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Roger McKinlay

Challenge Director: Quantum Technologies
UK Research and Innovation

The UK National Quantum Technologies Programme: Ten years down and ten to go.

Friday, October 6, 2023; 10:30 a.m. EDT

Zoom Link

In 2014 the UK Launched its National Quantum Technologies Programme with the formation of four quantum research hubs and the establishment of centres for doctoral training. In 2018 commercialisation activities were stepped up with the Quantum Challenge which has invested almost £200M in industry led collaborative programmes. The national programme has also grown to include international activities, notably two rounds of competitions for collaborative projects with Canada. The total government investment in this first ten years is approximately £1B.

With the programme approaching its tenth anniversary, £2.5B of further founding has been announced for the next ten years. In March 2023 a national Quantum Strategy was published and work is already underway preparing for the next phase. This includes the creation of new research hubs – the first round of the competition has already been held – new centres for doctoral training and a continuation of the industry funding activities. These will include early procurement activities as well as the collaborative R&D and study activity which has been a feature of the programme to date.

Since 2018 Roger McKinlay has been leading the Quantum Technologies Challenge in UK Research and Innovation. The QT Challenge funds industry-led collaborative projects and has funded over 120 projects with more than £174m over the past five years. The programme covers sensing, imaging and communications as well as quantum computing and has funded activities in many sectors including space.

Roger is a Chartered Engineer and a past president of the Royal Institute of Navigation. He joined UKRI following a career in the defence and aerospace industries. In a varied career he has crossed paths with the space industry on many occasions, notably some early work on GPS receiver design and pioneering work on aeronautical satellite communication.

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