

## Spaceports, Space Council & Satellite Inspired Ice Flows

There have been some interesting and exciting announcements over the last week related to the space and Earth observation (EO) industries.

Firstly, the [UK Government announced](#) last week that a National Space Council will be established this year to provide strategic leadership for the UK's Space Strategy through a new National Space Framework. This new framework will apparently have three priorities:

- Prosperity and Knowledge
- Security and Protection
- Global Influence

It was good to hear in the same statement that Chris Skidmore MP, Science Minister, confirm the intention for the UK to remain a leading member of the European Space Agency (ESA) – even after Brexit – and there are discussions also taking place on setting up a national investment programme for the industry with a focus on international partnerships.

We're curious as to whether this new framework will indicate any change in direction for the industry. For the last nine years, we've been led by the Space Innovation and Growth Strategy which had had an ambition for the UK to grow to 10% of the world space economy 2030, including the creation of 100,000 jobs.

Last year it was clear that we were [struggling to achieve these targets](#) and the potential impacts of Brexit – particularly in terms of European Union contracts relating to Galileo and Copernicus – added more uncertainty to the ambition. It will be interesting to see how this develops in the coming months. We're guessing the UK Space Conference at the end of September is the likely launch place for either of these things.

There was also some exciting news locally in the South West as the UK Space Agency and Cornwall Council announced they were making £20 million available to Spaceport Cornwall and Virgin orbit to establish horizontal launch facilities at Newquay Spaceport. The UK Space Agency is giving almost 40% of the money, 2.5% from the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership and the remainder from the Council; although, the Council business case is still be approved.

Virgin Orbital is also contributing £2.5 million and hopes to use the site for its LauncherOne system and Cosmic Girl carrier aircraft.

The small satellite launch market is a growing sector, and whilst there will be a lot of competition, there is certainly the possibility for growth in this sector in this area. The UK is working with the

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United States to establish the relevant requirements to allow US launches from the UK, both from Newquay and the vertical launch facility being developed in Sutherland in Scotland. It is hoped that Cornwall could see its first horizontal satellite launch within the next few years

Finally, and probably our favourite announcement of the last 7 days, is the news that seven areas of fast flowing ice in Antarctica have been named after Earth Observation satellites following [a request from Dr Anna Hogg from the University of Leeds](#).

Dr Hogg, who is researching the Antarctic and Greenland Ice Sheets, was struggling to describe the areas in her research papers and made a request to have them named after EO satellites involved in monitoring the area. The UK Antarctic Place-name Committee (let's be honest, how many of us even knew such a committee existed?) approved the request, and so the names will be added to the British Antarctic Territory Gazetteer (another thing I never knew existed until this week!) and will be available for international use on all maps, charts and publications. The newly named ice streams are:

- The Ers Ice Stream, named after the ESA satellites – ERS-1 and ERS-2.
- The Envisat Ice Stream.
- The Cryosat Ice Stream.
- The Grace Ice Stream.
- The Sentinel Ice Stream
- The ALOS Ice Rumples.
- The Landsat Ice Stream.

National Space Frameworks, satellite launch facilities only 50 miles from the Pixalytics office and learning how ice-flows can be given cool names – what more could you ask for in a week!