



PRESS RELEASE

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CNES DURING LOCKDOWN READYING TO GRADUALLY RESUME OPERATIONS

During the current lockdown, CNES has adapted its organization to protect the health of its workforce, play its part in the national effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic and sustain the nation's economic activity.

To this end, the agency has transitioned to teleworking on a massive scale across its four field centres in Paris Les Halles, Paris Daumesnil, at the Toulouse Space Centre and at the Guiana Space Centre, thanks to the capacity of its information system and the huge efforts of staff.

However, CNES's response plan requires certain employees to be physically present on site and all steps have been taken to ensure they can carry out all of their tasks to the usual high standards of quality while strictly applying the recommended distancing and transmission reduction measures.

Preparing to lift lockdown at CNES

The current unprecedented circumstances have dictated a sometimes difficult lockdown. CNES has succeeded remarkably in adapting to this requirement thanks to its excellent information system, which has enabled a large number of personnel to transition to teleworking, and above all to the motivation of everyone working on site and in most cases at home.

This phase is now drawing to a close. President Emmanuel Macron has announced that the lockdown will be progressively lifted from 11 May. The Prime Minister has started outlining the plan to achieve this that will be detailed by the end of April, but CNES is already preparing its own plan to ramp up operations at its field centres.

Unknowns nevertheless remain regarding the situations that each of us will be facing in the weeks and months ahead due to the health status in each region and the issues surrounding public transport and the return to school. All of these factors will obviously determine how and how quickly the lockdown is lifted, which will occur in a gradual and adaptable fashion.

The safety of CNES's people remains the top priority, as it has been since the start of this crisis. From 11 May, on-site operations will be resumed gradually on the basis of two principles. The first to resume will be priority operations that require people to be physically present at the agency's field centres and those that are hardest to accomplish remotely (personnel who can perform their tasks working from home will continue to do so). Then, depending on how the health situation evolves, and on government guidelines and lessons learned from this initial phase, homeworking will be progressively scaled back.

For the first step, the number of personnel on site will be purposely limited to ensure their safety, to protect strategic operations already underway and to contribute to the collective nationwide effort to gradually lift the lockdown.

Each of the agency's directorates is currently analysing options to define which activities will resume on site for the first phase from 11 May, who this will apply to and how work will be organized. This task is being performed on the front line to take into account the needs of operational personnel, the associated health constraints and the individual situation of each member of staff.

First Launchers R&D Challenge

During the lockdown and to support the national effort, CNES is maintaining its first Launchers R&D Challenge decided at its fifth Innovation Day on 11 February in Toulouse. In its constant quest to innovate in

space, CNES is seeking through this event to attract new players from outside the space sector and spur the development of new technology solutions.

The process is designed to accommodate any new player with an innovative technology that could benefit future space projects and to quickly demonstrate the value of proposed innovative solutions. Laureates will be chosen at a pitch day where they will sign a contract with CNES to develop their solution.

The first session of the Challenges will be held on 24 June and will be focused on space launch systems. CNES is allocating a budget of nearly €1 million to this domain for 2020-2021. Candidates can find out how to enter [HERE](#).

CNES to hold first virtual Space Tuesday evening

The next session of Space Tuesdays on the theme of 'the need for space in lockdown' will take place on the Twitch streaming platform on 28 April starting at 7.00 p.m. The master of ceremonies for this evening will be science journalist Paul de Brem, with musical accompaniment from Mehdi Bourayou.

Because living and working in confinement is second nature in space, three experts will be talking live about the isolation of astronauts during their six-month stays on the International Space Station (ISS) and about research currently underway with a view to sending crews to Mars, for which a mission duration of at least 18 months in confined quarters is envisioned. The participants will be Michel Viso, head of CNES's exobiology programme, Cyprien Verseux, an astrobiologist at the University of Bremen in Germany who spent 18 months in isolation in Hawaii for the HI-SEAS IV experiment in 2015-2016, and Romain Charles, a support engineer at ESA's European Astronaut Centre (EAC) in Cologne who took part in the Mars 500 experiment in 2011, spending 500 days in total isolation inside a module near Moscow.

Learn more [HERE](#).

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