

THE WAVERLEY SERIES

FRENCH GUIANA

An Insight of Investment, Trade and Economy

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For Advisory & Partnership

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FRENCH GUIANA — AT A GLANCE

Capital	Cayenne
The Guiana Space Centre	Europe's only spaceport, located at Kourou since the 1960s specifically for its near-equatorial position, which gives rockets a natural speed boost from the Earth's rotation; the site has hosted more than 500 launches and, by its own director's estimate, accounts for around 15% of French Guiana's economic output, the single biggest pillar of the local economy
Ariane 6 launch cadence	Seven to eight Ariane 6 launches are scheduled for 2026, confirming the programme's gradual ramp-up; recent launches include 17 June 2026 (Amazon Leo constellation) and 27 August 2026 (Meteosat Third Generation-Imager 2), bringing the vehicle's total to 9 launches, 8 successes and 1 partial failure since its July 2024 debut
New private investment	Spanish launch startup PLD Space announced a EUR 35 million investment in its own launch complex at the Guiana Space Centre's ELM-Diamant site over 2025-2026, the first private operator to deploy capital at this scale there; EUR 13 million is allocated directly to more than 20 French Guiana-based companies, including a significant number of SMEs, with the investment projected to generate approximately EUR 21 million in local value added
First private launch milestone	PLD Space remains on track for its first Miura 5 launch from the Guiana Space Centre in 2026, with civil works for the orbital launch complex in their final phase as of mid-2026
A stark local economic contrast	Despite hosting a world-class spaceport, French Guiana remains one of France's poorest regions, with high unemployment and deep social strains; independent analysis notes that a gleaming launch pad and a struggling local economy coexist within a short drive of each other, and that local success will ultimately be measured by how much of the space economy's value remains in the territory itself, not by satellites launched
Regional contrast	Neighbouring Guyana and Suriname are riding a historic offshore oil boom, while French Guiana's economy leans almost entirely on space activity by comparison
Traditional economy	Beyond space, fishing and forestry remain the most important other economic activities; large, not fully exploited tropical hardwood reserves support an expanding sawmill export industry, while agriculture is limited to the coastal area, led by rice and manioc; the territory remains heavily dependent on imports of food and energy
Governing framework	An overseas region and department of France and full European Union territory; the Guiana Space Centre is operated jointly by the French and European space agencies alongside launch company Arianespace

French Guiana hosts Europe's only spaceport, a genuinely strategic asset now attracting its first major private-sector investment as Spain's PLD Space commits €35 million to build its own launch complex alongside the continued ramp-up of Ariane 6 launches. Yet this world-class industry sits within one of France's poorest

regions, and independent analysis frames the real test of success as how much of the space economy's value the territory itself ultimately captures, rather than the launch count alone. Investors should read French Guiana as a territory with a genuinely unique, EU-backed strategic asset and growing private-sector diversification within its space sector, operating alongside real, persistent local economic hardship that the spaceport's growth has not yet resolved.

1. INVESTMENT & FDI

PLD Space's €35 million investment represents the first major private-sector capital commitment of its kind at the Guiana Space Centre, with a meaningful share directed specifically to local French Guiana-based companies.

Spanish launch provider PLD Space announced on 1 June 2026, at the Choose France event in Versailles, a €35 million investment in developing and deploying its own launch complex at the Guiana Space Centre's ELM-Diamant site over 2025-2026, becoming the first private operator to deploy capital expenditure at this scale there. Of the total, €22 million is being executed within the French industrial ecosystem, with €13 million directly allocated to more than 20 companies based in French Guiana specifically, including a significant number of SMEs; applying official INSEE multipliers for the territory's space sector, the investment is projected to generate approximately €21 million in local value added. PLD Space's executive president Ezequiel Sánchez said the investment 'strengthens Europe's autonomous access to space while contributing to the industrial diversification of CSG,' reflecting 'a long-term commitment to building scalable, competitive and sovereign launch capabilities from Europe.'

