



World's Largest AI Infrastructure in Space announced by the president of the French Republic:
Marlan Space and Loft Orbital Join Forces with Mistral and Global Space Industry Leaders to Build the Future of Agentic AI in Space with \$1 Billion

Satellites combining world-class optical, radar and advanced sensors with always-on connectivity and onboard compute will analyse what they observe in orbit, think, act, and ultimately deliver alerts in seconds.

The infrastructure will serve the sovereign needs of customers in France, Europe and the United Arab Emirates, and will address a large base of global commercial customers.

The first ten satellites are already in production in Abu Dhabi, with the first AI satellite launching this October.

Paris, September 9, 2026: Marlan Space, a UAE based investor and operator in space technology and a subsidiary of IHC, along with Loft Orbital are leading a consortium in a USD \$1 billion investment in France to build Altair-Next Gen, the world's largest artificial intelligence satellite infrastructure. The plan was announced and signed today at the International Space Summit in Paris by Marlan Space and Loft Orbital, in the presence of Emmanuel Macron, president of the French Republic. With Altair-Next Gen, France and the United Arab Emirates set out to lead the world in artificial intelligence in space.

The initial phase comprises fifty satellites carrying radar, optical and other sensors, built to serve the needs of government users, including French, European and Emirati, along with serving a global base of commercial and sovereign customers. Altair-Next Gen satellites analyse what they observe while still in orbit and transmit the event, not the raw imagery. The user gets an alert within seconds. Conventional systems deliver data hours later, once it has been downloaded and processed on the ground. Fifty satellites is a threshold at which this becomes a permanent capability rather than periodic observation: with a fleet of this size, one satellite is always close to where an event is unfolding, so an alert delivered in seconds arrives while there is still time to act.

Services run through an AI application store: users pick the models they need, from several providers, and run them on shared satellites, so one constellation serves many programmes at the same time. First applications include maritime domain awareness, wildfire detection and disaster response, and the security of ports and critical infrastructure.

Altair-Next Gen will build on a growing customer base which already includes various commercial and government customers in France and in the UAE.

This satellite infrastructure, held in a dedicated French company, pairs Emirati ambition, capital and manufacturing strength with European supply chain and space heritage.



The satellites are produced by Orbitworks at its purpose-built facility in KEZAD, Abu Dhabi, the region's largest high-volume site for commercial constellations, which also hosts satellite operations and gives the programme the industrial capacity to scale from ten satellites to fifty. Orbitworks was formed in 2024 as a joint venture between Marlan Space and Loft Orbital.

The announcement follows IHC's agreement to acquire an 80% stake in Marlan Space, announced on 8 September 2026, further strengthening the Group's investment in deeptech and the new space economy.

Syed Basar Shueb, CEO of IHC, said: "Altair-Next Gen represents the kind of ambitious, technology-led platform we want to build through Marlan Space. By bringing together advanced satellite infrastructure, AI, sovereign capabilities and world-class international partners, this investment positions the UAE and France at the forefront of a rapidly evolving space economy. For IHC, it is also a powerful example of how we can connect capital, technology and global partnerships to build platforms with long-term strategic and commercial relevance."

Dr. Hamdullah Mohib, Chief Executive Officer, Marlan Space and Orbitworks [signing on behalf of Marlan Space], added: "When we set out to build Altair, this is the future we bet on: that intelligence would move into orbit, and that the UAE would be one of the places building it. This is where the industry is going, and we are proud to be at the front of it. Fifty satellites, in groups with different capabilities working as one system, make this one of the most advanced constellations in the world, and we are leading it, not just taking part in it. Altair and Altair-Next Gen turns a factory into a national capability and the UAE from a buyer to a seller of satellite services - with engineering skills, intellectual property, and a supply chain that stays in the country long after the satellites are in orbit."

Loft Orbital brings the technological innovations, products and operational experience at the heart of the programme, drawing on its global teams and capabilities across satellite platforms, onboard AI and software, space mission infrastructure, deployment and constellation operations. Loft Orbital already operates more than 100 payloads and 20 AI missions in orbit. Most publicly, working with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, it demonstrated a world first: a satellite that runs a vision-language model onboard, understands what it sees, and can be tasked in plain language.

Pierre-Damien Vaujour, Chief Executive Officer, Loft Orbital, commented: "For the past few years, we have been working on deploying AI applications in space and orchestrating workflow. With this constellation, we are truly giving our partners developing agentic AI workflows in space a true world-class satellite infrastructure. I am excited to see the first of those satellites, built in Abu Dhabi, launch in the next few weeks and to start deploying solutions that have never been possible in the space industry."

Mistral joins the consortium to bring frontier AI to space: its models, deployed directly onboard next to the sensors, give the constellation the ability to reason about what it observes and to be tasked in natural language, and will power services in the AI application store.

