

Russian Soyuz rocket launches 34 new UK satellites

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A Russian Soyuz rocket blasted 34 satellites into space on Thursday for British operator OneWeb, which aims to provide broadband internet everywhere in the world, Moscow's space agency Roscosmos said.

The London-headquartered company is working to complete the construction of a constellation of low earth orbit satellites to provide enhanced broadband and other services to countries around the planet.

The UK company plans for its global commercial internet service to be operational by next year, supported by some 650 satellites.

The Russian rocket, operated by Europe's Arianespace, took off at 1809 GMT from the Guiana Space Centre in French Guiana.

"LIFTOFF!" Russia's Roscosmos space agency tweeted after the launch.

"The Soyuz-ST-B rocket successfully injected the Fregat upper stage with the #OneWeb spacecraft into a suborbital trajectory," the space agency said.

It added that the flight will last 3 hours and 33 minutes.

OneWeb is competing in the race to provide fast internet for the world's [remote areas](#) via satellites along with tech billionaire Elon Musk and fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos of Amazon.

Arianespace, which has worked with Russia for close to two decades, is under contract to make 16 Soyuz launches between December 2020 and the end of 2022.

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