

**Press Release**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012

**ESA Director General praises UK space innovation during SSTL's Kepler Building unveiling**

ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain and Rt. Hon. David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, today unveiled a commemorative plaque marking the inauguration of Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd's (SSTL) new state-of-the-art Kepler technical facility at an event attended by guests from the UK and European space sectors.



**(L-R) SSTL CEO Dr. Matt Perkins, Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts, SSTL Executive Chairman Sir Martin Sweeting, ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain open SSTL's Kepler technical facility on 25<sup>th</sup> January.**

The European Space Agency (ESA) Director General and the Minister were accompanied by Sir Martin Sweeting and SSTL's CEO Dr. Matt Perkins for a tour of the purpose-built facility in Guildford, Surrey where 14 Galileo programme satellite payloads and several SSTL spacecraft are currently under construction.

Jean-Jacques Dordain commented: “SSTL continues to demonstrate agility and innovation, two factors that are essential for competitiveness and growth. This new building will become the birthplace of many satellites and a cornerstone to an industry that the UK and Europe could be proud of.”

David Willetts said: “The continued success of SSTL is a clear sign that our space industry is thriving. This impressive, high-tech new facility is already manufacturing some of the most advanced satellites in the world, boosting growth and helping the UK stay ahead of the game in space technology.”

The £10m purpose-built Kepler technical facility is already in full operation. The 14 Galileo programme payloads are under construction in a specially designed secure area and seven satellites, including TechDemoSat-1 and the three 1 metre resolution SSTL-300S1 satellites for the DMC3 constellation, are also at varying stages of completion for customers in the UK, Canada, Kazakhstan and Russia.

The 3,700sqm (40,000 sqft) Kepler Technical Facility building is co-located with SSTL’s headquarters building in Guildford, UK and will house approximately 40 permanent staff and anything up to 100 further project specific staff from across the company at peak test and integration periods. An integral part of the new facility are the world-class test halls that provide two 125 cubic metre walk-in thermal chambers, a seismic test platform, 15,000kg & 3,200kg monorail cranes, 10,000kg & 8,000kg gantry cranes, and reinforced floors, providing the greatest possible flexibility for integration and testing of both small and larger spacecraft.

*The Full Operational Capability phase of the Galileo programme is managed and fully funded by the European Union. The Commission and ESA have signed a delegation agreement by which ESA acts as design and procurement agent on behalf of the Commission. The views expressed in this Press Release can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union and/or ESA. “Galileo” is a trademark subject to OHIM application number 002742237 by EU and ESA.*

## **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 over 400 staff working on turnkey satellite platforms, space-proven satellite subsystems and optical instruments.

Since 1981 SSTL has built and launched 36 satellites – as well as providing training and development programmes, consultancy services, and mission studies for ESA, NASA, international governments 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](http://www.sstl.co.uk)

**Notes to editor:**

A high resolution JPEG photograph of the inauguration ceremony is available upon request.

**Image caption:** (L-R) SSTL CEO Dr. Matt Perkins, Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts, SSTL Executive Chairman Sir Martin Sweeting, ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain open SSTL's Kepler technical facility on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

This press release can be downloaded as a Word or Pdf document at the following url: <http://www.sstl.co.uk/news-and-events>

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