

Argentina launches its first home-built satellite

October 17 2014, by Debora Rey



In this photo provided by Service Optique CSG, the Ariane 5 lifts-off carrying the Argentine made ARSAT-1 geostationary communications satellite, from Kourou, French Guiana, Thursday, Oct. 16, 2014. According the Argentine authorities the satellite will offer Internet, cell phone and television signals for the next 15 years for Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. (AP Photo/Service Optique CSG)

(AP)—Argentina launched its first domestically built communications

satellite Thursday.

The ARSAT-1 satellite is the first to be constructed with local technology in Latin America. It was built by a crew of about 500 scientists over seven years at a cost of \$250 million. The [satellite](#) was launched from a base in French Guiana and is to orbit 22,000 miles (36,000 kilometers) above Earth.

"ARSAT-1 is on its way to space. What a thrill," President Cristina Fernandez said shortly after the launch via her Twitter account.

ARSAT-1 is designed to provide digital television and cellphone services to Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay for the next 15 years. It's also expected to improve telephone and Internet connections in remote places, including for scientists working in the Antarctic region.

Fernandez has said that through ARSAT-1, Argentina joins an elite group that is able to build these types of satellites. Other nations with this capability include European Union states, the United States, Russia, China, India, Israel and Japan.

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