

New US-UK agreement boosts UK's spaceport plans

Press release

The UK and US governments have signed a new agreement paving the way for US companies to operate from UK spaceports and export space launch technology.



UK Ambassador Dame Karen Pierce and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Non-proliferation, Christopher Ford, signed the US-UK Technology Safeguards Agreement, which will enable U.S. companies to participate in space launches from the United Kingdom, on Tuesday 16 June 2020.

The Agreement means US space and technology companies throughout the supply chain can contribute to and benefit from the commercial opportunities offered by the UK space sector which already employs 42,000 people and generates an income of £14.8 billion each year.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

This deal with the US takes us one step closer to seeing the first ever launch into space from British soil.

This is a key moment for our commercial space industry, and I look forward to seeing companies from Scotland to Newquay benefiting, and the creation of highly skilled jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

Karen Pierce, UK Ambassador to the US said:

This agreement marks an exciting new area for UK-US space collaboration and represents a significant step towards US companies launching from UK spaceports.

The commercial space sector already represents hundreds of millions of dollars in trade between our two countries each year, as well as thousands of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. This new agreement will generate further growth and prosperity for both our countries.

The UK Government has already awarded grants totalling nearly £40 million to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports and put in place the necessary regulation to enable the first launches to take place in the early 2020s.

The UK Government's Spaceflight Programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports. Bringing launch to the UK will be a catalyst for growth in the wider space industry, and the government is also developing a comprehensive national space strategy to bring long-term strategic and commercial benefits for the UK.

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