

SPACE SYSTEMS

26 January 2016

ESA selects Airbus Defence and Space for two new Sentinel-2 satellites

- Airbus Defence and Space is prime contractor for the €285M order
- Additional Sentinel-2 satellites will join Europe's Copernicus Earth observation programme

Airbus Defence and Space, the world's second-largest space company, has signed a contract, worth around 285 million euros with the European Space Agency (ESA) to deliver two further optical satellites for the European Copernicus programme.

As part of the Sentinel-2 Earth observation satellite system, these two new models, called "Sentinel-2C" and "Sentinel-2D", will observe the environment and land surfaces and continue from 2021 with the measurements carried out by the first two flight units as part of the European Copernicus programme. As prime contractor, Airbus Defence and Space will lead an industrial consortium of more than 50 companies from 17 European countries and the USA.

"ESA's new order for the Copernicus satellites with by far the widest range of applications demonstrates the great confidence the agency has in our know-how," said François Auque, Head of Space Systems. "Continuous high-quality data spanning several decades is essential for the large community of users. The delivery of the Sentinel-2C and -2D satellites will ensure this continuity, allowing the advanced monitoring of our environment and land usage to continue."

The Sentinel-2 satellites deliver optical images from a height of 786 km with a resolution of 10, 20 and 60 metres at an image width of 290 km. These images are produced in 13 spectral bands, from the visible to the short-wave infrared range of the electromagnetic spectrum.

As part of Copernicus, the Sentinel-2 satellites make a significant contribution to meeting Earth observation data requirements in the areas of land use, water quality, agriculture and forestry, land management, natural disasters (floods, forest fires, landslides, erosion) and humanitarian aid. Environmental observation in coastal areas likewise forms part of these activities, as does glacier, ice and snow monitoring.

Sentinel-2 is also capable of using another ESA programme, the European Data Relay System (EDRS). EDRS-SpaceDataHighway will be a network of laser communication payloads on geostationary satellites and low Earth orbit satellites. The system will provide secure and fast communication services for the Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-2 satellites. It will ensure the timely availability of data particularly for time-critical applications such as environmental monitoring, emergency response and security missions.

The first satellite of this family, Sentinel-2A, lifted off on 23 June 2015 on a Vega launcher from the European spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana and is now in service. To date, over 7.000 products are available for download, cumulating a total volume of 35 TB, while over 57.000 products equivalent to 276 TB have been downloaded by the user communities. Since mid-January a step increase in the download activity was observed, reaching a volume of 7 TB distributed daily. The development of Sentinel-2B is progressing in full swing for a launch late this year.

For Sentinel-2, Airbus Defence and Space in Friedrichshafen (Germany) is responsible for the system design, the platform and satellite integration and testing. Airbus Defence and Space in Toulouse (France) is delivering the Multispectral Instrument (MSI), while Airbus Defence and Space in Madrid (Spain) is responsible for the mechanical satellite structure for producing the thermal equipment and cable loom, and for the delivery of power, energy management and high speed data acquisition units.

Airbus Defence and Space has been a key partner in Copernicus since the very beginning of the programme in 1998. The company is playing a key role in the construction of the Sentinel satellites that form the space segment of the programme and complement the data from the Copernicus Contributing Missions. Airbus Defence and Space operates a fleet of optical and radar satellites –"SPOT", "Pléiades", TerraSAR-X and TanDEM-X – and is therefore one of the leading data suppliers for the Copernicus services through these contributing missions.

TV material can be found at <http://airbusdefenceandspace.com/bcr/>

Airbus Defence and Space

Airbus Defence and Space is a division of Airbus Group formed by combining the business activities of Cassidian, Astrium and Airbus Military. The new division is Europe's number one defence and space enterprise, the second largest space business worldwide and among the top ten global defence enterprises. It employs more than 38,000 employees generating revenues of approximately €13 billion per year.

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