

Turkey joins the ranks of domestic satellite manufacturers

02 October 2024 Adam Jeffs, Editor, SAE Media Group

Turkey has launched its first self-built satellite on a Falcon 9 rocket, adding to a growing constellation of Turkish-operated communications satellites.



Turksat 6A launches on a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station (Credit: ASELSAN)

Turkey has become the latest nation to establish domestic satellite manufacturing capabilities following the launch of its self-built first satellite on July 8. Turksat 6A, manufactured by Turkish Aerospace at the Space Systems Assembly, Integration and Test Center, will be operated by the state-owned satellite operator Turksat. With this launch, Turkey becomes just the 11th country capable of manufacturing its own communication satellites.

The satellite was launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at 7:30pm EST from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. The launch is part of a plan to reduce Turkey's reliance on foreign satellite technologies, with Turkey's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Abdulkadir Uraloğlu, [calling the satellite](#) “the symbol of our independence in space.”

The satellite will form part of [Plan-S](#), Turkey's largest private initiative in satellite and new space technologies, which seeks to provide internet of things connectivity for a growing constellation of satellites. Plan-S intends to expand the constellation to include more than 100 satellites in the near future, enabling the provision of low-latency communication services across the globe.

Tugay Guzel, co-founder and CEO of Plan-S, believes the constellation project will strengthen Turkey's position in the final frontier by promoting its indigenous technologies.

“The satellite constellation will connect millions of devices at once, greatly benefiting many sectors worldwide, especially agriculture, logistics and energy, and there are only a few companies capable of providing such a service,” said Guzel.

Turksat 6A, the product of a decade-long construction effort, will provide satellite, TV and communications services over parts of Europe, the Middle East and Asia, adding four countries to Turksat's coverage: India, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan believes the project represents a bright future for the Turkish space programme:

“With the entry into service of Turksat 6A, Turkey will become a country capable of producing communication satellites. Thanks to technology and experience gained, our country will have a market share in the design and

production of satellites and their components,” he said. “Producing critical technologies such as communication satellites without being dependent on foreign sources is also of great importance for our national security.”

The launch was an apparent success, with Abdulkadir Uraloğlu, Turkey’s Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, announcing in a post on X that the first signal from Turksat 6A had been received shortly after launch.

Several nations and organizations will gather to discuss their satellite communications capabilities at the [Global MilSatCom](#) 2024 conference, including experts from NATO, UK MoD and the United States Space Force.