

Argentina, China ink space cooperation deal

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China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao (L) and Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner shake hands after a meeting in June 2012. China plans to build an antenna for deep space observation in Argentina's southern Patagonia region, Argentina's foreign ministry announced Wednesday.

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The agreement -- between Argentina's space agency and China's agency for the control and tracking of satellites -- also defines more general "parameters for establishing earth-based installations," and creates a basis for future cooperation, the ministry said.

It emphasized the antenna is "a project of tremendous importance," which will permit Argentina "to develop interplanetary exploration

activities, to study [deep space](#) and [celestial bodies](#), to monitor and control satellites, and to acquire scientific data."

It is to be built in Neuquen province, the ministry added.

In 2003, China became the third country to use its own equipment to send a person into space.

Argentina's space program is one of the most advanced in Latin America.

The [European Space Agency](#) (ESA) is finishing construction of an antenna in Argentina's central-west Mendoza province, to support deep space exploration.

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