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Telespazio has won the ESA competition for the Flight Operations Segment of IRIDE's Earth observation programme

Under Italy's national recovery and resilience plan (PNRR), Telespazio - a joint venture of Leonardo (67%) and Thales (33%) - has been awarded a tender by the European Space Agency (ESA) to supply the Flight Operations Segment (FOS) of the Italian satellite constellation IRIDE, for the NIMBUS and PLATiNO platforms.

IRIDE is an Italian government project drawing on resources from the PNRR, due to be completed by the end of the year 2026, managed by ESA in collaboration with the Italian Space Agency (ASI), for the creation of a satellite Earth observation infrastructure to provide services to government agencies.

The contract for the FOS segment is worth about 21 million Euro. As project head, Telespazio will rely on a nation-wide team of industries including Aiko, Leonardo, Next Ingegneria dei Sistemi, Planetek Italia, Serco Italia and Thales Alenia Space Italia, a joint venture owned by Thales (67%) and Leonardo (33%).

The Flight Operations Segment will provide command and control functions, determine orbit and avoid collisions, acquire data on useful loads, and monitor and plan satellites in the IRIDE constellation.

The activities included in the contract involve design, development, validation and maintenance of the segment, which is due to be completed in the first half of 2026, as required under the PNRR.

Telespazio will provide flight operation preparations, training, implementation and validation of a network of ground stations, execution of the LEOP (Launch and Early Orbit Phase), and commissioning for the IRIDE satellites.

"Telespazio is proud to be given this opportunity by the European Space Agency to contribute to the IRIDE programme", comments Luigi Pasquali, Space Activities Coordinator of Leonardo and CEO of Telespazio. "We bring to this innovative project funded by the PNRR many years of consolidated experience in the ground segment and operations of Earth observation satellites, guaranteeing the performance of the system, its useful lifespan and possible future evolution of the IRIDE constellation".

Simonetta Cheli, Director of the European Space Agency's Earth Observation programme and Head of the ESRIN Centre in Frascati, commented: *"The European Space Agency is happy with this contract signed with Telespazio. The Italian government has given ESA the task of creating the national Earth observation constellation, an innovative and strategic programme for Italy. We have*

Telespazio, a Leonardo and Thales 67/33 joint venture, is one of the world's leading operators in satellite services. Its activities range from the design and development of space systems to the management of launch services, from in-orbit satellite control to Earth observation, from integrated communications, satellite navigation and localisation services to scientific programmes. Telespazio plays a leading role in the reference markets harnessing technological experience acquired over the years. Since its establishment, the company has participated in major European space programmes such as Galileo, EGNOS, Copernicus and COSMO-SkyMed. In 2021, Telespazio generated 605 million euro in sales while employing more than 3,000 people in 15 different countries.

now completed the initial phase in the programme, with signature of all the contracts, on schedule and consistently with the directives regarding PNRR funding. We're confident that Telespazio will contribute to the success of the initiative, along with the other Italian companies involved."