

Rome, 13 September 2007

Telespazio (Finmeccanica/Thales) signs a contract with Teledife (defence ministry) for the launch and operation of the Sicral 1B satellite

The company will finance part of the programme and will be allowed to use some of the satellite's transmission capacity to offer telecommunications services to NATO

Telespazio, a Finmeccanica/Thales company, has signed a EUR 118 million contract with Teledife, the Italian defence ministry's directorate of telecoms, IT and technology, to complete the Sicral 1B military communications satellite system.

For the project, Telespazio will head a temporary consortium set up with Thales Alenia Space Italia.

Under the agreement signed with Teledife, the consortium will be responsible for both the space and ground segment of the programme. Telespazio will manage the satellite launch services, the launch and early operation phase (LEOP) and the subsequent in-orbit testing phases.

Telespazio will also invest directly in the Sicral 1B programme, thus enabling it to use some of the satellite's transmission capacity. The company will therefore have its own satellite capacity and will be able to offer communications services to NATO and the European defence market.

This important defence ministry contract is a further acknowledgment of Telespazio's capabilities, know-how and experience, the result of more than 40 years' activity in the space operations sector.

Sicral is Italy's first military communications satellite, ensuring interoperability between defence, public safety and civil emergency networks, and networks for the management and control of strategic infrastructure, which require a high degree of information security and confidentiality.

Sicral 1B will be launched in the second half of 2008, and will have an expected operating life of 13 years. The first satellite in the system, Sicral 1, was launched in February 2001 and is currently also used by NATO countries.