# Sees.ai secures £3.65m to advance autonomous drone inspections for UK infrastructure



Chichester-based startup Sees.ai has raised £3.65 million to accelerate the development of its autonomous aerial inspection technology, marking a major milestone in the UK’s push to lead in AI-driven infrastructure management. The funding round was co-led by Sustainable Future Ventures, Hearst Ventures and Elbow Beach Capital, with additional investment from WakeUp Capital.

Founded in 2018, Sees.ai has become the first UK company authorised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to conduct routine Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone missions. This world-first approval allows the firm’s drones to operate autonomously in open airspace, inspecting live high-voltage power lines owned by National Grid Electricity Transmission. Since 2021, the company has carried out regular remote inspections, improving safety and efficiency compared with traditional, labour-intensive survey methods.

Sees.ai’s platform captures georeferenced 2D and 3D data optimised for AI analysis, delivering highly accurate intelligence on infrastructure condition. “The precision and value of this data are unmatched globally,” said CEO John McKenna. The new funding will enable Sees.ai to scale operations and deliver AI insights that enhance how infrastructure is designed, developed and maintained.

Supported by Boeing and the UK Government’s Future Flight Challenge, Sees.ai operates at the intersection of two key global priorities: accelerating the transition to net zero and applying AI to transform productivity. Conan Lauterpacht, Founding Partner at Sustainable Future Ventures, called the firm’s technology “both commercially compelling and vital to the net zero transition,” highlighting its role in providing safer and more sustainable infrastructure insights.

Sees.ai’s BVLOS capability represents one of the UK’s most advanced drone permissions, allowing remote, autonomous missions across the country without on-site pilots. This innovation reduces risks associated with human inspection of high-voltage assets and paves the way for similar applications in utilities, transport and telecommunications.

Its ongoing work with National Grid reinforces the technology’s commercial strength and regulatory credibility. By enabling faster, safer and more scalable inspections, Sees.ai is setting new benchmarks for drone-enabled infrastructure management.

The company’s progress exemplifies how AI and autonomous flight can deliver measurable benefits for safety, resilience and sustainability. As the UK strengthens its position in the global AI and drone economy, Sees.ai stands as a clear example of responsible innovation driving both technological leadership and the net zero transition.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.uktech.news/ai/sees-ai-3-65-investment-20251008> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.uktech.news/ai/sees-ai-3-65-investment-20251008> - Sees.ai, a Chichester-based startup specialising in autonomous aerial solutions, has secured £3.65 million in funding. The investment, co-led by Sustainable Future Ventures, Hearst Ventures, and Elbow Beach Capital, with additional support from WakeUp Capital, will accelerate the company's technology for flight control, collision avoidance, autonomous take-offs, and safety management. Founded in 2018, Sees.ai was the first UK company to obtain authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for routine Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) missions. CEO John McKenna highlighted the unmatched precision and value of the asset condition data captured, aiming to transform the management of critical infrastructure. The funding is expected to drive significant growth and efficiency in the deployment of AI and drones for infrastructure management.
3. <https://www.suasnews.com/2025/10/sees-ai-secures-3-65m-to-accelerate-world-first-centralised-autonomous-drone-operations-for-critical-national-infrastructure/> - Sees.ai, a UK leader in autonomous aerial solutions, has raised £3.65 million in a funding round co-led by Sustainable Future Ventures, Hearst Ventures, and Elbow Beach Capital, with participation from WakeUp Capital. This funding will enhance the company's ability to deliver unprecedented insights that transform the design, development, and management of critical national infrastructure. Supported by Boeing, XeleratedFifty, and the UK Government’s Future Flight Challenge, Sees.ai became the first UK company to secure CAA authorisation for routine BVLOS missions in non-segregated airspace. The company has secured a contract with National Grid to inspect, survey, and monitor the UK's electricity transmission network, enabling remote operation of complex missions nationwide around live power lines and other critical infrastructure.
4. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/services/technology/drones/skies-without-limits-v3/sees-ai-case-study-2024.html> - Sees.ai has successfully implemented routine inspections of powerlines using remotely piloted drones since 2021. They secured the UK's first permission from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to conduct BVLOS flights regularly in non-segregated airspace over live transmission towers owned by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET). This progress has been key to their growth, although previously constrained by the availability of capital. The company has expanded its inspection solution from trials to commercial operations for NGET, demonstrating the viability of BVLOS operations in controlled environments.
5. <https://www.sees.ai/about-us/> - Sees.ai, founded in 2017 by professionals from Apple, CERN, McLaren F1, and hedge funds, is developing an operating system for autonomous flight. Their technology enables safe, scalable, and sustainable flight for effective survey, inspection, and incident response for critical national infrastructure. The company holds the UK's most advanced BVLOS permissions since March 2021, allowing routine BVLOS flights in non-segregated airspace over live overhead powerlines. Backed by Boeing, Sees.ai is developing an aerial inspection solution with the National Grid.
6. <https://www.unmannedairspace.info/latest-news-and-information/sees-ai-secures-routine-bvlos-permission-to-carry-out-aerial-inspection-of-overhead-powerline-assets/> - Sees.ai has secured routine permission from the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to fly drones BVLOS in non-segregated airspace over the high voltage electricity transmission network. This permission allows routine BVLOS flights on two specific runs of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) live overhead power lines, enabling close inspection of critical infrastructure. Sees.ai's technology captures structured, internally georeferenced data sets of 2D images and 3D models optimized for automated analysis using AI, transforming how critical infrastructure is managed.
7. <https://www.suasnews.com/2023/06/sees-ai-secures-uk-first-routine-bvlos-permission-to-carry-out-an-aerial-inspection-of-live-overhead-powerline-assets/> - Sees.ai has become the first UK company to secure routine permission from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to fly drones BVLOS in non-segregated airspace over the high voltage electricity transmission network. This permission allows routine BVLOS flights on two specific runs of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) live overhead power lines, enabling close inspection of critical infrastructure. Sees.ai's technology captures structured, internally georeferenced data sets of 2D images and 3D models optimized for automated analysis using AI, transforming how critical infrastructure is managed.