

“ASTRAEA is a pioneering £32 million aerospace programme which is addressing key technological and regulatory issues in order to open up non-segregated airspace to unmanned autonomous aircraft.”

First National **ASTRAEA** Conference held in Bristol

The first ASTRAEA Conference, held in Bristol on the 17th October 2007, provided some 150 delegates with updates on all aspects of the programme, both on technological and regulatory matters.

The audience, which included potential supply chain businesses and key stakeholders in the field of autonomous unmanned airborne systems, were also given an overview of ASTRAEA's place in the context of the National Aerospace Technology Strategy and regional economic development.

The speakers were:

Dr Sam Beale, *Rolls Royce*

Ken Maciver,
Chairman of the Aerospace Technology Steering Group

Dr Sue Wolfe,
Welsh Assembly Government

Stephen Williams, *CAA*

Lambert Dopping-Hepenstal,
ASTRAEA Programme Director

Belen Verduch-Arosa, *Thales*

Gary Clayton, *EADS*

Peter Johnson, *University of Bath*

André Clot, *Euro USC*

Mike Fielding, *Thales*

Nigel Mills, *QinetiQ*

Richard Bourne,
Flight Refuelling Limited

Simon Jewell,
ASTRAEA Steering Board Chairman



Ken Maciver, Chairman of the Aerospace Technology Steering Group

Government Encouraged To Support 2012 Unmanned Vehicle Flight

A number of issues were raised during the conference including the consortium's ambition to see unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) flying in non-segregated, UK civil airspace by 2012.

In particular, ASTRAEA Steering Board Chairman, Simon Jewell called on the Ministry of Defence and Department for Transport to engage further with ASTRAEA during the next phase of ASTRAEA from 2009 to help the programme maintain momentum.

“ASTRAEA has already created a new level of collaboration among the UK aerospace industry, placing the UK at the forefront of thinking in the autonomy sector,” says Jewell. “This progress will benefit not only the aerospace industry but also the wider economy owing to the efficiencies autonomy can bring to a number of sectors and industries, positioning the UK as a provider of autonomous technology to the rest of the world.”

UK Enterprise Urged to Aid Unmanned Vehicle Development

The role of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in ASTRAEA's success was highlighted by André Clot, a sub-contractor on the programme. Andre urged his colleagues from across the industry to look at ways to support further developments on the initiative and complement the objectives of the lead partners. André formed European UAV Systems Centre Limited (Euro USC) which is now working with FRL and EADS Defence & Security Systems Ltd.

The growing role of SMEs on the programme has already contributed to economic growth across the regions and Dr Sue Wolfe of the Welsh Assembly Government, the lead regional representative on the ASTRAEA steering board, outlined the contribution that SMEs across the country were making and the benefit of over £1 million of investment that has already been channeled into partnerships between companies and academic institutions. In total, around 75 SMEs are working on the programme.



*Dr Sue Wolfe,
Welsh Assembly Government*

Dr Wolfe commented:

“ASTRAEA has an important role to play in stimulating innovation in the UK economy through higher levels of research, development, and knowledge transfer. In the regions it is developing technology infrastructure, increasing research and development expenditure, enhancing opportunities for regional businesses and helping to improve technical skills. There are numerous opportunities for smaller businesses to benefit and we would recommend they make efforts now to outline their potential contribution.”

WEAF will continue to support ASTRAEA as part of its South West Technology Programme. Further technology seminars will be organised to inform WEAF members about the progress of the programmes.

For more information, visit <http://www.weaf.co.uk/technology>

