Milbank

Space Business Review

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

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USAF HOSTED PAYLOAD PROGRAM

On July 10, the U.S. Air Force (USAF), through its Space and Missile Systems Center, awarded an indefinite-delivery-indefinite-quantity contract to 14 space industry companies under the Hosted Payload Solutions program, created by the USAF to standardize processes and interfaces for placing U.S. military payloads on commercial satellites. Covering a potential total of up to 6 hosted payloads and $494m, the contract award establishes a pool of companies that are pre-qualified for USAF hosted payload projects, with contracts for actual projects to be awarded by the USAF as task orders in due course. The group of 14 companies is composed of a variety of satellite operators and space hardware manufacturers, ranging from the large and established, such as Intelsat General Corporation and The Boeing Company (Boeing), to the emerging and growing, such as ViviSat LLC and ExoTerra Resource, LLC. In an unrelated development, Boeing announced on July 29 that it is providing the U.S. government with military Ka-band satellite communications service from the Inmarsat-5 satellite. The transaction represents the first time that Boeing has resold bandwidth on a commercial satellite to a U.S. government customer.

JULY LAUNCHES

June 30 – The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully launched the SPOT 7 satellite for Airbus Defence and Space, along with 4 smaller satellites for Germany, Canada and Singapore, on a PSLV launch vehicle. SPOT 7 joins the SPOT 6 and Pléiades 1A and 1B satellites in orbit to complete Airbus' network of high-resolution Earth observation satellites.
July 10 – Arianespace S.A. successfully launched 4 more satellites for O3b Networks, Ltd. on a Soyuz launch vehicle. Manufactured by Thales Alenia Space, the satellites join the 4 O3b satellites launched by Arianespace S.A. in 2013 to progress the deployment of a constellation that will provide low-cost, high-speed, low-latency Internet and mobile connectivity services.
July 14 – Space Exploration Technologies Corp. successfully launched 6 next generation OG2 M2M communications satellites, all manufactured by Sierra Nevada Corporation based on its SN-100 satellite platform, for ORBCOMM Inc. on a Falcon 9 launch vehicle.

JULY SATELLITE ORDERS

July 1 –The Hispasat Group announced that it selected Space Systems/Loral, LLC to manufacture the Hispasat 1F satellite based on its SSL 1300 satellite platform.
July 8 – Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems announced that it was selected by Intelsat S.A. to manufacture the Intelsat 35e Epic^{NG} high-throughput satellite based on its 702MP satellite platform.
July 15 – Dauria Aerospace announced that it was selected by Aniara SpaceCom LLC of India to manufacture two small electric Ku-band telecommunications satellites, to be launched together by the Indian Space Research Organisation on a single GSLV launch vehicle.
July 17 – SES S.A. announced that it selected Airbus Defence and Space to manufacture the SES-12 satellite based on its Eurostar E3000 satellite platform. Expected to be launched in late 2017, SES-12 will use electric propulsion for both orbit raising and on-orbit maneuvers but will carry a back-up chemical propellant system.
July 22 – Thales Alenia Space announced that it was selected by PT. Telekomunikasi Indonesia TbK to manufacture the Telkom-3S telecommunications satellite based on its Spacebus 4000B2 satellite platform.
July 31 – Eutelsat Communications S.A. announced that it selected Airbus Defence and Space to manufacture the EUTELSAT 172B satellite based on its Eurostar E3000 satellite platform. With a targeted launch in the first half of 2017, the satellite will be the first European satellite to use electric propulsion in orbit raising.

JULY LAUNCH SERVICES ORDERS

On July 2, Inmarsat plc (Inmarsat) announced an agreement with Space Exploration Technologies Corp. for one firm and two optional launches. The agreement contemplates use of the Falcon Heavy launch vehicle but allows for substitution of the Falcon 9 launch vehicle if necessary for timely performance. The firm launch under the agreement, scheduled for late 2016, will be for a satellite jointly owned and funded by Hellas-Sat Consortium Limited, currently being manufactured by Thales Alenia Space. Inmarsat will have full ownership of the satellite's S-band payload, which it will use to provide mobile communications services as part of a new satellite-terrestrial broadband network.