



Press release



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CNES chooses Eiffage TP to complete earthworks for future Ariane 6 launch facilities

CNES's Launch Vehicles Directorate (DLA) is prime contractor on behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA) for ground launch facilities in French Guiana. After analysing competing bids, it has selected the consortium led by Eiffage TP to complete the earthworks for the future ELA 4 launch complex dedicated to Ariane 6.

The contract, worth €14.8 million in total, covers preparation of the sub-grade for the future roads and buildings for ELA 4; excavation work to open up the Luna sand quarry; and excavation work to open up the Renner rock quarry.

The site will cover an area of 170 hectares and some 1 million cubic metres of earth will be moved. Work will begin on 29 June and last 12 months. Most of the work must be completed within the next six months while the dry season lasts.

The Eiffage TP consortium is innovating by treating soils in situ with cement or hydraulic binder, a technique that offers many advantages since it makes maximum use of the soil already on site and limits the need for quarry sand. It also reduces transport, the carbon footprint and the environmental impact of the Guiana Space Centre, while saving natural resources and bringing down overall costs. Waste plant materials from site clearance work will be sent to the biomass recycling facility in Kourou.

The work will be carried out mostly by Guianese firms, both in the consortium with Eiffage TP and DLE Guyane and through subcontractors, service providers and suppliers. At least three-quarters of the contract's value will be channelled into French Guiana's economy. For example, the hydraulic binder that will be used for soil treatment is made in Cayenne.

The contract also includes social insertion clauses to provide some 11,000 hours of work, including 2,000 hours of training, for long-term unemployed people. The GEIQ association of Guianese employers for insertion and qualification is directly involved in applying these contractual conditions and the first recruits have already been hired.

This contract is the first step in the construction of the new ELA 4 launch complex for Ariane 6. Other work is set to be completed, notably the construction of the main buildings that will support integration and operation of the launcher.

After the contract signature at the 51st International Paris Air Show, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Through this contract with Eiffage TP, CNES is kicking off construction of the ELA 4 launch complex for Ariane 6, in line with the decisions reached at the ESA Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg. Our goal is for Ariane 6 to make its first flight in 2020 to maintain Europe's position as the world leader in commercial satellite launches."

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