

## Space Sustainability Consortium Set to Unlock Economic Growth in UK Space Sector

**Harwell, Oxford / London, UK, Dec. 23, 2024:** D-Orbit, Astroscale and ClearSpace have jointly secured GBP 691,000 (excluding VAT) from the UK government's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) for a Regulatory Sandbox project to test innovative Rendezvous and Proximity Operations (RPO) missions, help the regulators understand these emerging technologies and their implications, and ultimately inform and enable regulation for such novel space activities which are set to boost UK economic growth.

In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing (ISAM), categories of RPO missions, has been identified as a high value market, representing a £14 Bn revenue opportunity globally over the next decade, as highlighted in the latest Northern Sky Research report. According to the UKspace In-Orbit Servicing & Manufacturing Priorities paper, the UK is optimally positioned to capture an estimated 25% share of the market. In order to maintain the UK's global leadership in ISAM activities, DSIT are funding a Regulatory Sandbox for RPO, an advanced capability that will underpin all future ISAM missions.

*"RPO – when a spacecraft purposefully manoeuvres to operate in close proximity to a client space object, and in some cases to dock to that object to perform in-orbit servicing – is at the heart of Astroscale's missions to create a safe, sustainable, and secure space environment,"* said **Nick Shave, Managing Director of Astroscale UK**. *"We're on the crest of seeing ISAM become a much-needed routine activity in space. A key factor to ensure we get there is a clear path to licensing ISAM missions. This welcome funding from the UK government will enable industry to engage with regulators to address current licensing challenges."*

*"The RPO Regulatory Sandbox is an opportunity to feed into the development of a safe and sustainable market for in-orbit services in the UK,"* said **D-Orbit's UK Legal Counsel, Lauren Payne**. *"There are challenges associated with regulating innovative new technology and services in many industries, and sandboxes are a recognised way of bringing a range of key stakeholders together to address these challenges. We are pleased to be part of the UK's first space sandbox and look forward to engaging with regulators and other key ISAM stakeholders in this innovative regulatory initiative."*

*"The advanced RPO capabilities developed by ClearSpace play a pivotal role in unlocking ISAM activities, which are set to provide enduring value to both public and private satellite operators, enabling novel space activities and ensuring safe and sustainable operations,"* said **Rory Holmes, Managing Director of ClearSpace UK**. *"Establishing a robust and well-defined regulatory framework is essential to driving scalable and dynamic ISAM activities. We look forward to engaging with regulators to shape a clear licensing pathway for RPO missions in the UK."*

Successfully capturing a share of the global ISAM market requires overcoming significant technology, legal, and regulatory uncertainties. Today, the key challenges associated with RPO mission authorisation include lack of shared understanding and standardisation, the need for balanced regulation that enables safe operations while still allowing for and encouraging innovative missions, and technical and commercial hurdles associated with this new technology. As RPO operators, D-Orbit, ClearSpace and Astroscale have formed a consortium to work together to explore these key challenges throughout the RPO Sandbox exercise.

Together with independent regulators, such as the Civil Aviation Authority, and UK government bodies, the industrial consortium will identify the key bottlenecks and areas of uncertainties around licensing of novel space activities involving RPO. The project will see suggestions for improvements to the RPO licensing regime, to provide certainty to operators and incentivise actors involved in emerging RPO markets, unlocking economic growth.

ClearSpace, Astroscale and D-Orbit have long recognised that unlocking this nascent economic sector requires removing the current regulatory uncertainty and developing shared understandings. The Regulatory Sandbox for RPO project builds on the three operators' efforts in this realm and is a significant step toward giving service providers and end-customers confidence that the services can be carried out.

### **About D-Orbit**

D-Orbit is a market leader in the space logistics and transportation services industry with a track record of space-proven services, technologies, and successful missions. Founded in 2011, D-Orbit is the first company addressing the logistics needs of the space market. ION Satellite Carrier, for example, is a space vehicle that can transport satellites in orbit and release them individually into distinct orbital slots, accommodate multiple third-party payloads requiring a test in orbit, and that can be rented for edge computing applications and space cloud services to provide satellite operators with storage capacity and advanced computing capabilities in orbit.

D-Orbit's roadmap includes becoming a relevant player in the in-orbit servicing market, which is forecasted to become one of the largest, growing markets within the space sector.

With offices in Italy, Portugal, the UK, and a new US team which will focus on bus design, manufacturing and commercialisation, D-Orbit is the first certified B-Corp space company in the world and a registered benefit corporation.

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### **About Astroscale**

Astroscale is the global leader in on-orbit servicing, dedicated to the safe and sustainable development of space. The company delivers a variety of innovative and scalable on-orbit servicing solutions, including life extension, in-situ space situational awareness, end-of-life, and active debris removal.

Since its first successful launch in March 2021, Astroscale has proven rendezvous and proximity operations technologies in orbit during the ELSA-d and ADRAS-J missions. Astroscale spacecraft have been selected for pioneering missions with JAXA, the U.S. Space Force, the European Space Agency, the UK Space Agency, and Eutelsat OneWeb.

As more satellite operators adopt on-orbit servicing to routinely inspect, relocate, remove, and extend the life of spacecraft, the potential of a circular space economy — and a future of no waste in space — is being unlocked.

Headquartered in Japan, Astroscale has a global presence with subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Israel.

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### **About ClearSpace**

ClearSpace, an in-orbit servicing (IOS) company created in 2018, is intent on revolutionizing how space missions are conducted. ClearSpace is becoming now a global company with dynamic engineering teams in Switzerland, the UK, Germany, Luxembourg and the United States.

ClearSpace is creating the technologies that will support a wide range of IOS applications, from disposal and in-orbit transport to inspection, assembly, manufacturing, repair, and recycling. ClearSpace aims to support institutions and commercial operators alike to enhance sustainable space operations and promote a circular space economy.

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