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Guidance

UK involvement in the EU Space Programme from 2021

How the UK's space programmes will be affected from 2021.

Published 9 August 2019

Last updated 24 December 2020 — see all updates

From:
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy>)

Brexit transition: new rules for 2021

The UK has left the EU. This page tells you the new rules from 1 January 2021.

It will be updated if there's new information about the UK's deal with the EU that affects what you need to do.

Get your personalised list of actions (<https://www.gov.uk/transition>) and subscribe to email updates to find out when things change.

For current information, read: UK Space Agency information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-space-agency>)

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The EU Space Programme includes the following components:

- the European satellite navigation programmes, Galileo and European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS)
- the Copernicus Earth Observation space programme
- the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking (EU SST) programme
- the Governmental Satellite Communications (GovSatCom) programme (a new EU programme)

The UK is seeking participation in the Copernicus component.

The UK's membership of the European Space Agency (ESA) is not affected by leaving the EU as it is not an EU organisation.

Galileo and EGNOS

From 1 January 2021, the UK will no longer participate in the EU Galileo or EGNOS programmes.

Actions for businesses, academics and researchers

Any UK businesses, academics and researchers currently contracted or expecting to carry out contracts on programmes where the UK will no longer participate, should contact the relevant contracting authority to make sure that arrangements are in place to comply with the conditions of the contract and to avoid possible penalties.

Organisations in the UK and in UK overseas territories which currently hold ground infrastructure hosting contracts may wish to contact their contracting authority, such as the European Space Agency or the EU Global Navigation Satellite System Agency to verify the future position.

Any UK users of the EGNOS Safety of Life (SoL) service and EGNOS Data Access Service (EDAS) should make preparations for mitigating the loss of these services from 1 January 2021 as an agreement could not be reached with the EU on continued UK access.

Areas where UK involvement can continue

For the public and most UK, EU and other satellite navigation users, there should be no noticeable impact from 1 January 2021. For example, devices that currently use Galileo and EGNOS, such as smart phones, will continue to be able to do so.

UK businesses and organisations will continue to be able to use the freely available 'open' signal to develop products and services for consumers, and will be able to continue using the open position, navigation and timing services provided by Galileo and EGNOS.

EU subsidiaries of UK businesses remain eligible to bid for future work on the EU Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) programmes.

As set out in the document *The Future Relationship with the EU* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-approach-to-the-future-relationship-with-the-eu>), published on 27 February 2020, the UK is considering a service access agreement for EGNOS but will not participate in the programme. Discussions with the EU on a service access agreement are ongoing.

Areas where UK involvement will end

The UK will not:

- use Galileo (including the future Public Regulated Service (PRS)) for defence or critical national infrastructure
- have access to the encrypted Galileo Public Regulated Service
- be able to play any part in the development of Galileo
- be able to play any part in the development of EGNOS
- be able to use the EGNOS SoL and EGNOS Working Agreements (EWAs), which will no longer be recognised by the EU
- be able to access or use EDAS

This also means that UK-based businesses, academics and researchers will not be able to bid for future EU GNSS contracts and may face difficulty carrying out and completing existing contracts.

Background

As a member of the EU, the UK participated in the EU GNSS programmes Galileo and EGNOS, made financial contributions and provided technical expertise to the programme. EU countries may access all services provided by both systems including the encrypted Galileo PRS which is expected to be available from the mid-2020s.

Companies based in the EU may also bid in open competition for contracts to build, operate and exploit both Galileo and EGNOS.

The Galileo system has begun to offer initial services worldwide but is not expected to be completed until the mid-2020s. EGNOS is already fully operational and provides services across Europe. In addition, the UK hosts ground infrastructure for EGNOS. Currently users in the UK may access all available Galileo and EGNOS signals and services, i.e. the Galileo Open Signal and the EGNOS Open Service.

Copernicus

The UK welcomes the agreement in principle to continue to participate in the Copernicus component of the EU Space Programme as a third country for 2021-27. This agreement is subject to finalisation of the EU Space Regulation. The UK will need to assess any potential exclusions applied to third country participants in the EU Space Regulation against the agreement reached to ensure it receives a fair balance of rights in return for an appropriate financial contribution to the programme. The UK reserves the right to reconsider participation following the finalisation of the EU Space Regulation.

We expect the final confirmation on UK's participation in the Copernicus component of the EU Space Programme to be made in the first quarter of 2021.

Actions for businesses, academics and researchers if the UK confirms its participation in the Copernicus programme

If the UK confirms in early 2021 to participate in Copernicus, we expect UK-based businesses, academics and researchers will be able to bid for future Copernicus contracts tendered through the EU, funded through the EU's Multi-annual Financial Framework and through any process using EU procurement rules after December 2020.

Similarly, we expect UK users will also be able to access most of the Copernicus data and services as now. It is anticipated that UK would not have access to a small proportion of data considered to be security sensitive.

