

PRESS RELEASE

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY BOARD

14 May 2008

INNOVATIVE AVIATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO BE CO-FUNDED BY TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY BOARD

- **£103 million Next Generation Composite Wing programme will revolutionise aircraft wing development in UK.**
- **Part of the Technology Strategy Board's collaborative research and development programme, NGCW will bring together 17 companies, led by Airbus.**

The Technology Strategy Board is to invest £25 million in a major new research and development programme that will improve future wing design processes and help to maximise the eco-efficiency of future aircraft designs.

Part of the Technology Strategy Board's collaborative research and development programme, Next Generation Composite Wing will see 17 industrial partners – led by Airbus – join forces in one of the most significant aviation research and technology programmes launched in the UK for many decades.

The total value of the programme is £103 million. In addition to the Technology Strategy Board's £25 million investment, nine regional development agencies and devolved administrations will invest a total of £26 million while the 17 industrial partners will contribute £52 million. The programme follows an invitation issued by the Technology Strategy Board in 2007 for businesses to submit proposals for innovative collaborative research and development in design engineering and advanced manufacture.

Next Generation Composite Wing (NGCW) will keep the UK at the cutting edge of innovation in aircraft wing development. NGCW will ensure the UK is competent and well-equipped to maximise the use of weight-saving composite materials in future wing design and development. The skills and capability to design and manufacture in composite materials is vital in the aerospace industry today, helping to improve efficiency and performance while lowering both operating costs and gaseous emissions through burning less fuel.

The three-year programme will bring together 17 leading British organisations, both industrial companies and research bodies. The programme is led by Airbus in partnership with Advanced Composite Group, Aircraft Research Association, Atkins Ltd, Bombardier Aerospace, Delmia UK Ltd, Eaton Aerospace Ltd, GE Aviation, GE Digital Systems, GKN Transparency

Systems, Goodrich Actuation Systems, Hyde Group Ltd, KuKa Automation, Messier – Dowty, Morgan Professional Services, QinetiQ Ltd, Spirit Aerosystems Ltd.

The nine regional development agencies and devolved administrations taking part in the programme are: Advantage West Midlands, East Midlands Development Agency, East of England Development Agency, Invest Northern Ireland, North West Development Agency, Scottish Enterprise, South East England Development Agency, South West Regional Development Agency and Welsh Assembly Government.

Welcoming the programme, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham said: “Aerospace is a vibrant industry. Quite rightly there is pressure to develop new technologies so that new aircraft have a reduced impact on the environment. This project is an important part of meeting that ambition. Our investment is further proof of Government’s commitment to help British business respond to those demands. This was a key part of our innovation White Paper published in March”.

Commenting on the decision to invest in the programme, the Technology Strategy Board’s chief executive, Iain Gray, said: “The Technology Strategy Board’s role is to ensure that the UK is in the forefront of technology-enabled innovation. One of the organisation’s key themes, as outlined in the strategic plan launched only last week, is to invest in high value manufacturing technologies, where the UK leads or could lead. We are delighted to support this vital programme, which will also benefit the UK’s regions by bringing inward investment and generating high value jobs.”

Notes to Editors

1. For more information about the Next Generation Composite Wing programme please contact Airbus UK Communication 0117 936 4769.
2. The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the government. Its mission is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). For more information please visit: www.innovateuk.org.
3. The Technology Strategy Board’s 3-year strategic plan “*Connect and Catalyse – a strategy for business innovation, was launched in London on 8 May 2008*. Please visit www.innovateuk.org to view and download the strategy.

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