

# NTU partners Thales to set up new small satellite research centre

PUBLISHED ON FEB 11, 2015 10:02 AM



Data from one of Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) satellites. The university announced on Wednesday morning that it will set up a small satellite research laboratory with Europe's largest satellite manufacturer, Thales Alenia Space. – ST PHOTO: AUDREY TAN



BY AUDREY TAN

**SINGAPORE** - The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is setting up a joint satellite research laboratory with Europe's largest satellite manufacturer, Thales Alenia Space.

The new laboratory, named S4TIN (Smart Small Satellite Systems - Thales in NTU), will work in areas such as developing small infrared cameras that can detect changes in climate from space, and explore the possible use of satellite technology for maritime security.

It will also explore the use of the technology in areas such as remote sensing, environment monitoring, navigation and automatic identification systems, said Thales Alenia Space's chief technical officer Patrick Maute.

Small satellites, which refer to satellites that weigh less than 100kg, is an emerging area in the global satellite industry which the partners hope to tap on.

The lab was launched on Wednesday by Mr Maute, NTU Provost Freddy Boey, managing director of the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) Yeoh Keat Chuan, and Thales in Singapore chief executive Jean-Noel Stock.

Since 2011, NTU's existing Satellite Research Centre has built, launched and operated four satellites that can take photographs from space, sense climate data and experiment with inter-satellite communications.

The centre will independently launch two more by 2015.

Prof Boey believes NTU's expertise in this field gives the university an advantage in the new collaboration with France-based Thales.

He said: "Together with Thales, we now aim to develop more advanced satellite technology to bring the world better telecommunications and more accurate climate sensing and observation data. This is also the more sustainable route, as smaller satellites require less resources and time to build, launch and operate."

Mr Maute said the firm was impressed with NTU's ability to "build, launch and operate four satellites in such a short period".

He added: "The talents trained by NTU had proven themselves to be fully capable of developing nano and micro satellites at a rapid pace."

During Wednesday's event, NTU also launched its Satellite Research Centre II, which will house state-of-the-art satellite communications and research equipment.

audreyt@sph.com.sg