

**NEWS BRIEFS**

# Spaceport Nova Scotia Just Cleared the Milestone We Were Waiting For.

Maritime Launch Services and Isar Aerospace have finalized the work plan we were waiting for at Spaceport Nova Scotia. Now the scoreboard moves to construction, handover and launch readiness.

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Illustration: Nasty Canuck / AI-assisted.

**Last week, Nasty Canuck said the next test for Canso was whether Maritime Launch Services and Isar Aerospace could turn their agreement into a finished work plan. They have. Now the scoreboard moves to construction, handover, launch readiness — and the customers who may eventually use it.**

**Updated Sept. 16, 2026:** Isar Aerospace has announced a new five-launch agreement with SEOPS, adding fresh evidence of commercial demand for the launch network that includes Spaceport Nova Scotia. The agreement does not specify how many of those missions will fly from

Canso.

When we looked at Spaceport Nova Scotia last week, there was a good reason not to get ahead of ourselves. Isar Aerospace had just put its Spectrum rocket into orbit from Norway, and the German company already had a deal to build a dedicated Spectrum launch complex near Canso. One important piece was still unfinished: Maritime Launch Services and Isar had not agreed on the detailed statement of work and program milestones needed to move the Canadian project forward.

The original deadline was September 1. The companies extended it by 14 days to September 15, and they made it. Maritime Launch and Isar announced Monday that the statement of work and program milestones are now finalized, satisfying a key condition of their July facilities-use agreement. Maritime Launch also says the next phase of construction is underway.

Canso still does not have an operational orbital launch complex. There is plenty of work between a completed plan and a rocket leaving Nova Scotia, but one of the things we were specifically waiting to see has now happened. That is worth putting on the scoreboard.

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## One condition down

The July agreement between Maritime Launch and Isar was more substantial than another memorandum about what two companies might someday like to do. It established a 10-year commercial relationship under which Isar plans to develop and operate a dedicated Spectrum launch complex at the multi-user Nova Scotia spaceport.

The agreement provides for US\$3.75 million in quarterly payments, apart from a defined 30-month fee-waiver period beginning after the first year, plus additional charges for certain launch services. Isar has also established Isar Aerospace Canada Inc. as its Canadian entity.

The agreement still came with work to do. The detailed statement of work and program milestones had to be settled. The designated launch pad is supposed to be handed over to Isar by **November 1, 2026**, additional infrastructure is due by **December 31, 2027**, and first orbital launches from Nova Scotia remain targeted for 2028.

The planning condition has now been cleared, and Maritime Launch says finalizing it does not change the other key terms of the July agreement. That gives us something more useful than another large announcement: dates we can come back to. For the Isar agreement, the next one is November 1.

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## The rocket reached orbit. Now Canada has to build around it.

There has been another important change since the Canadian agreement was signed.

Isar's second Spectrum flight reached orbit from Andøya, Norway, on September 5. Isar subsequently reported that all five CubeSats and the mission's technology demonstration were successfully released.

One successful orbital flight does not establish long-term reliability, and it tells us nothing about whether the Nova Scotia complex itself will be ready on schedule. It does remove a fairly large question mark.

Canada is now preparing infrastructure for a launch vehicle that has demonstrated it can reach orbit. The harder Canadian questions are shifting toward construction, operations and economics: Can the facility be built on schedule? Can Canso support a commercially useful launch cadence? Can early customer demand turn into repeat launches from Nova Scotia? And how much of the resulting work, knowledge and value stays in Canada?

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## Keep the two launch projects straight

There is also a distinction that will become increasingly important as construction progresses.

Isar's dedicated Spectrum complex is separate from the government launch capability Ottawa is supporting at Spaceport Nova Scotia. The federal government has entered a 10-year, \$200-million agreement for access to a dedicated government launch pad and associated services at the broader multi-user spaceport. Isar is developing its own dedicated Spectrum complex at the same site.

The distinction can get lost easily because both projects involve rockets, Canso and Maritime Launch Services, but they are not interchangeable.

As we argued in the original story, the infrastructure itself is only the beginning. The larger test is what develops around it: launch operations, Canadian suppliers, engineering work, satellite companies, training, intellectual property, repeat customers and economic activity that lasts longer than the few minutes a rocket is in the sky.

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## Keep the scoreboard

Our original story laid out a broader scorecard for Canso: Canadian jobs and suppliers, engineering and intellectual property, local career opportunities, new companies, repeat launch customers and an economy that continues functioning between launches. Those measures haven't changed.

Neither has another question we raised: **how often can Canso actually launch?**

Isar and Maritime Launch have said the Spectrum complex could potentially support as many as 40 launches a year by 2029. That remains a forward-looking ambition. Weather availability, range operations, turnaround time and customer demand will eventually determine whether anything close to that cadence is achievable.

But the customer-demand side of the scoreboard has already moved. Isar has signed a new multiple-launch agreement with U.S.-based SEOPS for five additional dedicated Spectrum launches between 2028 and 2030. Isar says those missions will use its dedicated launch complexes at

Andøya Space in Norway and Spaceport Nova Scotia. Together with an earlier SEOPS booking, the companies now have six Spectrum missions under contract, and Isar says the new agreement brings its 2028 launch manifest close to full.

That does **not** mean Canso just booked five launches. Isar has not disclosed how the new missions will be divided between Norway and Nova Scotia. What it does give us is something we did not have when this follow-up was first published: fresh evidence that commercial customers are reserving launch capacity across the network that includes the Canadian complex.

The milestone we were tracking answered one question: would Maritime Launch and Isar finish the work they said they would finish? They did. The SEOPS agreement starts answering the next one: **will customers be there when the Canadian launch complex is ready?**

There is still a long way between a launch contract and a commercially successful Canadian spaceport. We do not yet know Canso's eventual share of these missions, its achievable launch cadence or how much of the resulting work and value will remain in Canada. That is why we keep the scoreboard.

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## November 1 is next

The commercial picture has moved, but the next physical milestone has not.

Maritime Launch and Isar did what they said they needed additional time to do. The detailed work plan and program milestones are finalized, a contractual condition has been satisfied, Maritime Launch says construction is moving into its next phase, and the 2028 launch target remains in place.

Now we watch **November 1**. If the designated launch pad is handed over to Isar as scheduled, another box gets checked. If the date slips, that belongs on the scoreboard too.

Projects with ambitions this large should eventually be judged by what gets built and what works, not how many announcements they generate. Last week, the work-plan milestone was still outstanding. **Now, we can put a check mark beside it — and start watching whether the customers follow the infrastructure to Nova Scotia.**

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