

Brazil Space Program to Get Greater Funding

Contributed by Daniel Dutra
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The work on revisions in the Brazilian space program for the next ten years was concluded at a meeting in the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), where the amount of funds needed for its execution was defined.

The projections point to an annual figure of US\$ 200 million, considered "ambitious but feasible" by the president of the AEB, Sérgio Gaudenzi.

The space program should count on around US\$ 100 million this year, "but there is the possibility of an increase," he said.

Gaudenzi emphasizes that, with a budget on the order of US\$ 200 million, the technological distance separating Brazil from the countries capable of space exploration should be reduced, especially when it comes to the successful launching of the country's own space objects.

VLS-1 by 2006

The National Space Activities Program (PNAE) has strategic value for the country's development, and it is important for it to be publicized, so that the population can understand how the life of ordinary citizens can be affected by its implantation, affirmed last month the Minister of Science and Technology, Eduardo Campos.

According to Campos, oversight of the Amazon, weather prediction, and national security policy can be improved through the space program.

The PNAE operates in the area of training in space systems, backs up Brazil's participation in the International Space Station, provides research incentives, and encourages the transfer of space technology to other productive sectors.

The program is planned to span a period of ten years, with periodic revisions.

The current version covers the period 1998-2007 and is organized in seven sub-programs: Space Applications, Satellites and Functional Cargo, Launch Vehicles, Infrastructure, Research and Development, Human Resource Training, and Development of National Industrial Capacity.

The Minister pointed out that international technical cooperation agreements are being negotiated for the reconstruction of the launching tower in Alcântara, in Northeast Brazil, and for the launching of the fourth prototype of the VLS-1 missile in 2006.

"Brazil is once again investing in the program at one of the most favorable moments in the past 30 years. In 2005 we shall have one of the best years in terms of investments since the implantation of the program in Brazil," he concluded.

Translation: David Silberstein
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