

On-orbit Space Situational Awareness Challenge

Overview

Space is becoming more congested and contested. This trend increases the risk of undesirable events, either deliberate or accidental, that could negatively impact the space-based services upon which New Zealand society and economic wellbeing relies. As a strong proponent of a rules-based system of international cooperation, New Zealand requires the means to monitor on-orbit activities that may affect those critical services, including tracking, inspection and assessment of orbital objects.

Challenge Objective

To demonstrate operating concepts and technologies to support a sovereign capability to monitor, inspect and assess orbital objects that could negatively impact the safe and effective operation of critical space capabilities¹, and provide information to support international rules-based norms in space.

End User

New Zealand Defence Force

Desired Outcomes

The programme seeks to explore this technology to strengthen the domestic space supply chain, and position New Zealand as a trusted contributor to global space missions. It also promotes inclusive participation, fosters commercialisation pathways, and generates flight data to support future mission integration and export potential.

¹ Critical capabilities include satellite communications, global navigation satellite systems, and earth observation