

Press Release

Friday 6th November 2009

Small satellite pioneer to oversee European student lunar mission

Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) has been selected by the European Space Agency (ESA) to manage a pan-European student built mission to the Moon. The European Student Moon Orbiter (ESMO) programme will place a spacecraft into a lunar orbit to map the lunar surface, acquiring images and other scientific data about our nearest neighbour.



The ESMO team gather outside SSTL in Guildford, UK

Students from at least 10 universities throughout ESA's Member States and Cooperating States will learn about space science and engineering “hands on” by collaborating on the design and building of systems that could be launched into orbit around the Moon as soon as 2013.

SSTL will draw upon its experience in delivering cost effective space missions and training schemes to project manage the European Student Moon Orbiter (ESMO)

mission, supervising the academic and student teams throughout Europe to help them achieve their goal of a space-ready Moon orbiter.

Professor Sir Martin Sweeting, Executive Chairman of SSTL said, "SSTL has had its sights on the Moon for nearly a decade and ESMO combines the industrial and educational strengths of SSTL towards this exciting challenge. We have shown many times in the past that success in space can be achieved at a fraction of the cost normally considered and we expect that this exciting mission will further demonstrate that this applies as well to science missions as Earth Observation and communications."

SSTL Lunar Expert Andy Phipps commented, "ESMO is an extremely exciting opportunity for these European students to learn about space "hands-on", but with the practical insight and support of our training and development programmes.

"Having successfully delivered the radar payload processor to BAE Systems for NASA's contribution to the Indian lunar mission Chandrayaan-1, the ESMO project is just as significant for SSTL and forms the next step on our lunar roadmap – the delivery of a complete mission", continued Phipps.

SSTL was recently down-selected by the UK government's STFC (Science and Technology Facilities Council) to lead the design phase for the MoonLITE mission, which will lead to the development and launch of a low-cost lunar orbiter carrying scientific lunar surface penetrators and a communications relay payload to the Moon in 2014.

About SSTL

Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL) is the world's leading small satellite company, delivering operational space missions for a range of applications including Earth observation, science and communications. The company design, manufacture and operate high performance satellites and ground systems for a fraction of the price normally associated with spacecraft, with 300 staff working on turnkey satellite platforms, space-proven satellite subsystems and optical instruments.

Since 1981 SSTL has launched 34 satellites as well as providing training and development programmes, consultancy services, and mission studies for ESA, NASA and commercial customers, changing the economics of space.

Based in Guildford, UK, SSTL is owned by EADS Astrium NV.

www.sstl.co.uk

Notes to editor:

This press release can be downloaded as a Word or PDF document at the following url:

http://www.sstl.co.uk/News_and_events/Latest_News

A high resolution 5MB, JPEG, group photo of the university academics and students involved in the ESMO programme is available upon request.

Image caption: The ESMO team gather outside SSTL in Guildford, UK

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