SPACENEWS 30+ YEARS

Satellogic signs deal to provide imagery service in China

by **Jeff Foust** — September 13, 2019

An example of one-meter imagery from Satellogic's satellites. Those spacecraft can also produce hyperspectral imagery. Credit: Satellogic

PARIS — Earth imaging startup Satellogic has signed an agreement with a Chinese company that will give it access to its fleet of satellites for imaging a Chinese province.

The agreement with ABDAS, a Chinese data science company, gives that company exclusive access to Satellogic's constellation of imaging satellites for imaging sites within China's Henan Province. ABDAS will have control over what sites to observe within the province when the satellites are passing overhead. The agreement is valued at $38 million, Satellogic said in a Sept. 9 statement.

The deal is the first for a concept Satellogic calls a "dedicated satellite constellation." It gives customers exclusive control over a number of satellites over a specific geographical region. Customers have control over tasking of the satellites as if the satellites were their own.

"It's basically an alternative to having to go buy a satellite, or a number of satellites," said Emiliano Kargieman, chief executive of Buenos Aires-based Satellogic, during an interview Sept. 12 at Euroconsult's World Satellite Business

Week here. “It has all the benefits of a service model. You get the ownership without the cost.”

He said the company has seen “significant traction” for the dedicated satellite constellation concept for customers at both the regional and national level, particularly for countries that are just starting to develop Earth observation capabilities, such as in Latin America and Africa. “We expect this to be the first of many” such deals, he said.

Satellogic currently has eight satellites in orbit, providing multispectral imagery at a resolution of one meter and hyperspectral imagery at a resolution of 30 meters. Sixteen more satellites are scheduled for the next several months on Long March and Vega rockets. That includes 13 on a dedicated Long March 6 rocket in July 2020.

With at least 20 operational satellites in orbit, Kargieman said the company will be able to provide multiple revisits per day and “remapping essentially the entire planet” monthly. The company will then move on to a 90-satellite constellation that could be ready 24 months later, for weekly remapping globally. “We believe that is the sweet spot in terms of frequency and resolution to start really improving the more mainstream applications of Earth observation,” he said.

He said the company is fully funded through the next set of satellites. Moving on to the 90-satellite constellation may require another equity funding round, he said, along with cash flow from operations and debt.

A unique aspect of Satellogic’s satellites is the inclusion of the hyperspectral instrument, but Kargieman said there’s been little commercial interest in that so far. “Commercially, I think hyperspectral is still a very experimental capability,” he said, especially at the lower resolution that Satellogic’s satellites can provide.

The company is making that hyperspectral data to researchers to experiment with it for potential applications, while using it in its own data analysis pipelines in combination with multispectral images and other data. Kargieman said the company will carry hyperspectral instruments on its upcoming set of 16 satellites, “because we believe there is value in this data set, and this value will grow as we have more frequency of data.”

https://spacenews.com/satellogic-signs-deal-to-provide-imagery-service-in-china/