In addition to other European Aerospace and AI leaders that will be announced later this year, BlackSky, a US company, is joining the team, investing in France to take part in this endeavour



and will provide high-resolution optical satellites at the highest performance commercially available in the world.

Blacksky, with a majority of its supply chain in Europe, has a long history of collaboration between the UAE, the US and France, dating back to building satellite buses for Loft Orbital through Leostella, its previous joint venture with Thales Alenia Space.

Brian O'Toole, CEO, Blacksky: "We're proud to be selected as a key partner and the very high-resolution optical provider on this program. The proven, on-orbit performance of our technology stands as an essential capability behind the world's first AI enabled constellation"

Finally, MaiaSpace has been selected as the preferred launch partner as its launch services become commercially available, anchoring France's lead in the new generation of European launchers

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About Marlan Space:

Marlan Space is a UAE-based investor-operator focused on building and scaling companies and technologies across the space economy and a subsidiary of IHC. Its portfolio spans space systems, autonomous operations and advanced compute, combining investment, technology partnerships and operational capabilities to develop globally competitive space businesses from Abu Dhabi.

Marlan Space founded and operates Orbitworks, the Middle East's first private space infrastructure company, established as a joint venture with U.S.-based Loft Orbital. Based in Abu Dhabi, Orbitworks designs, builds, tests and operates satellite systems at its state-of-the-art assembly, integration and testing facility in KEZAD, UAE. Altair, its flagship programme, is an AI-enabled Earth observation constellation of multiple satellites, combining multi-sensor optical, hyper spectral, thermal, infrared and passive RF payloads with onboard processing.

About Loft

Founded in 2017, Loft provides governments, companies, and research institutions with a fast, reliable way to deploy missions in orbit. Loft integrates, launches, and operates spacecraft on behalf of its customers, allowing them to focus on mission outcomes rather than building or operating their own satellites.

By leveraging Loft's existing space infrastructure, modular technologies, and inventory of satellites on a shelf, customers can deploy new capabilities in months instead of years. Loft has flown more than 25 missions across a wide range of payloads and applications, demonstrating consistent, repeatable performance on-orbit. Loft is a global company with facilities in San Francisco, Golden, Colorado, and Toulouse, France. In 2024, Loft and Marlan Space established Orbitworks, the Middle East's first private space-infrastructure company, extending Loft's ability to support customers worldwide.

About Orbitworks

Orbitworks Satellites Manufacturing – L.L.C. – S.P.C. is a UAE-based satellite manufacturing and space services company focused on developing cost-effective, high-performance space



systems. Orbitworks enables broader access to space through integrated satellite platforms, constellations, and Earth Observation services tailored to evolving mission needs.

About Mistral

Mistral is a pioneer company in generative artificial intelligence, empowering the world with the tools to build and benefit from the most transformative technology of our time. The company democratizes AI through high-performance, optimized, and cutting-edge open-source models, products and solutions as well as end-to-end infrastructure with Mistral Compute.

Headquartered in France and independent, Mistral defends a decentralized and transparent approach to technology, with a strong global presence in the United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore.

About BlackSky

BlackSky is a real-time, space-based intelligence company that delivers on-demand, high frequency imagery, analytics, and high-frequency monitoring of the most critical and strategic locations, economic assets, and events in the world. BlackSky owns and operates one of the industry's most advanced, purpose-built commercial, real-time intelligence systems that combines the power of the BlackSky Spectra® tasking and analytics software platform and our proprietary low earth orbit satellite constellation.

With BlackSky, customers can see, understand and anticipate changes for a decisive strategic advantage at the tactical edge, and act not just fast, but first. BlackSky is trusted by some of the most demanding U.S. and international government agencies, commercial businesses, and organizations around the world.

About IHC:

Established in 1999, IHC has become the most valuable holding company in the Middle East and one of the world's largest investment firms, with a market capitalization of AED 840 billion (USD 229 billion). Since then, it has transformed to represent a new generation of investors. IHC's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and economic diversification spans over 1,300 subsidiaries, driving growth across 4 key sectors: Technology, Infrastructure, Financial Services and Consumer.

IHC continually looks beyond the stand-alone value of its assets for opportunities, stepping outside of traditional approaches and artificial barriers to unlock opportunities across its portfolio, enabling sector-agnostic Dynamic Value Networks and creating results that are often much greater than the sum of their parts.

At IHC, we take our responsibility to shareholders, customers, and employees seriously. Our commitment to responsible investment ensures that we create sustainable value by staying connected to the communities we serve, making a positive difference with every investment.

www.ihcuae.com

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MEDIA CONTACT

Katherine Raso

+971 50 780 5894

Vice President of Marketing and Communications

katherine.raso@orbitworks.ae