

## **ATLANTIC International Satellite Launch Programme**

### **Launch services to Space from the Island of Santa Maria, Azores (PT)**

Brief Information note, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018

#### **Background Information:**

The Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation (FCT) and the Mission Structure of the Azores for Space (EMA-Space) launched an international invitation to qualified entities worldwide to express their interest to collaborate with Portuguese enterprises and research laboratories to design, install, and operate a spaceport on the Island of Santa Maria, in the Azores, in association with the development and operation of a new generation of satellite launch services to space.

The enclosed document provides insights into the initiative and provides details for interested parties on how to submit an expression of interest. The initiative will be presented in a “Breaking News Event” on the **2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 11 am**, during the International Astronautical Congress, **IAC 2018 in Bremen**, <https://www.iac2018.org/>.

The objective of this ***International Call for Interest*** is to encourage and invite enterprises and public organizations from around the world to provide low-cost, frequent and regular access to space for small satellites as a way to boost the utilization of space for the benefit of humanity. The immediate goal is to start sustainable small-satellite launch services from Santa Maria, Azores, in 2021. The development of a spaceport in the Atlantic, extending existing satellite and launcher monitoring and tracking capabilities, will open a new generation of launch services and space activities based on small satellites for the benefit of society at large. It benefits from the unique location of the Azores in the Atlantic and its centrality in relation to Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

The Government of Portugal and the Regional Government of the Azores are jointly engaged in supporting the growth of the current Portuguese space business in the coming decade, in close international cooperation and in a way that make possible the growth of global *New Space* industries, with the technical support of the European Space Agency (ESA).

The activities to be developed are to be considered under the overall effort associated with the increased competition and growing international initiatives for the “New Space” commercial sector, along with the need to accelerate safety and security initiatives involving the use of micro, mini and small satellites. The overall concept should address the full end-to-end value chain by being associated with the emerging expansion of Earth observation activities to application areas, which may range from agriculture and fisheries, to infrastructure monitoring, urban development, safety and security, among others, together with the growth of New Space entrepreneurship worldwide.

**The process:**

The applicants are invited to express their interest and their views about the operational concept under which they would contribute to the following main objectives:

- a) The development of a low-cost, safe and ideally-located spaceport for *Low Earth Orbits* (LEO), namely *Sun Synchronous Orbits* (SSO) and *Polar Orbits*, where operators can launch small satellites, in a friendly cooperative environment including a modern legal framework supporting the New Space industry;
- b) Enabling business opportunities along the full value-chain of satellite and launchers development and operation, as well as “new space” services opportunities, as provided by low cost satellite constellations and other solutions.

It should be noted that the Island of Santa Maria offers a privileged geographic location in the middle of the Atlantic, permitting an unobstructed launch trajectory, over the sea, for Polar or SSO orbits, as well as a unique position between Europe, the Americas and Africa, representing a major advantage compared to other proposed space ports in the world. The enclosed document provides a short description of the launch site location and related characteristics.

The Government of Portugal and the Regional Government of the Azores, with the technical support of ESA, intend to set a financial, legal and technical framework able to attract worldwide enterprises/consortia interested in working with Portuguese enterprises and research laboratories in the development of a spaceport and the operation of international launch services to space from the Island of Santa Maria, in the Azores. Such a framework may include, in particular, grants for precompetitive research and development, the design and building of relevant basic infrastructures and the commitment to be anchor customer of the launch services operated from Azores.

Details are listed in the enclosed document, together with the associated process and its calendar.

Within the first of three phases, the expected content of “Expressions of Interest” should include the following (about 4 pages):

1. A clear statement of interest to build, install and operate a launch base and launch services from the Azores, as of 2021, for small satellites (i.e., smaller than 500 kg). This statement of interest must be associated with the operational concept under which the applicant plans to share responsibilities of the launch base operations, maintenance and associated services;
2. A clear statement on how a commitment will be made to collaborate with Portuguese enterprises and research laboratories to design, install and/or operate a spaceport in the Island of Santa Maria, in the Azores, associated with the development (as applicable) and operation of a new generation of satellite launch services to space;
3. Basic recommendations concerning how best to provide low-cost, frequent and regular access to space for small satellites from Azores, including the process to access the necessary markets

for New Space industries, as well as an initial and brief business strategy to establish and run an “Open Spaceport”, by suggesting a potential definition of the operation of such concept compatible with the specifications of selected area(s);

4. A basic technical description of the proposed launching solution, defining minimum service performance parameters and highlighting any competitive advantages or any hazards resulting from the technology used, as well as stating the current and expected level of maturity and launch record at the target date to start the spaceport operations;
5. Basic considerations about the capacity to use and develop systems engineering approaches, perform the necessary analyses, define and apply processes/methods resulting in a reliable written assessment of safety, environmentally safe conditions, geological stability conditions and electrical and water requirements;
6. A nominated single point of contact.

The initial “Expressions of Interest”, regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the process, shall be submitted by the **31st of October 2018** (5 pm, Lisbon time), through the website of the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation ([www.fct.pt](http://www.fct.pt)).