Purchase Of Commercial Services In Norway Helps Lockheed Martin's CSOC Save Money For NASA

Lockheed Martin's Consolidated Space Operations Contract (CSOC) is saving money for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) by purchasing commercially provided ground network satellite tracking services. CSOC officials announced that they recently signed a contract for these services with Space Data Services AS (SDS) of Tromso, Norway.

One of the primary objectives under CSOC's contract is to obtain routine services from the commercial sector to reduce costs while maintaining quality. The SDS contract meets both of these criteria and significantly simplifies operations and contract management.

Under the terms of the agreement, SDS will provide CSOC with data services for polar orbiting satellites from two large ground-based antennas located in Svalbard, Norway. With the antennas located very near the North Pole, the Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat) has a unique geographical location. SvalSat can view all 14 daily orbits of polar orbiting satellites and at the same time have continuous contact with geostationary communication satellites so that data can be received and transmitted in real time to the United States and Europe. The NASA polar orbiting satellites play an important role in environmental monitoring and other science related to our understanding of the earth's climate.

"CSOC's ability to purchase these services from a commercial provider such as SDS greatly reduces the costs that NASA has experienced in the past," said Doug Tighe, program manager for CSOC. "By consolidating all polar ground network services at Svalbard into one commercial contract, we can purchase data services on a need-only basis, without incurring discrete maintenance and operational costs. Working with NASA, CSOC hopes to take a next step and privatize SGS."

SDS is a Norwegian firm jointly owned by Norwegian Space Centre (NSC) and Kongsberg Defense and Aerospace (KDA). Norwegian Space Centre has been a collaborative partner with NASA for many years and jointly implemented the NASA-owned station on Svalbard in 1998. This NASA station, coupled with a separate commercial station originally developed by Kongsberg and Lockheed Martin, provide the necessary support under the agreement with SDS. Kongsberg Defense and Aerospace is one of Norway's largest aerospace firms and has worked closely with Lockheed Martin on a variety of defense and space programs.

"We are very pleased that we can provide continued service to NASA Earth Observation Satellites through this contract with CSOC," said Rolf Skar, President of NSC and Chairman of SDS. "The consolidation of several contracts related to our satellite tracking and support activities at SvalSat into one commercial contract between SDS and CSOC will simplify operations, reduce cost for the satellite owners and further strengthen SvalSat's role as the ideal location for Telemetry, Tracking and Command as well as Data Reception."

CSOC is a $3-billion-plus contract awarded by NASA to Lockheed Martin, who serves as the prime contractor to provide end-to-end space operations and Mission and Data Services to both NASA and non-NASA customers. CSOC manages NASA's data collection, telemetry and communications operations that support Earth-orbiting satellites, planetary exploration, and human space flight activities. Services include data acquisition from spacecraft, data transmission to end-users, data processing and storage, ground and space communications, and mission control center operations.

Lockheed Martin Space Operations (LMSO) is a business unit of Lockheed Martin Technology Services headquartered in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. LMSO, a high-tech engineering and science services firm, employs about 4,000 engineers, scientists and support personnel. Services include managing CSOC; software and hardware engineering for the Space Shuttle and International Space Station; mission operations and planning systems design, development, and integration; and human life sciences research.

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