

PRESS RELEASE

25 July 2022

PR053-2022

CNES announces laureates to operate micro- and mini-launchers from the Guiana Space Centre

At the end of last year, CNES issued a call inviting micro- and mini-launcher operators to signal their interest in launching from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), thus expressing its desire in close coordination with ESA to open up Europe's spaceport to new operators.

The agency has now pre-selected seven laureates from this call across Europe, two of them in France: ¹ Avio SPA (Italy), HyImpulse Technologies GmbH (Germany), ISAR Aerospace (Germany), MAIA Space (France), Payload Aerospace (Spain), Rocket Factory (Germany) and Latitude (ex-Venture Orbital Systems, France). Further operators may be pre-selected after another call at a later stage, depending notably on capacity at the CSG.

CNES is particularly pleased that French companies MAIA and Latitude (formerly Venture Orbital Systems) are among the shortlisted companies, illustrating the dynamism of the national industrial network that CNES has long been encouraging.

With the advent of New Space driving prospects in the global commercial market, interest is flourishing in Europe in the development of new micro- and mini-launcher systems. The CSG in Kourou, French Guiana, offers a particularly advantageous geographic location for certain launches and a more than 50-year track record. Accommodating these new commercial operators ties in with the transformation that Europe's spaceport is currently undergoing and demonstrates its great attractiveness.

CNES has chosen the Diamant launch complex to accommodate these new micro-/mini-launchers. The complex will provide shared facilities—access road, power systems, etc.—for several launchers, as well as specific facilities for each individual launcher—launch table, assembly building, etc.

CNES will now be engaging talks with each of the operators, on the basis of their project's technical and financial progress and status, with a view to signing a preliminary agreement setting out the terms and conditions for hosting their launcher at the CSG. This agreement will formally acknowledge their selection before the signature of contracts to provide the launch systems required to operate the micro- and mini-launchers.

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