

29th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SMALL SATELLITE MISSIONS (B4)
Access to Space for Small Satellite Missions (5)

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Abstract

The United Kingdom's Spaceflight Programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports from 2022. In March 2018, the Space Industry Act which defines the regulatory regime for commercial spaceflight operations carried out from the UK, received Royal Assent. Together with the different set of Regulations that came into force in July 2021, these Legislations support the growth of the UK space sector in a safe and sustainable manner. The next major milestone was the appointment of UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as the UK's independent spaceflight regulator in July 2021, performed under the Space Industry Act through regulations. The CAA ensures that the risks associated with the activities are as low as reasonably practicable and will issue licences for launch from the UK (space or suborbital) and re-entry in the UK, the operation of a satellite in orbit from the UK, the operation of a spaceport in the UK and the provision of range control services in the UK. In addition, the UK government is funding a range of industry-led projects to support the Spaceflight Programme allowing for new innovative technologies and spaceports to be developed; these include £31.5 million to help establish vertical launch services from Scotland (via spaceports in Sutherland and SaxaVord in Shetland) and £7.35 million to support horizontal launch from Spaceport Cornwall. These all align with the recently published UK National Space Strategy's four pillars to grow the UK space sector, enhance international collaboration, become a science and technology "superpower" and develop resilient space capabilities and services. The National Space Strategy, launched in September 2021, set out the Government's commitment to achieve the first small satellite launch from the UK in 2022 and to become the leading provider of commercial satellite launch in Europe by 2030. The UK Space Agency has been at the heart of the cross-government collaboration that has successfully carried-out the major milestones above and will provide an update of the UK launch activity and the Spaceflight Programme.