

South Africa to launch 3 nanosatellites, a first for the African continent

In a first for the African continent, South Africa is expected to launch three maritime-focussed nanosatellites into orbit on Thursday afternoon.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

The three nanosatellites – the first to be entirely developed on the African continent – will be launched from Cape Canaveral in the United States at about 5.25pm.

The three satellites form part of the Department of Science and Innovation's (DSI) Maritime Domain Awareness Satellite (MDASat) constellation.

When complete, the constellation will comprise of nine satellites which, according to the department, will “detect, identify and monitor vessels in near real-time in support of South African maritime domain awareness”.

satellite as a significant milestone for the country.

“This will further cement South Africa's position as an African leader in small satellite development, and help the country to capture a valuable share of a niche market in the fast-growing global satellite value chain.”

Nzimande added that although South Africa is making strides in the space industry, specialised skills are needed to take it forward.

He said the department has developed a human capital development programme based at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology; called the cube satellite (CubeSat) programme; which seeks to remedy the lack of professionals and skills in the industry.

“As part of this programme, students are taught engineering principles using CubeSats as training tools. CubeSats are built using the same engineering principles as any other satellite, hence highly specialised and advanced skills are acquired through this programme,” he said.

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