

Press release: Major new multi million pound satellite investment deal for the UK

- Eutelsat and Airbus invest millions in new satellite components and assembly in the UK
- Deal will support hundreds of high quality jobs in Portsmouth and Stevenage and thousands of jobs in the supply chain
- A year since the launch of the modern Industrial Strategy, this deal represents a further vote of confidence in the UK's future economy and growing space industry

A new multi-million-pound deal by European businesses Eutelsat Communications and Airbus Defence and Space for two new communication satellites will see components and major parts assembled in the UK before final assembly is completed in Toulouse, France.

Components and major parts of the assembly will be built in the UK under the contract signed today (Monday 19 November) between satellite operator Eutelsat and aerospace manufacturer Airbus, Business Secretary Greg Clark announced.

The deal, worth hundreds of millions of pounds, between Eutelsat, one of the world's top three providers of TV broadcast signals and Airbus is a huge vote of confidence in the UK expertise in the space industry, benefitting 500 high skilled workers involved in Eutelsat projects.

The new investment means Airbus sites in Portsmouth and Stevenage will manufacture key components of the two new satellites for Eutelsat, which will feature a brand-new electric platform to bring down size and cost, while boosting performance.

Eutelsat is to replace its three existing satellites with two new ones set to launch in 2021. Today's announcement means that 6 out of 7 of the company's next satellites will be partially built in Britain, representing inward investment of up to €40 million per year.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

This investment is a significant vote of confidence for the UK's world leading space industry.

The UK is already a world-leader in developing satellite technology, with a 40 per cent share of the global export market of small satellites and building major parts for one in four of the world's commercial telecommunications satellites. This new deal builds on the recent announcement, as part of our Industrial Strategy, that the UK is investing in, and building, its first

proposed spaceport in Sutherland. The Spaceport will further develop our expertise and capabilities in the space sector enabling us to launch small satellites.

Through our Modern Industrial Strategy, we are increasing the R&D budget to its highest level ever, building on our commitment to this sector and our world leading science base. This deal demonstrates that science, innovation and business has no borders.

UK expertise has contributed significantly to the build of 23 of Eutelsat's 38 satellites currently in orbit.

Eutelsat CEO Rodolphe Belmer said:

I am delighted to sign this agreement with Airbus to build two new state-of-the-art satellites, cementing the long-standing partnership between our two companies.

The agreement will see the manufacture of key parts of the new satellites at Airbus' facilities in Stevenage and Portsmouth. These satellites will renew the in-orbit assets at HOTBIRD, Eutelsat's largest video hotspot, ensuring our continued support to global broadcasters in delivering high quality video content and services throughout the UK and Europe.

We are impressed with the ongoing expansion of the UK space sector, particularly its growing industrial capabilities and development of cutting-edge technology, and we will continue to rely on the UK's ability to build and deliver world-leading spacecraft.

I am grateful for the support of the UK government and UK Space Agency, both of whom recognise the strong commitment Eutelsat has made to the UK over many years.

The Airbus UK facilities in Portsmouth and Stevenage will build the entire communications payload, platform structure, propulsion subsystem, antennas and various mechanisms for the satellites. Airbus employs over 3,000 space engineers in the UK.

Colin Paynter, Managing Director, Airbus Defence and Space UK, said:

Airbus' telecommunication satellite technology developed in the UK has been key to this significant contract win. UK Space Agency support for the ESA ARTES programme has enabled Airbus in the UK to develop world leading technology for the world's leading satellite operators.

Notes to Editors:

1. The build of an electric propulsion system for another new Eutelsat satellite known as KONNECT was recently completed by Thales Alenia Space in Belfast, demonstrating the growing presence of space across the UK.
2. The UK Space Agency is helping industry to develop new technologies, infrastructure and services as part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy.
3. Major initiatives for the UK Space sector include the £99m National Satellite Test Facility at Harwell, the £92m to develop options for a UK alternative to the Galileo satellite navigation project, the £31.5m to support the development of the proposed spaceport in Sutherland in Scotland, and the UK's continuing commitment to being a leading player in the European Space Agency.
4. Eutelsat QUANTUM the first software defined satellite, able to adapt to new demands in coverage, bandwidth, power and frequency configurability simply by being reprogrammed from the ground. Its phased array antennas will be able to shape the broadcast footprint as required – unlike a fixed standard reflector on most telecommunication satellites. It will also be partially built by Airbus in Portsmouth and Stevenage. The UK Space Agency is part of the Eutelsat QUANTUM Public Private Partnership through the ESA participation.