STFC Innovations Ltd to lead ESA’s UK technology transfer work

STFC Innovations Ltd’s excellence in knowledge exchange and technology transfer has been recognised with the awarding of a prestigious contract by the European Space Agency (ESA).

STFC Innovations Ltd has been selected to lead ESA’s Technology Transfer Programme (TPP) in the UK as part of its Technology Transfer Network. This will see them identify opportunities to exploit ESA’s technology, expertise and know-how to create social and economic impact in non-space sectors.

The transfer of space technologies into non-space applications can have many benefits for people on Earth. ESA’s technologies have been used in a wide number of areas including; to improve air purification in hospital intensive care wards, produce enhanced materials for sports equipment such as running shoes, to monitor offshore oil and gas fields, and help manufacturers to develop or improve new and existing products.

STFC Innovations Ltd has a long track record of successful commercialisation and knowledge exchange. Since its creation in 2002 it has successfully established 15 spin-out companies which have raised more than £25m of external investment between them.

As ESA’s UK technology transfer lead, STFC Innovations Ltd will work closely with space science organisations across the UK and with STFC’s Space Science Technology Department, which already provides world-leading research and technology development for ESA and other space organisations.

Credit: ESA / A Van Der Geest
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“In the current climate all organisations are even more aware of the need to share their experience and knowledge. A new technology is usually developed to meet a specific need, but can often have many more uses which could be exploited. We are delighted to be able to work with ESA to explore where we can share the fruits of their and other organisation’s research to develop new technologies, products and services that will benefit both the UK and European economy and wider society.”

Tim Bestwick, Chief Executive of STFC Innovations Ltd

“We are delighted to have STFC Innovations Ltd as the ESA technology broker in the UK. Their expertise in technology exploitation will contribute to our joint objective to make the Harwell Centre a thriving European hub for innovation and generation of wealth. Together we will help UK industry to benefit from the space technology already developed and the many projects presently underway.”

Frank Salzgeber, Head of the Technology Transfer Programme Office at ESA
RSE/STFC Enterprise Fellowships

This scheme is run jointly by the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and is part of the Council’s Industry Programme.

Following the recent call for applications STFC and RSE have awarded a fellowship to Anke Lohmann starting October 2009. Enterprise Fellowships are designed to encourage exploitation of the STFC research programme. Applications can be submitted on any subject provided that the original research or technological developments have their origin as part of a programme largely funded by STFC (formerly PPARC and CCLRC), or in the case of nuclear physics programme previously funded by EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council).

Fellowships include one year’s salary costs and some additional support funding, and can be held at any UK Higher Education Institution or Institution that agrees to host the work. The Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for researchers to spend a year gaining business training whilst developing the commercialisation of their existing research. The training provided aims to support fellows through an active process of business planning and implementation.

The next call for applications will be in 2010.
Grants awarded

Particle and Nuclear Physics Applied Systems-A pilot scheme for knowledge exchange

Professor R Barlow, University of Manchester, ‘Using Thorium as fuel in conventional reactors’.

Dr A Boston, University of Liverpool, ‘ProSPECTus: Next generation single photon emission computed tomography’.

Professor S Chattopadhyay, University of Liverpool, ‘Compact radio-frequency linear accelerator technology with dynamic RF power controls for applications in cargo and global security’.

Dr RJ Nichol, UCL, ‘CREAM TEA (the Cosmic ray extensive area mapping for terrorism evasion application) – Phase 1’.

Dr A Nomerotski, University of Oxford, ‘PImMS: Fast CMOS sensors for imaging mass spectrometry’.

Please see http://www.stfc.ac.uk/KE/FOpp/pnpasawards.aspx for further details.

Mini IPS

Dr Paula Chadwick of Durham University entitled ‘Field testing of the Durham/AG1 transmissometer’.
Developing Daresbury as a National Science and Innovation Campus - Next Generation

Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (Daresbury SIC) enters a new and exciting phase with notification in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) of its intention to procure a private sector partner in a joint venture (Public Private Partnership) to develop the Campus over the next 30 years.

It is anticipated that the joint venture, between existing Campus partners; Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and Halton Borough Council; and a private sector business or consortium, will be operational by May 2010, following a period of pre-qualification and selection of the preferred bidder by the public sector partners.

The notification sets out a unique, long-term opportunity for a private sector partner to develop up to 1 million square feet of space on the Campus for business, research and innovation, to provide facilities management and other services to the Campus and potentially realise commercial services and investment opportunities with the Campus companies. It is expected that the private sector partner will be selected in early 2010, with the joint venture company in place and ready to move forward with the next stage of the development by May 2010.

One of two national Science and Innovation Campuses, Daresbury SIC is a high profile development bringing together STFC, high-tech businesses, universities, research organisations and strategic industrial partners, along with the business support and investor community to create up to 10,000 new jobs. The Campus is already home to almost 100 high-tech companies, based in the Daresbury Innovation Centre, in sectors including biomedical, digital/ICT/telecoms, advanced engineering/instrumentation and energy and environmental technologies. The majority of these companies are high-tech SMEs but also present are major international blue chip organisations such as IBM and SGI.

