

PRESS RELEASE

UKspace and CONFERS sign collaboration statement focused on In-Orbit Service Manufacturing and In-space Servicing, Assembly & Manufacturing

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UKspace, the official trade association of the UK space industry, and its American counterparts, CONFERS and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), have today signed an statement detailing plans to work together in pursuit of common goals relating to the opportunities presented by In-Orbit Service Manufacturing (IOSM) and In-space Servicing, Assembly and Manufacturing (ISAM).

This collaboration statement, signed at the 2023 UK Space Conference in Belfast, follows several recent announcements of other space-related collaborations between the UK and United States. It is an expression of interest and intent by UKspace and CONFERS with AIAA to ensure their members benefit from international synergy across IOSM and ISAM capabilities, and to advance space ecosystems aligned with national interests of the UK, US and their Allies.

UKspace plays an active role in promoting the opportunities and addressing the regulatory challenges presented by IOSM, with a dedicated cross-community working group, whose main areas of focus are: Active Debris Removal; Life Extension and Refuelling; Transportation and Logistics Infrastructure; and Repair, Assembly & Manufacturing.

CONFERS, in concert with AIAA, has three ISAM pillars, focusing on: advocating and promoting satellite servicing within the space domain extending from low-earth orbit (LEO) to cislunar orbit and beyond; developing industry-led standards that contribute to a sustainable, safe and diverse space economy; and engaging with global governmental legislative and regulatory bodies on policies and oversight of satellite servicing activities.

UKspace Chair, John Hanley, said: “The UK wants to be one of the nations at the forefront of this emerging sector. Through this statement, we are seeking to open up new opportunities for transatlantic collaboration between UKspace and CONFERS members.”

Brian Lagana, Executive Director, CONFERS, said: “The principals seek to collaborate and benefit from the strengths of an expanded global network of organisations to achieve mutually beneficial goals and objectives to advance space ecosystems.”

Nick Shave and Richard Lowe, who co-chair the IOSM Working Group at UKspace, said: “This important statement recognises common goals and objectives of both organisations to advocate and promote expansion of capabilities to accelerate deployment of space-based capabilities. We very much look forward to developing the relationship for the benefit of UKspace and CONFERS members.”

Dave Sandy, Managing Director, The Aerospace Corporation UK Ltd, said: “Commercial activities above the Kármán line extending out to 550,000 km within lunar orbits will offer great benefits to humanity. This collaboration is an essential precursor to making this a success.

Aerospace UK is delighted to be able to bring together these critical voices as our international partners find their places in the future LEO and cislunar economies.”

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About UKspace

UKspace is the official trade association of the UK space industry, representing and promoting space to government and other key stakeholders nationally and internationally. UKspace works closely with ADS and techUK, encapsulating both the upstream and downstream nature of the space sector. For more information, visit www.ukspace.org.

About CONFERS

CONFERS is the not-for-profit independent global trade association developing industry-led standards and guiding international policies for satellite servicing that contribute to a sustainable, safe and diverse space economy. CONFERS is open to membership by industry, academic research institutions, governments, and nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations and individuals who are interested in furthering the commercial satellite servicing industry. For more information, visit <https://satelliteconfers.org>.

About AIAA

The AIAA Cislunar Ecosystem Task Force (CETF) is focused on the coordination of government, aerospace industry, adjacent industry, and supporting institution participation in a whole-of-economy effort to promote development of a cislunar ecosystem comprising the necessary infrastructure and institutions for permanent, sustainable human presence off-world between LEO and the lunar surface. The CETF is convening major stakeholders from space industry, adjacent industry, government, academia, and non-government civil organizations to emphasize the need for sustained and consistent cislunar ecosystem development. Its principal outputs will be support to policymakers and stakeholders with relevant technical and analytic perspectives.

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