



Press Release

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Fourth CNES Innovation Day Space economy and solar system exploration the focus of attention

Thursday 7 February, CNES held its fourth Innovation Day at the Pierre Baudis Congress Centre in Toulouse. This key event in the agency's calendar offered the opportunity to present the 2019 Multiyear Research and Technology Plan for orbital systems and launchers, to discuss alternative sources of funding such as public-private partnerships, notably with the industrial SME base, and to underline how innovation is sustaining solar system exploration science. It also provides a forum for French space stakeholders to meet.

In his opening address, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall reflected on the successes of the past year in the agency's five areas of focus: launchers, with the 100th flight of Ariane 5; science, through the large-scale exploration missions that marked 2018; Earth observation, with the orbiting of Metop-C and CFOSat; the launch of four new Galileo satellites; and defence, with the entry into service of the CSO-1 satellite. He also emphasized that innovation will be to the fore at major events during the course of the year, such as the Science Survey Seminar in Le Havre from 8 to 10 October and the ESA Ministerial Council meeting in Seville on 27 and 28 November.

CNES is working on various alternative sources of funding with a view to fostering innovation, partnerships with French industry and the emergence of space start-ups. In 2018, an investment fund was set up and is being managed by CapDecisif Management to spawn firms working in the field of space and its applications. This fund aims to raise €80 to €100 million from institutional and industrial investors. CNES is also partnering with public investment bank Bpifrance to co-fund projects.

The day's proceedings concluded with a roundtable session on the challenges of solar system exploration science, with a panel of experts from CNES and the national scientific research centre CNRS.

On the sidelines of today's event, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Innovation is sustaining the emergence and development of new players at all levels of the space ecosystem, from both the public and private sectors. It ties into a broader scheme and must be approached from a collaborative perspective. Innovation underpins everything we do at CNES and is why, more than ever, we are a pivotal player on the European and international space scene."

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