

SES gives SpaceX first geostationary satellite launch deal

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SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket lifts off on in 2010 from launch pad 40 at Cape Canaveral, Florida. Luxembourg-based satellite operator SES said on Monday it had reached an agreement with the privately owned company SpaceX for a 2013 launch that will be the first geostationary satellite placement using the US firm's Falcon 9 rocket.

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"The SES deal shows that even the most conservative commercial or government customers can have confidence flying their satellites on the Falcon 9 rocket," [SpaceX](#) chief executive Elon Musk said in a statement.

The world-leading [telecommunications satellite](#) operator "is known for their low tolerance to risk and cautious approach in evaluating suppliers," he added.

The agreement supplements SES's existing multi-launch agreements with its traditional launch providers [Arianespace](#) and ILS, and includes an option for a second launch.

"After extensive due diligence of SpaceX's technical and operational expertise, we feel comfortable entrusting SpaceX with one of our satellites, thereby encouraging diversity in the [launch vehicle](#) sector and fostering entrepreneurial spirit in the space industry," SES chief executive Romain Bausch said in statement.

The SES-8 satellite is scheduled to launch in the first quarter of 2013 from SpaceX's Launch Complex 40 at the Air Force Station at Cape Canaveral, Florida.

To be placed into the orbital position of 95 degrees East, it will help respond to the strong demand for additional direct to home (DTH) capacity in Asia.

SpaceX completed in December a successful unmanned test launch of its Dragon capsule on board a Falcon 9 rocket.

The US space agency NASA signed a 1.6-billion-dollar contract with SpaceX in December 2008 under the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) programme to provide 12 spacecraft with cargo capacity of at least 20 tonnes to resupply the [International Space Station](#) (ISS) through 2016.

The full cargo mission to the ISS is planned for 2011.

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