

Space Business Review

A monthly round-up of space industry developments for the information of our clients and friends.

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FCC GRANTS ONEWEB MARKET ACCESS

On June 22, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission approved the application submitted by WorldVu Satellites Limited, doing business as OneWeb, to access the U.S. satellite market. The approval – the first of its kind for a new generation of large NGSO FSS system – enables OneWeb to advance, to later this year, the start of production for its planned 720-satellite LEO constellation, which will provide low latency, high-speed Internet services worldwide.

SIS NEW ON-ORBIT SERVICING VENTURE

On June 28, SSL MDA Holdings Inc. (SSL MDA) announced the establishment of Space Infrastructure Services LLC (SIS), a new venture that aims to commercialize on-orbit satellite servicing capabilities, including satellite refueling. SSL MDA holds a minority stake in SIS, which is majority owned by Finance Technology Leverage LLC, a global investment company based in Silicon Valley. SIS announced that it selected Space Systems Loral to design and manufacture its first satellite servicing vehicle based on specifications under the Robotic Servicing of Geosynchronous Satellites program of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. SIS also announced its first commercial customer with the news that it was selected by SES S.A. to perform an initial on-orbit satellite refueling mission.

INTELSAT ISSUES \$1.5B OF SENIOR NOTES

On June 19, Intelsat S.A. (Intelsat), through its subsidiary Intelsat Jackson Holdings S.A. (Jackson), issued \$1.5b of 9.75% senior notes due 2025. Proceeds from the issuance are expected to be used to redeem Jackson's \$1.5b of 7.25% senior notes due 2019. The notes may be redeemed by Intelsat at 105 if a merger with SoftBank Group Corp. (SoftBank) or OneWeb, Ltd. (OneWeb) closes within the next year. Earlier this month, Intelsat announced that bondholders in its subsidiaries passed on a \$14b debt exchange offer by SoftBank as part of a proposed merger of Intelsat and OneWeb, leaving unsatisfied a condition to closing under agreements entered into between Intelsat and each of OneWeb and SoftBank in February.

INMARSAT SELECTS THALES ALENIA

On June 7, Inmarsat plc announced that it selected Thales Alenia Space to manufacture an additional satellite for its Global Xpress Ka-band broadband constellation, increasing the number of satellites in the network from four to five.

JUNE LAUNCH SERVICES

June 7 – ILS International Launch Services Inc. successfully launched the EchoStar XXI satellite for EchoStar Corporation on a Proton launch vehicle, marking a successful return to service for the Proton, which was grounded roughly a year ago following an anomaly that caused the premature shutdown of one of its four second-stage engines. Built by Space Systems Loral (SSL), EchoStar XXI will provide mobile connectivity services to users across Europe from the 10.25°E orbital location.

June 23 – Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX) successfully launched the BulgariaSat-1 satellite for Bulgaria Sat AD on a Falcon 9 launch vehicle featuring the same first stage as was used in the January launch of 10 Iridium NEXT satellites. Built by SSL and equipped with 32 Ku-band transponders, BulgariaSat-1 will provide fixed and broadcast services from the 1.9°E orbital slot, with coverage of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

June 25 – SpaceX successfully launched 10 more satellites of the Iridium NEXT constellation for Iridium Communications Inc. on a Falcon 9. With this mission and a prior launch in January, SpaceX has so far orbited 20 of the total of 75 satellites that it was selected to launch for the Iridium NEXT program. Thales Alenia Space and Orbital ATK Inc. are the manufacturers of the Iridium NEXT satellites, as prime contractor and subcontractor for production, respectively.

June 28 – Arianespace S.A. successfully launched the Hellas Sat 3-Inmarsat S EAN condosat and the GSAT 17 satellite on an Ariane 5 launch vehicle. Hellas-Sat Consortium Ltd will use the Hellas Sat 3 payload to provide DTH services, Inmarsat plc will use the Inmarsat S EAN payload to provide in-flight Wi-Fi and the Indian Space Research Organisation will use GSAT-17 to provide fixed and mobile services.

JUNE LAUNCH SERVICES ORDERS

June 2 – Eutelsat Communications S.A. announced that it placed another launch services order with Arianespace S.A. (Arianespace), increasing to three the number of its future launch services on the Arianespace manifest.

June 20 – Arianespace announced the first commercial order of VEGA C launch services with news that it was selected by Airbus Defence and Space to launch, beginning in mid-2020, the four very high-resolution satellites that comprise its next generation optical observation constellation, using two VEGA C launch vehicles.