

UK Grants First Space Launch Licence to Scottish Firm Skyrora

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The UK has issued its first space launch licence to a British-based company, granting Glasgow firm Skyrora permission to carry out up to 16 rocket launches annually from SaxaVord Spaceport in the Shetland Islands. The approval, confirmed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), marks a key milestone in Britain's efforts to establish a sovereign commercial space launch capability.

Skyrora, founded in 2017, becomes the first UK operator licensed to conduct vertical launches from UK soil. The company plans to use its suborbital Skylark L rocket to deliver small satellites and carry out scientific missions. The CAA described the decision as a significant step for the UK's space ambitions, positioning the nation as a credible player in the global space industry.

Rob Bishton, Chief Executive of the CAA, called the licence a breakthrough moment for the UK space sector. He said the decision demonstrates confidence in Britain's regulatory and safety standards, adding that future launches will proceed by environmental and international obligations.

This development comes as the UK renews its push to secure a foothold in the fast-growing global space economy, projected to exceed one trillion US dollars (approximately £752 million) by 2030. With SaxaVord now the country's only vertical launch site and Skyrora officially approved as a launch operator, Scotland is emerging as a focal point for the nation's future in space technology and satellite delivery.

While other European firms, such as Germany's Rocket Factory Augsburg, have also been granted UK launch licences, Skyrora's status as the first homegrown company to receive approval sets a new precedent for the domestic space sector.