

ADFD to Launch First Dedicated Satellite Capacity in Q4 2026

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Abu Dhabi Fund for Development has announced plans to launch its first dedicated satellite capacity in the fourth quarter of 2026, marking a major step in the use of space technology to support international development projects.

The initiative, unveiled during Make It In the Emirates 2026, forms part of ADFD's strategic partnership with Orbitworks and is designed to strengthen project monitoring, improve transparency and support more data driven decision making across the Fund's global portfolio.

The move positions ADFD as the first development fund globally to secure dedicated satellite capacity for development finance operations, following an agreement signed during the World Governments Summit earlier this year.

H.E. Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD, said the programme will significantly enhance the organisation's ability to oversee projects worldwide.

"The launch of our first dedicated satellite capacity in Q4 marks a defining step in how we monitor and deliver development impact," he said.

"This capability strengthens our ability to oversee projects with greater precision and transparency, while also reflecting the UAE's growing leadership in advanced industries and space technologies, in line with the vision of our leadership and the objectives of Make it in the Emirates."

AI enabled satellite network to support global oversight

Under the partnership, ADFD will utilise the Altair constellation, a network of 10 AI enabled, multi sensor satellites assembled and integrated in Abu Dhabi.

The system is intended to provide near real time Earth observation data, allowing ADFD to independently monitor infrastructure projects, environmental conditions and development activity across multiple regions.

The platform will also give the Fund access to high resolution satellite imagery and Orbitworks' secure digital mission control infrastructure, enabling closer oversight of project execution and compliance.

Dr Hamdullah Mohib, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Orbitworks, said the project represents a shift from agreement to operational delivery.

"This milestone reflects the transition from agreement to execution, enabling ADFD with dedicated satellite capacity and supporting a new approach to development finance that is more data driven, accountable and responsive," he said.

As part of the next phase of implementation, ADFD representatives recently visited Orbitworks' facilities to review development progress and align on delivery timelines ahead of the planned 2026 launch.

Supporting transparency and local manufacturing

Once operational, the Altair constellation will provide continuous optical imaging capabilities to support independent oversight of ADFD funded projects globally.

The initiative also aligns with wider UAE ambitions around advanced manufacturing and space enabled technologies. The satellites are being assembled locally in Abu Dhabi, supporting the country's strategy to strengthen domestic high technology industries.

ADFD said the integration of Earth observation technology into its operations will improve efficiency, transparency and impact measurement across its international development activities while reinforcing the UAE's position as a growing centre for advanced space and AI driven innovation.