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France-Vietnam space cooperation Paving the way for a CNES-VAST framework agreement

Thursday 23 July in Hanoi, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met Nguyen Quan, Vietnam's Minister for Science and Technology, and Professor Chau Van Minh, President of the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), to pursue discussions from his previous meeting with Professor Minh in Paris on 15 June.

France and Vietnam have a long and storied record of cooperation in space. Two Vietnamese telecommunications satellites—Vinasat-1 in 2008 and Vinasat-2 in 2012—have been launched by Ariane 5 and Vietnam's first Earth-observation satellite, VNREDSat-1A, was built in France and launched in 2013 by Vega. All of these launches were conducted from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG).

The aim of today's meeting was to pave the way for a framework agreement between CNES and VAST, which could be signed by year-end. This agreement will give pride of place to arrangements for training of Vietnamese engineers and to joint projects on microsatellites and nanosatellites. Future cooperation could also encompass projects associating Vietnamese partners with CNES Earth-observation and Universe science missions. An agreement is also being discussed with the University of Science and Technology of Hanoi (USTH) to put its excellent relations with CNES on a formal long-term footing.

After his visit, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Our very constructive talks with Minister Nguyen Quan and Professor Chau Van Minh reflect France and Vietnam's good relations and our desire to work more closely together. Vietnam today has mature space telecommunications and imaging systems and it attaches a great deal of importance to training. In this respect, the proximity of the future USTH campus to which CNES is contributing and the future Vietnamese space centre will help to spur synergies and I sincerely hope we will be able to move forward on the various areas we have identified for collaboration in the near future."

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