



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

SAXAVORD UK SPACEPORT

ISO 9001, ISO 14001,
AND ISO 45001

Ready for takeoff: SaxaVord UK Spaceport in Scotland (UK). The first and only spaceport in Europe, with three launch pads and capacity for 30 launches per year – plus ISO 9001 certification with NQA.



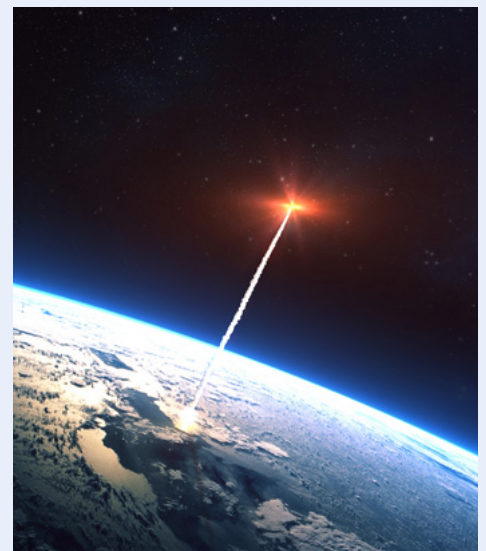
Among NQA's clients is Shetland Space Centre Ltd (trading name SaxaVord UK Spaceport), licensed in December 2023 as the first UK vertical launch facility for satellites into sun-synchronous and polar orbit.

SaxaVord UK Spaceport is the sole spaceport in Europe, with a head office in Grantown-on-Spey and an operational site in Shetland (Scotland) run by 60 employees.

At the spaceport, you can find:

- Three launch pads, with ambitious plans to build to 30 launches per year
- Partnerships with ten rocket companies (the first launch expected in 2024)
- Two years of data downloaded by the rocket engine testing and ground stations
- An integrated management system (IMS) in place:
 - ISO 9001 (Quality Management) – certified in 2023
 - ISO 14001 (Environmental Management)
 - ISO 45001 (Health & Safety Management)

SaxaVord UK Spaceport's achievement of ISO 9001 certification recognises their ongoing commitment to efficiency, compliance and customers within a highly regulated industry.





Propelling towards ISO 9001 certification

Space is a highly regulated industry overseen by the [Civil Aviation Authority](#).

By achieving ISO 9001 certification early on (SaxaVord UK Spaceport was established in 2017), the company can demonstrate their commitment to quality standards.

“SaxaVord UK Spaceport is creating a successful, internationally recognised space business that aims to provide a superior value proposition in all that we do.

We felt that implementing a process-based management system – and initially certifying it to ISO 9001 – would help us operate efficiently, meet our customer expectations and compliance obligations, achieve our goals, and ensure that fact-based decisions continually improve the business and are beneficial long-term.”

Achieving a competitive edge with certification



As SaxaVord UK Spaceport is the first vertical launch facility in the UK and Europe and is likely to be so for a number of years, it is important that we demonstrate excellence and commitment to quality standards from the start. Certification gives us a head start, although it will be some time before we have any UK competitor spaceports. There is an expectation for us to have certification, and it gives confidence to the many European and American service providers that approach us.



The purpose of an IMS

SaxaVord UK Spaceport's IMS involves a combination of Author, a proprietary flowcharting software provided by [Prism Energy](#), and [SharePoint](#).

The company chose to implement an IMS due to its strengths in streamlining operations, eliminating duplicates and enabling efficient resource allocation. By providing a holistic view of performance, SaxaVord UK Spaceport's IMS allows for better decision-making – and ultimately encourages continual improvement.

Having an IMS in place also opens opportunities for possible future certification to:

- [ISO 14001 \(Environmental Management\)](#)
- [ISO 45001 \(Health & Safety Management\)](#)
- [ISO 27001 \(Information Security Management\)](#)
- [Aerospace quality management standards](#)



Preparing for launch with Centrada Limited

SaxaVord UK Spaceport partnered with [Centrada Limited](#) to build their IMS for ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001.

Centrada Limited also supports SaxaVord UK Spaceport with quality, health and safety and environmental (QHSE) matters – alongside recommending NQA as the certification body.

“Space launch is a relatively new business sector in the United Kingdom. Centrada Limited felt, based on NQA having aerospace-related experience, that this would be beneficial. NQA’s clients include [NASA](#) and [Lockheed Martin](#), who will deliver the UK Space Agency’s UK Pathfinder launch, hosted by SaxaVord UK Spaceport in Shetland.”

Why do clients work with consultants?

Many organisations recruit a consultancy when preparing for their management system audits.

In the case of SaxaVord UK Spaceport, they benefitted from having Centrada Limited involved for various reasons:

- Space legislation is fairly new, so interpreting the regulations and guidance took some time
- SaxaVord UK Spaceport is constantly growing, with each new member needing onboarding
- Embedding ISO principles from the very start would promote productivity and efficiency



Upskilling the team with internal auditor training

Two staff members at SaxaVord UK Spaceport completed [NQA’s ISO 9001 Internal Auditor virtual training](#) in April and June 2023.



Those who took part in the internal auditor course gained the necessary competencies to assess our processes against the ISO 9001 standard. As well as identifying non-conformities, auditing is essential for driving continuous improvement within our IMS.



NQA offers virtual training for quality standards and beyond. [Visit our training page to learn more.](#)





Ambitious plans on the horizon

With ISO 9001 certification to their name, SaxaVord UK Spaceport continues focusing on launch efforts.

Alongside recruiting more team members to facilitate the launch and develop the ground station network, the company is actively applying for licenses.

“ All efforts are to complete the launch site to enable the first launch in 2024. Launching a satellite requires four licenses from the Civil Aviation Authority. We received the Spaceport License in December 2023 and expect our Range Services License within the next few months. The launch service provider, one of the rocket companies we work with, also requires a license – as does the satellite provider. ”

A positive audit atmosphere

The stage 1 audit took place at SaxaVord UK Spaceport's head office in Granttown-on-Spey.

The second stage, covering the management system implementation, was performed over two days at Granttown-on-Spey and the launch site and ground station in Shetland.

SaxaVord UK Spaceport's assessors were Kevin Gunn and Malcolm MacMillan. According to the client, "Kevin was excellent to deal with and showed a real interest in what the company does, especially as he is ex-RAF like many of the SaxaVord UK Spaceport personnel. Malcolm was also very professional and excellent to deal with."



Final thoughts from NQA

NQA congratulates [SaxaVord UK Spaceport](#) for achieving [ISO 9001 certification](#) and continuing to trailblaze the space industry.

The company is a prime example of how highly regulated industries like aerospace can benefit from ISO certification.

Discover the many standards NQA has to offer. [Visit our ISO certification page.](#)

Want to speak to an expert about your certification options? [Get in touch today.](#)

TO DISCUSS YOUR CERTIFICATION & TRAINING NEEDS GET IN TOUCH:

0800 052 2424 | www.nqa.com



0015