



AIR NAVIGATION SOLUTIONS & SKYPORTS PARTNER ON CAA INNOVATION SANDBOX PROJECT

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Air Navigation Solutions has joined Skyports Drone Services in the Civil Aviation Authority's Sandbox which provides companies with a space in which to test innovative airspace solutions. Air traffic management provider ANSL and drone operations company Skyports Drone Services will partner to develop plans to create the UK's first low-level Transponder Mandatory Zone in the West of Scotland. The project aims to facilitate safe and efficient equitable access for all airspace users, including both crewed and uncrewed aircraft.

ANSL and Skyports Drone Services are working with the Innovation team from the CAA to create an operational safety case for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations. This will enable the two companies to develop their plans and intentions for the TMZ operation and explore regulatory views feasibility of the proposal, before formally submitting them for approval. A key segment of ANSL and Skyports' development work involves actively engaging stakeholders to seek ongoing feedback.

Vicki Hughes, ATM Operations Specialist at ANSL, which is leading the TMZ development activity, commented: "We are excited to be continuing our work with the CAA's innovation team. This will allow us the space to build on our innovative plans with Skyports, and to have expert review while evolving our safety work. This initiative delivers on a key part of the Government's aviation strategy to ensure new technology is integrated in a safe, secure and sustainable way."

Jef Geudens, Head of Technology at Skyports Drone Services, said: "Participating in the Innovation Sandbox enables us to build on work we have already conducted throughout Scotland to facilitate a safe airspace for crewed and uncrewed aircraft alike. Partnering with ANSL as we continue this work allows us to combine our strengths, leveraging ANSL's extensive experience in air traffic management and Skyports' BVLOS drone operations to develop a permanent, low level airspace solution for the region."

Frederic Laugere, Innovation Services Lead at the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), said: "Exploring the options of how drones can be safely and successfully incorporated into more of the UK's airspace is a key project for the CAA's innovation team and our sandbox work. It is vital that projects such as this take place to feed into the overall knowledge and experiences that will soon enable drones to be operating beyond the line of sight of their operator on a day-to-day basis, while also still allowing safe use of the air by other users."

ANSL has a proven track record of delivering air traffic management in Scotland. It has been the air traffic control provider for Edinburgh airport since 2018. It has also recently installed essential Instrumental Runway Visual Range (IRVR) systems (a meteorological equipment for airport runway operations) at Inverness and Kirkwall airports and works closely with Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL), supporting the Scottish Airports operator with its tailored services and solutions.

Skyports Drone Services has extensive experience operating BVLOS drone flights in Scotland. The company has previously performed multiple test flights and projects in the Argyll and Bute region and is currently working on a project in the east of the country with Angus Council and the NHS.

Plans for ANSL and Skyports' airspace change proposal can be found on the CAA website*.

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