Actions for businesses, academics and researchers if the UK is not able to reach an agreement with the EU on Copernicus participation

The UK reserves the right to reconsider its intention to participate in the Copernicus programme if the EU Space Regulation imposes conditions that impacts the way the UK would participate in the programme. In such a case, the UK will not be able to participate in the parts of the Copernicus programme that are open only to EU Member States. For example, UK-based businesses, academics and researchers will not be able to bid for future Copernicus contracts tendered through the EU, funded through the EU's Multi-annual Financial Framework or through any process using EU procurement rules after December 2020.

In this eventuality, we would encourage UK-based entities holding contracts that run past 31 December 2020 to confirm arrangements with their relevant contracting authority.

Some UK users may lose the right to high-bandwidth access to the standard data from Copernicus Sentinels. Some UK users may also lose access to data sourced by Copernicus from Contributing Missions.

In this eventuality, UK-based Copernicus data users should consider the impact that losing access to any data or information not sourced under the free and open data policy may have on their operations.

Areas where UK involvement will continue under all circumstances

The UK will remain a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) and will continue to participate in the Copernicus Space Component (CSC-4) of the Copernicus programme through ESA. This will allow UK entities to continue to be able to bid for contracts tendered through ESA for CSC-4, its predecessor the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme, or under other programmes such as the Earth Observation Envelope Programme 5 (EOEP5) and Future EO-1.

Copernicus has a free and open data policy which means that the data produced by its satellites (Sentinels) and the Land, Marine, Climate Change and Atmosphere services will continue to be freely available to UK users.

UK membership of the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and Mercator Ocean are unaffected. Those organisations will retain access to high-bandwidth data that supports the Land, Marine, Climate Change and Atmosphere services.

Currently, UK organisations can bid for Copernicus contracts tendered through ECMWF and Mercator Ocean. It is not yet clear whether this will still be possible from 2021 and will only become clear once the EU has finalised agreements with their Entrusted Entities (including ECMWF and Mercator Ocean).

Subsidiaries of UK organisations that are based in the EU and EU-based researchers using Copernicus data and services will be unaffected from 1 January 2021.

The UK will continue to be part of the Jason Continuity of Service (C/S) mission. We expect that UK-based entities holding contracts in the Jason C/S mission with delivery dates that run past 31 December 2020 will continue to be able to deliver that work. We would encourage UK-based entities holding those

contracts to confirm arrangements with their relevant contracting authority.

Background

As a member of the EU, the UK participated in the Copernicus Earth Observation space programme, as well as through our memberships of ESA, EUMETSAT, ECMWF and Mercator Ocean. The UK contributes to Copernicus financially and UK industry and academia are involved in the delivery and operation of the programme.

UK companies, researchers and public sector organisations use Copernicus data for a wide range of applications. Companies and researchers based in the EU or in Copernicus Participating states also bid in open competition for contracts to design, build and operate both the physical infrastructure of the programme and its services.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) leads for the UK government on Copernicus policy. The UK Space Agency leads on policy relating to satellites and the physical data infrastructure of the Copernicus programme for the UK.

Space surveillance and tracking

From 1 January 2021, the UK will no longer participate in the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking (EU SST) programme. The UK will however continue to have access to EU SST services as a non-EU country.

Actions for businesses, academics and researchers

A small number of UK providers may still have programme delivery contracts in place in January 2021.

Any companies currently involved in the programme should contact their relevant contracting authority if they have concerns about their contractual status.

Any EU organisations currently or expecting to carry out contracts which involve partnership arrangements with UK businesses, academics and researchers may wish to contact the relevant contracting authority to make sure that arrangements are in place to ensure continued partnership complies with the conditions of the contract from 1 January 2021 and to avoid possible penalties.

Areas where UK involvement will end

The UK will not be eligible to participate in the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking programme from 1 January 2021.

The UK will continue to receive space, surveillance and tracking data from the US.

UK organisations will not be able to contribute to providing services to the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking, to participate in the scientific and technical groups to develop the programme further or be able to receive grant funding to pay for UK involvement.

More information

Businesses, academics and researchers with existing contracts relating to these programmes, or who use data and services, may contact the UK Space Agency info@ukspaceagency.gov.uk with any questions or concerns.

Organisations who get Horizon 2020 research programme funding, or who are bidding for funding, can find more information in the Horizon 2020 guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-participation-in-horizon-2020-uk-government-overview>).

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Last updated 24 December 2020 + show all updates

1. 24 December 2020

From 1 January 2021, the UK will no longer participate in the EU Galileo, EGNOS or EUSST programmes. The UK has agreed in principle participation in the Copernicus programme with final confirmation expected in the first quarter of 2021.

2. 9 October 2020

Guidance updated to reflect negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship.

3. 9 August 2019

First published.

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