

**Dr Stavros Polykarpou leads outreach programme on AI-enabled drone governance to advance public dialogue and policy engagement**



The Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) sector is poised to deliver transformative socioeconomic impact. By 2035, it is projected to be worth £74 billion globally. In the UK alone, autonomous drone operations are expected to contribute up to £45 billion in economic value, generate £16 billion in national savings, and create over 650,000 jobs. Coordinated drone delivery ecosystems are already expanding access to essential goods and services—reducing health and infrastructure inequality through rapid, on-demand logistics to underserved regions.

Dr Stavros Polykarpou is leading an ESRC Social Science Impact Accelerator (SSIA)-funded public engagement project that addresses the governance challenges of this emerging technology. The initiative bridges frontier social science research with public policy, advancing inclusive and evidence-based dialogue on the responsible development of AI-enabled drone platforms and ecosystems.

Key activities include:

- A thought leadership blog series featuring diverse, interdisciplinary perspectives on AAM innovation, ethics, and governance.
- A policy-oriented stakeholder workshop convening regulators, policymakers, academic experts, and industry leaders.
- A focus on emergency response and public good applications, fostering knowledge exchange on challenge-led research priorities.

## Delivering Strategic Outputs

- 1 Thought leadership blog series**  
Weekly expert posts and real-world AI case studies, spotlighting key AAM challenges and solutions.
- 2 Podcast**  
Short interviews with industry leaders and cross-disciplinary academic experts on AAM innovation, cybersecurity and policy.
- 3 Hybrid Workshop**  
Interactive event bringing together industry, policymakers, community representatives, and researchers to shape AAM governance.
- 4 Executive Report**  
An actionable best-practice guide for responsible AI deployment in emergency response and last-mile logistics.



### FOSTERING CROSS-SECTOR DIALOGUE FOR THE UK'S EMERGING AAM ECOSYSTEM

#### Connect and Collaborate



If you wish to contribute to the thought leadership blog series or podcast with your expert input, please contact:

Dr Stavros Polykarpou/ Project Lead

Stavros.Polykarpou@rhul.ac.uk

\* PwC. 2022. *Skies Without Limits v2.0* – Taking the UK's Economy to New Heights.  
\*\* Morgan Stanley. 2018. *Flying Cars: Investment Implications of Autonomous Urban Air Mobility*.  
\*\*\* Grand View Research. 2024. *Advanced Air Mobility Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report By Region (UK)*

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## Call for Contributions: ESRC SSIA Impact Blog Series & Podcast

Contributions are invited for the ESRC SSIA blog and podcast on the future of AI-enabled drone governance.

### Suggested topics include:

- Responsible AAM innovation deployment
- Supply chain opportunities and challenges for drone delivery ecosystems
- AI accountability, data governance, and cyber risk implications
- Potential Use cases (e.g. emergency fast response, commercial last mile)
- Public trust, societal impact, and innovation ecosystems

### How to contribute:

Please email Stavros.Polykarpou@rhul.ac.uk with a short 2–3 line expression of interest.

- **Rolling submissions:** August–September 2025

- **Format:** Short opinion piece or perspective contribution article + 5–10 min Q&A podcast (optional)
- **Published via:** Royal Holloway's ESRC SSIA Impact Blog and promoted via LinkedIn
- **Why it matters:** Your insights will help inform critical national conversations about safety, innovation, and public value as we shape the governance of tomorrow's skies.

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### *Successful Launch of the 1st Interdisciplinary Omnidrome Sandpit During Research Festival Week*

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**Dr Stavros Polykarpou delivers lightning talk on the importance of cross-boundary collaboration for tackling grand challenges**



Over 25 colleagues from diverse disciplines gathered for the inaugural Omnidrome Sandpit, engaging in 15 insightful lightning talks, dynamic Q&A sessions, and collaborative brainstorming activities. The workshop was expertly chaired by Professor Ruth Livesey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Innovation and Omnidrome Director, Professor Jurgen highlighting the university's strategic commitment to interdisciplinary research excellence and innovation.

By bridging expertise across drone technology, robotics, AI-driven autonomous systems, social sciences, humanities, and governance, this initiative is cultivating a comprehensive ecosystem capable of addressing complex challenges and unlocking the vast opportunities within advanced autonomous innovation.

Showcasing RHUL's extensive Omnidrome research, the event sparked vibrant interdisciplinary dialogue, generating fresh ideas and fostering collaborations across academic boundaries. The Omnidrome Sandpit exemplifies RHUL's leadership in challenge-led, partnership-driven