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Vila do Porto, Santa Maria, Azores [16/11/2026]

The Atlantic Spaceport Consortium (ASC) and INNOSPACE submit, to the Portuguese regulator, the licensing application to operate HANBIT-Nano from Santa Maria, Azores, aiming for a launch in Q2 2027.

The **Atlantic Spaceport Consortium (ASC)**, a company operating a spaceport at the island of Santa Maria, Azores, and **INNOSPACE**, a South Korean space launch company developing optimized launch vehicles powered by hybrid and methane rocket engine technologies and commercializing satellite launch services, have submitted the license application for the first HANBIT-Nano mission from the Malbusca Launch Centre, expected to be launched in Q2 2027.

In January 2026, the companies signed a multi-year launch site use agreement granting INNOSPACE priority, long-term access to the Malbusca Launch Centre, enabling its HANBIT launch vehicle series to be launched to orbit from the Azores in the coming years. The licensing application, now submitted, is for the first mission under this agreement.

HANBIT-Nano is a two-stage space launch vehicle capable of carrying a 90kg payload to a 500km Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO). The first stage of HANBIT-Nano is powered by a 25-ton thrust hybrid rocket engine, while the second stage employs a 3-ton thrust liquid methane rocket engine. With the expansion of its engine portfolio, INNOSPACE can offer customized launch services to small satellite customers.

The Malbusca Launch Centre, operated by ASC, is the first and only licensed spaceport in Portugal, leveraging the geolocation of the island of Santa Maria in the Azorean archipelago, and enabling access to space from EU territory.

“This is a necessary and crucial step towards the first orbital mission from Santa Maria and builds on the hard work the teams have been developing. The ASC stays true to its vision and believes that transparency is truly important in these processes, as we grow the operation at the Malbusca Launch Centre”, stated Bruno Carvalho, Director at the Atlantic Spaceport Consortium. “All involved are learning, we know it will be a challenge to the national space authority, as we are raising the stakes, we are raising altitude, we are removing the ceiling! We stand ready and look forward to the exchanges that will follow.”

The application marks the first licensing process for an INNOSPACE orbital mission in Europe, reflecting the company’s commitment to serving European customers and its ambition to grow into a global provider of regular access to space.

“Submitting this licence application is an important step towards our first mission from Europe”, said Soojong Kim, Founder and CEO of INNOSPACE. “We will continue to work closely and transparently with the Portuguese authorities and ASC throughout the review process, with safety as our first priority.”

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The Atlantic Spaceport Consortium and INNOSPACE are pushing for regular orbital launches of the HANBIT rocket family, obtaining the first launch licence, in the coming months, will get the companies closer to the pad, helping unlock the future of European access to space.

Media support

Malbusca site:
https://spaceport.pt/press/innospace-media/Launch-site-Malbusca.JPG
https://spaceport.pt/press/innospace-media/Launch-site-Malbusca-2.JPG
(image credits: ASC)

HANBIT-Nano at Alcântara Launch Center, Brazil:
https://spaceport.pt/press/innospace-media/HANBIT-Nano-Fully-Erected-on-the-Launch-Pad.png
(image credits: INNOSPACE)

About the Atlantic Spaceport Consortium – ASC

Formed in 2020, to establish a financially balanced, environmentally sustainable, and operationally safe vision for the Santa Maria Spaceport, the Atlantic Spaceport Consortium is a 100% Portuguese consortium formed by the companies Ilex Space Lda. and Optimal Structural Solutions Lda. The Atlantic Spaceport Consortium was awarded a Spaceport Operators license, by the Portuguese authorities in August 2025 and is now operating its Malbusca Launch Centre at 36°55'57" N, 25°04'12" W.

For more information about the spaceport and the Atlantic Spaceport Consortium, get in touch info@spaceport.pt or visit https://spaceport.pt/.

About INNOSPACE

INNOSPACE is a South Korean space launch company developing optimized launch vehicles powered by hybrid and methane rocket engine technologies and commercializing satellite launch services. Through competitive rocket engine technology and the establishment of launch sites across multiple continents, the company is developing optimal solutions to provide low-cost, responsive, and reliable launch services for the rapidly growing small satellite market. Recently, the company has expanded its rocket lineup beyond satellite deployment to include testing and validation as well as diverse mission capabilities, continuing its evolution into a comprehensive space platform company. In March 2023, INNOSPACE successfully launched its test launch vehicle HANBIT-TLV from the Alcântara Launch Centre in Brazil, becoming the first private company in South Korea to conduct such a launch. In December 2025, the company attempted the orbital launch of its first commercial launch vehicle, HANBIT-Nano. Founded in 2017 and headquartered in Sejong, South Korea, INNOSPACE operates overseas subsidiaries in Brazil, France, and the United Arab Emirates and continues to expand its global presence in the space industry. To learn more, visit https://www.innospc.com.

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