



Press Release

Friday 28th December 2009

SSTL celebrates 4th anniversary of first Galileo satellite launch

Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) is today celebrating the 4th anniversary of the launch of its historic GIOVE-A satellite - the first step in Europe's visionary Galileo satellite navigation programme - on December 28th 2005. During the past 4 years, SSTL and GIOVE-A have contributed significantly to the testing and validation of technologies vital to the now imminent operational constellation of satellites. The 660 kg GIOVE-A satellite was built by SSTL for ESA in just 30 months at a cost of just 28m Euros.

SSTL CEO Dr. Matt Perkins commented, "SSTL is proud of its involvement with the Galileo programme and the continuing success of GIOVE-A. This mission has clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of SSTL's small satellite approach for the delivery of operational missions."

GIOVE-A was the first part of the in-orbit validation programme for Galileo, broadcasting the first signal to successfully secure the critical Galileo frequency filing with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) at 17:25 GMT on the 12th January 2006. This was a significant achievement for SSTL having commissioned the necessary systems to achieve this broadcast in just 3 weeks.

On the 2nd May 2007 GIOVE-A successfully transmitted the first Galileo navigation message from space, containing the information needed by users' receivers to calculate their position using the future Galileo satellite navigation service. These signals have since been used for signal quality testing and for equipment manufacturers and the scientific community to validate prototype Galileo receivers.

Throughout the past 4 years, the satellite has provided valuable data about the Medium Earth Orbit which the Galileo constellation will occupy, helping to characterise the radiation environment and validating subsystems such as an atomic clock and the Galileo signal broadcasting payload.

In July and August this year, GIOVE-A was gradually moved to a higher orbit to ensure that it does not cross the operational Galileo constellation's orbits when the first operation satellites are launched in 2012. The satellite has been in orbit for 21 months beyond its original 27 month mission design life and continues to provide critical data to all of the ground users experimenting with Galileo navigation signals

SSTL, together with its partner OHB-System of Bremen, Germany form the core team of one of the two consortia bidding for the operational satellites. The final proposal was delivered to ESA in November and the outcome of the evaluation process is awaited. To help improve the overall schedule the team was authorised by the EC and ESA to initiate the procurement of long lead items for the full system earlier this year. The British space pioneer looks forward to continued success supporting the European Space Agency (ESA) and the EC with the expertise it has gained and its cost effective and reliable approach to satellite and subsystem design and manufacture.

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 designs, manufactures and operates high performance satellites and ground systems for a fraction of the price normally associated with space missions, 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, with its innovative approach that is changing the economics of space.

Based in Guildford, UK, SSTL is owned by EADS Astrium NV. www.sstl.co.uk

Notes to editor:

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