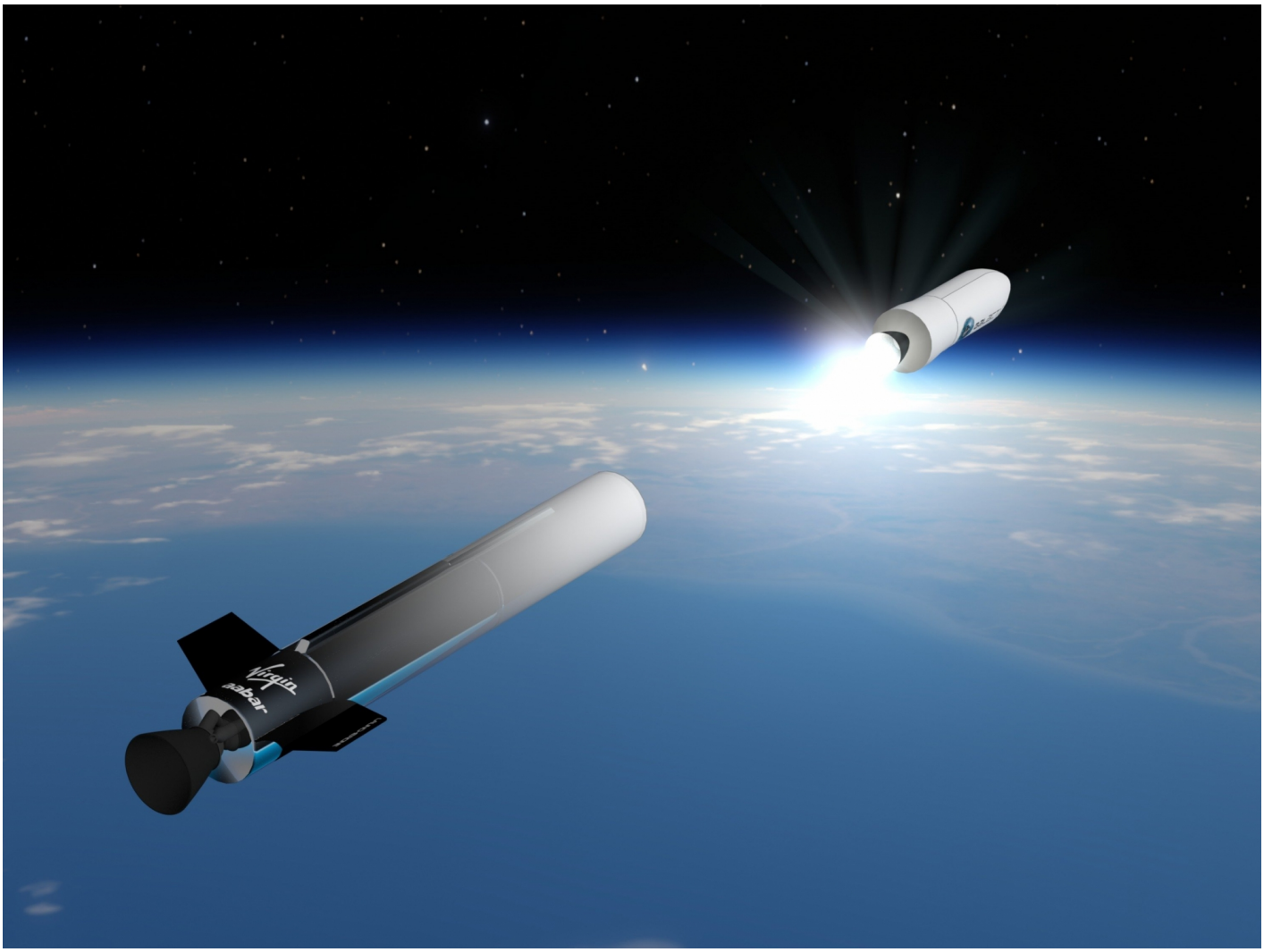
VIRGIN GALACTIC MAKES PROGRESS IN LAUNCHERONE PROJECT

News / Manufacturer



Virgin Galactic, part-owned by Aabar Investments of Abu Dhabi, has announced it has made significant progress with LauncherOne rocket propulsion after test firings.

The Abu Dhabi based stock company owns a 37.8 per cent stake in Virgin Galactic, whose engineers and technicians have achieved longer duration, steady state firings of the small satellite launch vehicle's gas generator in California.

"The Virgin Galactic propulsion team has made strong progress that keeps us on track for providing dedicated, responsive service for small satellite customers. We're proud that the team is now among a small group of organizations that have fired a pump-fed rocket engine in this thrust class. There is much work yet to be done, but the NewtonThree and NewtonFour test results are strongly encouraging," said Virgin Galactic CEO George T. Whitesides.

The NewtonThree and the NewtonFour refer to a 73,500 lbf thrust main stage engine and a 5,000

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lbf thrust upper stage engine that power LauncherOne’s orbital flights.

The test firing showed NewtonThree’s engine running for more than 20 seconds, giving the team the opportunity to record data about the engine start-up, operation and safe shutdown.

NewtonFour recorded multiple test times all exceeding six minutes in duration.

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