

Investment fuels Aurora Avionics' ascent

Startup secures major backing to pioneer universal rocket control systems

A space firm has attracted investment of more than £320,000 to help it become a key player in one of the UK's fastest growing industry sectors.

Aurora Avionics specialises in producing the electrical systems necessary for flight, called avionics, which is driven by software which guides the rocket to its planned destination – in essence the rocket's entire nervous system.

At present the growing number of launch vehicle manufacturers are investing vast sums, as well as time and effort, in creating their own avionics – something Aurora's co-founders hope to change with the creation of the first "off the shelf" systems.

Aurora secured the major backing from Gabriel Investment Syndicate and Scottish Enterprise, which is enabling it to ramp up its research and design, further expanding its five-strong team of engineering experts.

The support follows on from the 2023-founded firm's early success in securing funding and backing from the European Space Agency (ESA) which enabled its move to a research laboratory at Edinburgh's Royal Observatory.

Chief Executive Oren Smith-Carpenter (23) co-founded Aurora with fellow engineer and former Orbex colleague Rowland Fraser (49), the firm's Chief Technical Officer.

He said, “We are in the midst of the second space race with rocket developers on the cusp of launching from UK soil, with the number of launches across the globe growing exponentially.

“Each and every firm is trying to grapple with complex and costly avionics to allow them to launch and control their vehicles, and to ultimately place satellites into specific orbits.

“We want to revolutionise this hugely wasteful process – and enable launch vehicle manufacturers to launch rockets promptly and inexpensively using our modular and reliable systems.”

With the recent investment, the firm is regularly testing components and is on track to have a full prototype system ready for testing within a year.

Rowland Fraser added: “This capital injection will accelerate the development of our technology to unleash the full potential of a new generation of launch vehicles. This is a hugely exciting time for us, with growth and early customer engagement validating our engineering concepts and helping drive future development.

Oren and I have firsthand experience of the technical challenges to building avionics. Our vision, of a universal modular system, will result in a step-change in development time, cost and reliability. We will give manufacturers access to the best technology to power the next generation of space vehicles.”

Kerry Sharp, Director of Entrepreneurship and Investment at Scottish Enterprise, said: “The technology being developed by Aurora Avionics addresses an important gap in the market for one of Scotland’s – and indeed the world’s – fastest growing sectors.

“Space is one of the key opportunity industries identified by our new missions approach. Our support for Aurora Avionics

will help the company to convert and scale its innovation into growth, delivering maximum benefits for this burgeoning sector and Scotland's economy."

Gillian MacAulay, Director of the Gabriel Investment Syndicate, said: "We are delighted to have led the investment deal into this exciting young company. We believe that this is a very dynamic market sector to be involved in, and with the advent of a UK Space Port, we feel there is tremendous growth in this area, and we are pleased to be working closely with such a dynamic team who have a wealth of experience and expertise to bring to the table."

<https://aav.space/>

