

Europe, India to build telecom satellite

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Europe and India are teaming up to build a new telecommunications satellite that will provide various services to about half of the world starting in 2008.

Satellite operator Eutelsat said the agreement to build the W2M satellite would be signed at a Feb. 20 ceremony in New Delhi that will be attended by the presidents of India and France.

W2M is the first satellite to be built jointly by the Indian Space Research Organization and Europe's EADS Astrium. Eutelsat will act as prime contractor and will supply the communications payload.

The payload consists of between 26 and 32 Ku-band transponders with enhanced security features and will have an operational life of 15 years.

Once in orbit at 10 degrees east, the three-ton W2M will supply fixed-beam transmission of television and data signals to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. It will also have a steerable beam feature that can reach other parts of Africa as well as central Asia.

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