EMIRATES SKYCARGO TRANSPORTS ORBITWORKS' ALTAIR-1, THE FIRST COMMERCIAL AI-ENABLED SATELLITE DEVELOPED AND MANUFACTURED IN THE UAE

News / Airlines

Emirates SkyCargo completed the transport of Altair-1, the UAE's first commercial AI-enabled earth observation satellite. Part of Orbitworks' Altair constellation, the movement of the satellite highilghts a landmark achievement in the UAE's vision to become a global leader in space and advanced technologies. Altair-1 was flown on an Emirates SkyCargo Boeing 777 freighter aircraft from Dubai (DWC) airport to Los Angeles (LAX) ahead of its scheduled launch in October 2026.

Altair is a multi-sensor satellite constellation developed and manufactured in the UAE by Orbitworks. The system is equipped with optical, infrared, thermal and RF sensing capabilities and onboard AI processing. With advanced imaging payloads, optimised orbital design, frequent revisit rates and consistent data acquisition, Altair will provide analysis-ready intelligence for applications including environmental monitoring, disaster response, land and coastal-use analysis, maritime domain awareness, and resource and infrastructure assessment. The satellite transported by

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Emirates SkyCargo is the first of 10 that will form the Altair constellation.

The transportation of Altair highlights Emirates SkyCargo's expertise in flying highly sensitive and specialised cargo under its Aerospace and Engineering vertical. A dedicated Emirates SkyCargo team managed the end to end transport of the satellite, maintaining rigorous environmental and safety controls and delivering on schedule.

Badr Abbas, Divisional Senior Vice President, Emirates SkyCargo commented: "Emirates SkyCargo is proud to support Orbitworks at this significant moment and contribute to the UAE's growing reputation as a global hub for innovation, advanced technologies and specialised logistics. Transporting highly sensitive and technologically advanced cargo requires precision and expertise and we are well positioned through decades of deep expertise to support this critical mission. The movement of Altair-1 from the UAE to the United States ahead of its launch also underlines the role of specialised air cargo solutions in supporting the global aerospace sector."

Schahan Sediqi, General Manager, Orbitworks stated: "Altair-1 is the product of hard work by an incredible team, and today marks a historic moment, not just for Orbitworks, but for the UAE's ambitions in space. We could not have reached this point without in-country partners like Emirates SkyCargo, whose care and expertise got Altair safely from Dubai to Los Angeles. We are incredibly proud of what our team has built, and we now look forward to October, when Altair-1 will launch into orbit and begin its mission."

Emirates SkyCargo has extensive experience transporting satellites and other highly sensitive aerospace equipment worldwide. Most recently, the air cargo carrier transported Arab Satellite 813 from Dubai to its launch site near Shanghai, China. In 2018, the air cargo carrier made history by transporting Khalifasat, the first satellite developed and built by UAE engineers from Dubai to South Korea. Emirates SkyCargo's dedicated solution for transporting Aerospace and Engineering cargo is one of the fastest growing verticals in its portfolio of specialised products. In 2026, over 6,000 tonnes of aerospace and advanced engineering cargo have been moved across the world by the air cargo carrier.

Emirates SkyCargo has embarked on an ambitious programme of fleet and network expansion. Since March 2026, the cargo carrier has taken delivery of six Boeing 777-F production freighters and one Boeing 777-300ERSF converted from an Emirates passenger aircraft. The carrier is slated to receive a further four Boeing 777-F production freighters and one additional converted freighter later this year. Emirates SkyCargo's expanded freighter fleet has allowed the cargo carrier to boost its global freighter network to over 60 destinations, providing customers with access to vital maindeck cargo capacity as well as flexibility and agility to navigate global supply chains.

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