



Press Release

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Space'ibles CNES launches survey observatory

The field of space is undergoing seismic shifts driven by NewSpace, SmartSpace, FastSpace, the GAFAs web giants, newcomers, venture capital firms and start-ups. After 50 years of government-led development, space is seeing a massive influx of private investors in previously sovereign sectors. After telecommunications, today it is the turn of Earth observation to experience its economic revolution. In this new landscape now taking shape, which calls for a multi-disciplinary science and technology perspective, CNES is holding an event today attended by more than 50 speakers from all horizons to inaugurate its Space'ibles space survey observatory, aimed at investigating the field of possibilities. The agency and its partners will thus be armed with a new resource to share their insight into current trends and shape common visions of possible futures for space.

Space is finding its way into smart cities, climate change monitoring and myriad new applications, as more and more sectors look to space solutions to meet society's needs. It is this interpenetration and cross-fertilization that CNES intends to examine from a long-term perspective to consolidate France's position as the world's number two space power. By extending its field of vision to new technologies normally outside the scope of space, like artificial intelligence, nanotechnologies, biotechnologies and new energies, CNES is foreseeing the decisions that will shape the future.

Realizing that the most striking evolutions are likely to come from sectors outside space, CNES and stakeholders from the space ecosystem are seeking input from the transport, healthcare, insurance, energy and agriculture sectors, and from prospective and geopolitical think tanks, human and social sciences, anthropologists and science-fiction authors. This interpenetration of space with other sectors keen to adopt space technologies will boost uptake of space applications.

The quickening pace of technological change is not only affecting traditional space infrastructures. After the development of a space economy for Earth, a new 'off-planet' space economy could soon start to emerge. Tomorrow, might we see fuel depots in space, stations stocking spares, factories for recycling modules and materials, and additive manufacturing plants building space modules and spacecraft? All of these questions pose many legal and ethical issues. How can we live and produce in space while ensuring that space and its resources are developed sustainably? Should we be putting so much scientific, engineering and financial effort into off-planet development? Faced with such issues, it is more important than ever to understand the changes underway and anticipate their possible impacts on the key balances of the space ecosystem. And that is precisely what Space'ibles is designed to do.

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