Professor Colin Whitehouse, Chair of the Joint Venture Executive Steering Group and Deputy Chief Executive of the STFC said: “This is an exciting time in the development of Daresbury SIC. The Campus has already demonstrated that it is leading the way in bringing together scientists, academics and the business community to share their knowledge and find innovative solutions to global challenges including energy, healthcare, security and the environment.

“The investment being made by the future joint venture partner in further developing Daresbury SIC will unlock the Campus’ full potential and strengthen its position, along with its sister Campus in Harwell, as a principal location for world-leading science and innovation.”
The Discipline Hopping Grant scheme is an annual competition and the deadline for this year’s competition is 18th November 2009.

Discipline Hopping Awards provide short term support to pump prime new collaborations between Engineers and Physical Scientists with Life Scientists, with the aim of fostering long-term interaction. This scheme allows researchers who have a track record in their own field in the physical sciences to apply for funding to investigate and develop ideas, skills and collaborations in the areas of biological, clinical, health services and public health research. Alternatively, Life Science researchers can apply for funding to develop ideas, skills and collaborations with physical scientists.

Grants can last from three months to a year. The Discipline Hopping awards competition is run by the Medical Research Council (MRC) in partnership with some of the other Research Councils (EPSRC, BBSRC and Science Technology Facilities Council). For more information, please visit the MRC website.
The IPS Panel (previously PIPSS) will have two new members with effect from September 2009. Paul John of e2v Technologies and Val O’Shea from Glasgow University will step down. The new Panel members are Deepak Gupta of Black Kite Ltd and Julian Dines from the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, Edinburgh.

New IPS Panel member

Julian A. B. Dines

Is Head of Innovation at the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, Edinburgh – the UK’s national facility for astronomy instrumentation, and part of STFC. The UKATC has over 30 years history of designing and building world class astronomical technology for both space-based and ground-based observatories.

Julian gained a B.Sc. in Physics & Electronics, and an M.Sc. in Computer Science from Manchester University. He then moved to Edinburgh to carry out research in Optoelectronic Computer Architectures towards his Ph.D. and subsequent post-doc position at Heriot-Watt University. He became a Lecturer in Computing & Electrical Engineering at Heriot-Watt before moving to the Institute for System Level Integration, Livingston, performing industrially-focused R&D and training in System-on-Chip (SoC) design.

After a short time with Cadence (Tality), Julian joined the Motorola Scotland Design Centre in Livingston. He ultimately became Head of Hardware Design – leading SoC/FPGA chip-design & verification for products within networking, computing-systems, and mobile communication.

In 2006 Julian moved to the UKATC to head up the Innovation Group with the dual remit of managing early-stage technology R&D as well as growing the exploitation & commercialisation activities. Within the technology R&D area he is fostering a range of new projects spanning from investigations into cryogenic material properties through to the application of a novel deformable mirror technology in adaptive optics. The exploitation & commercialisation activities are rapidly expanding by applying the technologies and expertise from the astronomy instrumentation field into other sectors as diverse as healthcare, environmental monitoring, and synchrotron sources.

Julian is a member of the Institute of Physics and the Institution of Engineering & Technology. He is part of the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance (SUPA) Knowledge Transfer team and is a co-director of the Photonics Knowledge Transfer Network (soon to become the Photonics & Plastic Electronics KTN).
Deepak Gupta is a business development manager at Brunel University; he supports the School of Engineering & Design, Wolfson Materials Centre, Advanced Solidification Technology Centre, Institute of Bioengineering, and the Energy and Environmental Sustainability Collaborative Research Network to establish industry partnerships for, mainly, TSB funded projects. Alongside this, he runs Black Kite, his own consultancy, which provides business development, bid and project management services to R&D and novel technology companies and institutions, primarily in the communications and space sectors. Deepak particularly enjoys creating, leading and managing collaborative partnerships across industry and academia to win novel technology and science projects, and he gains satisfaction from ensuring project success.

After graduating in Electronic and Electrical Engineering from Loughborough University, he banked a part-time PhD and then started his first job with the Independent Broadcasting Authority to help develop the first OFDM DVB-T professional transmitter and receiver. Moving to Roke Manor Research (a Siemens company), he initially assisted the development of the first DAB ASIC, Psion’s DAB radio, the WaveFinder™ and then worked on wireless and cellular communication technologies. Later, as a business development manager, Deepak developed new business mainly in the space and communications sectors, creating partnerships with universities and companies to bid for and undertake projects for institutional customers, including ESA (e.g., ARTES-1 and TRP), Ofcom, PPARC (CREST) and ITI Techmedia (a research organisation funded by the Scottish Enterprise). Deepak is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the IET, and a member of the IET Fellow Assessment Panel.