

Ground Control to Faraday-1: Dstl to Operate First Space Mission

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory's (Dstl) new satellite control ground station will support its first space mission following the launch of the Faraday-1 satellite. This mission will contribute towards international research collaborations to facilitate satellite operations between nations in support of wider defence science and technology goals in the space domain.

Manufactured by In-Space, Faraday-1 (also known as Prometheus-1 in the MOD community) will be launched from the Rocket Lab's complex in Mahia, New Zealand, on 3 July, and orbit the Earth for a nominal period of three years to collect commercial data for industry partners.

Dstl will support operations of Faraday-1 to de-risk communication systems for future satellites, notably Prometheus 2, an international science and technology satellite mission manufactured by In-Space and utilising the latest Airbus systems for inter-satellite communications and high-rate data downlink. Lessons learnt by Dstl from Faraday-1 operations will be shared across the MOD space community and with international partners, to both address key technical challenges in preparation for collaborative operations of Prometheus 2 and build UK space capability and experience.

Mike O'Callaghan, Space Programme Manager for Dstl, the science inside UK national security, said: "This is a significant step for Dstl's space operations. As well as investing in UK sovereign capability we will be sharing knowledge with our international partners to maximise the safe operation and security of our space assets."

Tony Holt, In-Space's CTO, said: "Utilising our Faraday-1 satellite, we're able to offer a responsive, turnkey spacecraft service for our customers covering everything from design support through to operating the payload in orbit. We are delighted to be working with the world-leading teams at Dstl and Airbus in delivering the highly capable mission into orbit."

Francis Kinsella, Senior Systems Engineer at Airbus said: "Faraday-1 will give us in-orbit validation of some innovative Airbus technologies. This reinforces our partnership approach of working with SMEs and government agencies to pursue innovative next generation space capabilities, to support and de-risk our space production and services businesses."