

# Japan to develop cheap satellite for emerging markets

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File photo shows a Japanese rocket carrying satellites blasting off from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima prefecture. Japan is developing a low-cost surveillance satellite to aid disaster relief and other purposes as it looks to expand its reach into emerging markets, government and corporate officials said Friday.

Japan is developing a low-cost surveillance satellite to aid disaster relief and other purposes as it looks to expand its reach into emerging markets, government and corporate officials said Friday.

Japan's trade ministry is collaborating with [NEC Corp.](#) and other companies to develop by 2012 a [small satellite](#) costing a fifth of current prices for conventional monitoring satellites, trade ministry official Shuichi Kato said.

NEC will contribute technology it developed for the Hayabusa asteroid probe programme, whose success in being the first to collect asteroid particles during a seven-year odyssey has captured the imagination of Japan's public.

Kato said the satellite would be ready for launch in 2012 and sales would be aimed at emerging countries such as Egypt, Brazil, Indonesia and Thailand as well as Dubai and Kazakhstan.

The government is also talking to Vietnam about providing the satellite as part of official development aid, he said.

The ministry estimates that the [satellite system](#) would cost about 10 billion yen (120 million dollars), about one fifth of existing satellite systems developed by European and American groups, he said.

NEC's spokesman Shinya Hashizume said the satellite alone would cost about 5 billion yen.

The multi-purpose satellite will be capable of monitoring the impact of natural disasters such as flood damage as well as other tasks such as forest conservation or mapping, officials said.

Even though the United States dominates the [satellite](#) market in terms of sales value, Japan's main competitor in [emerging markets](#) is European consortium EADS Astrium whose shareholders include French and Spanish governments as well as Germany's Daimler AG., they said.

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