Catapult choose only one sector?

No. The programme aims to develop a balanced portfolio. Priority areas may include life sciences, materials, semiconductors, manufacturing, or defence/dual-use.

7. What happens after submission?

The Catapult and partners will review EOIs, shortlist promising opportunities, explore mission feasibility and costing, and determine whether any projects should progress to more detailed discussions or support.

END OF DOCUMENT