Press Release

September 25, 2025
ispace, inc.
ElevationSpace, Inc.

ispace and ElevationSpace Sign Agreement to Undertake Japan's First Private Lunar Sample Return Mission

Tokyo–September 25, 2025 – ispace, inc., (TOKYO: 9348) a global lunar exploration company, and ElevationSpace Inc., have signed a memorandum of understanding to pursue a private mission that will return a lunar sample to Earth.

The agreement between the two companies will explore development of atmospheric re-entry and recovery technology for bringing materials developed in space back to Earth, and to develop technologies and create business opportunities for lunar sample return missions.

A computer-generated image of an atmospheric entry capsule, courtesy ElevationSpace

Based on the agreement, ispace and ElevationSpace will jointly pursue development to undertake a lunar return mission. ispace has already demonstrated the technology to deploy a lander into lunar orbit through its two lunar missions operated in 2023 and 2025. The company is currently considering the development of an Orbital Transfer Vehicle (OTV), derived from its existing lunar lander development technology.

A computer-generated image of the Orbital Transfer Vehicle that ispace is planning to develop

The collaboration aims to conduct a technology demonstration to verify the feasibility of missions utilizing an and the sample return re-entry capsule being developed by ElevationSpace, as well as to evaluate the overall system characteristics. Concurrently, the companies plan to actively collaborate on communications with various potential customers, including governments, space agencies, and private entities both domestically and internationally, to create business opportunities for Japan's first lunar sample return mission in the future.

Statement of Takeshi Hakamada, Founder & CEO of ispace

“Lunar sample return is a focus of the three key scientific goals based on discussions with Japan’s Space Policy Committee. We also consider it an essential technology for building the cislunar economy, which our company aims to realize under the vision “Expand Our Planet, Expand Our Future,” said Takeshi Hakamada, Founder and CEO of ispace. “The re-entry and recovery technologies being advanced by ElevationSpace are key elemental technologies for implementing lunar sample return. We are confident that combining these with our orbital transport vehicle and operational technologies we are developing to deliver payloads to the Moon will bring us closer to realizing a sample return. We look forward to working closely with relevant organizations to pursue and create business opportunities.”

Statement of Ryohei Kobayashi, CEO and Representative Director of ElevationSpace

“We are thrilled to be able to challenge the realization of Japan’s first lunar sample return by integrating our cultivated atmospheric reentry and recovery technology with ispace's lunar landing and exploration technology,” said Ryohei Kobayashi, CEO and Representative Director of ElevationSpace. “This initiative is a historic challenge that directly aligns with our vision of ‘building a transportation network connecting people and goods in orbit,’ while simultaneously

creating new scientific and industrial value. By combining both companies' technologies and experience, we will pioneer a new era of high-frequency travel between the Moon and Earth."

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About ElevationSpace Inc. (https://elevation-space.com/)
ElevationSpace is a space startup with the vision of "Building an on-orbit transportation network." In collaboration with Tohoku University and JAXA, ElevationSpace is leveraging Japan's world-class re-entry technology to develop a space transportation service that facilitates the return of goods from space to Earth. The company is focused on creating small spacecraft capable of transporting items that have been experimented on, developed, and manufactured in the microgravity environment back to Earth.

The International Space Station (ISS), which has been used for a wide range of purposes from basic scientific experiments to industrial applications, has been scheduled to cease operation at the end of 2030 due to structural lifespan and other factors, and securing a continuous "place" for utilizing the space environment has become an issue.With an eye on the "post-ISS era," ElevationSpace aims to provide a space environment utilization platform called "ELS-R." "ELS-R" is the first service of its kind in Japan to use an unmanned small satellite to conduct experiments and demonstrations that take advantage of the zero-gravity environment, and then return it to Earth and to customers.

About ispace, inc. (https://ispace-inc.com)
ispace, a global lunar resource development company with the vision, "Expand our planet. Expand our future.", specializes in designing and building lunar landers and rovers. ispace aims to extend the sphere of human life into space and create a sustainable world by providing high-frequency, low-cost transportation services to the Moon. The company has business entities in Japan, Luxembourg, and the United States with more than 300 employees worldwide. For more information, visit: www.ispace-inc.com and follow us on X: @ispace_inc.