



# A thriving environment with space to succeed



**The Harwell Oxford science and innovation campus has a strong reputation for excellence in the space sector. For Oxford Space Systems, locating at STFC's Innovations Technology Access Centre (I-TAC) provided them with the ideal environment to flourish, in the epicentre of the thriving space cluster at Harwell.**

## The challenge

Deployable structures play an important role in space missions, and there is increasing demand for structure instruments such as booms. Production of these structures, however, highlights a number of engineering challenges, which small start-ups are not able to overcome without easy access to the facilities required to develop their unique technology. I-TAC incubatee Oxford Space Systems is developing a new type of advanced material, which enables deployable space structures to be uniquely lightweight and allows greater simplicity in design. For a small start-up such as Oxford Space Systems, accessing the facilities required to produce this innovative design was a difficult obstacle to overcome.

## The solution

By basing themselves at I-TAC on the Harwell Oxford campus, Oxford Space Systems became an active member of the UK Space Gateway at Harwell, providing the opportunity to collaborate with a variety of organisations within the cluster, such as STFC's RAL Space. They took advantage of the multi-million pound facilities and the specialised expertise available at STFC in order to develop their innovative technology to the next level. The wider networks and opportunities available to organisations within the space cluster also enabled Oxford Space Systems to secure funding through Technology Strategy Board (TSB) Harwell Space Launchpad competition, which ultimately provided them with the funds they needed to grow their business.

## The benefits

By being part of I-TAC, Oxford Space Systems were in the heart of the space cluster which presented them with a variety of opportunities, one of which included the available facilities on offer at RAL Space. The thriving environment also surrounded the company with its end customers, with whom employees could network and gain a deeper understanding of their needs. The ability to simulate conditions in space using the thermal vacuum chamber and vibration table provided by RAL Space allowed Oxford Space Systems to prove that their technology worked. As a result, the company have created a working prototype and ultimately achieved a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 3. They hope to achieve a higher TRL through further R&D by continuing to develop their product whilst maintaining their presence in the reputable space cluster.

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For more information about how your business could benefit from access to I-TAC:

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