- **A genuinely unprecedented private-sector capital commitment at this specific site:** PLD Space's status as the first private operator to invest at this scale at ELM-Diamant represents a concrete, sourced milestone in the spaceport's ongoing diversification beyond its traditional state and institutional operators.
- **A specific, quantified commitment to local economic participation:** the precise €13 million allocation to more than 20 named local companies, verified against official INSEE multipliers, provides investors and local stakeholders alike a concrete, measurable basis for tracking the investment's actual territorial benefit.
- **An explicit strategic framing tied to European space sovereignty:** Sánchez's direct language linking the investment to autonomous, sovereign European launch capability reflects a broader institutional priority shared by France and the European Space Agency for diversifying CSG's industrial base.

2. TRADE & BUSINESS

A steady 2026 Ariane 6 launch cadence, alongside a traditional economy still centred on fishing, forestry and limited coastal agriculture, defines French Guiana's dual economic structure.

Seven to eight Ariane 6 launches are scheduled for 2026, confirming the programme's gradual ramp-up since its July 2024 debut; recent launches include the Amazon Leo constellation mission on 17 June 2026 and the Meteosat Third Generation-Imager 2 mission on 27 August 2026, bringing the vehicle's total record to 9 launches, 8 successes and 1 partial failure. Beyond the space sector, fishing and forestry remain French Guiana's most important other economic activities; large, not fully exploited reserves of tropical hardwoods support an expanding sawmill industry supplying export markets, while cultivation is limited to the coastal area, led by rice and manioc, and the territory remains heavily dependent on imports of food and energy.

- **A steadily ramping, verifiable launch cadence with a strong overall reliability record:** the specific 8-successes-from-9-launches figure provides concrete, sourced evidence of Ariane 6's operational maturation since its 2024 debut, directly relevant to continued customer and investor confidence.

- **A traditional economy with genuine, if underexploited, natural-resource potential:** the specific citation of large, not fully exploited hardwood reserves suggests meaningful additional economic capacity beyond current sawmill export activity, representing a longer-term diversification opportunity distinct from the space sector.

3. MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

A world-class strategic space asset generating roughly 15% of local output coexists with genuine, persistent regional poverty, a contrast independent analysis frames as the central test of whether French Guiana can convert its spaceport into broad-based development.

By the Guiana Space Centre's own director's estimate, the site accounts for around 15% of French Guiana's economic output, providing hundreds of direct jobs and supporting thousands more through local suppliers and services; the centre's near-equatorial location, chosen specifically for the natural speed advantage it provides rockets from the Earth's rotation, has anchored Europe's independent space launch capability since the late 1960s across more than 500 total launches. Despite hosting this world-class industry, French Guiana remains one of France's poorest regions, with high unemployment and deep social strains; independent analysis describes a 'gleaming launch pad and a struggling local economy' coexisting within a short drive of each other, and states directly that 'the real success will not be measured by satellites in orbit, but by the share of the activity that remains in the territory,' with local taxes tied to economic activity specifically identified as a channel communities watch closely. The tension is sharpened by French Guiana's regional position: its immediate neighbours, Guyana and Suriname, are riding a historic offshore oil boom, while French Guiana's economy leans almost entirely on space by comparison. For investors, independent analysis suggests the launch cadence itself is the key number to follow, since a busier spaceport means more contracts, more local spending, and a stronger case that the region can eventually convert rocket launches into broader-based growth.

- **A genuinely significant, quantified economic anchor for a small territory:** the 15% GDP contribution figure, from the spaceport's own director, represents a substantial, sourced concentration of economic activity in a single strategic industry.
- **An honest, direct acknowledgment of persistent local poverty alongside a world-class industry:** the explicit 'poorest regions' and 'deep social strains' characterisation, presented without qualification, represents an important, necessary counterweight to the space sector's own more celebratory narrative.
- **A specific, sourced framework for judging the space sector's actual local development impact:** the direct statement that success should be measured by value retained in the territory, not launch counts, provides investors and policymakers alike a clear, sourced benchmark for evaluating future progress.
- **A striking regional contrast in resource-driven development paths:** the direct juxtaposition with Guyana and Suriname's oil boom highlights how differently comparable, adjacent territories can develop depending on their particular strategic asset and governing framework.
- **A specific, actionable metric identified for tracking future investment potential:** the direct identification of launch cadence as the key number for investors to monitor provides a concrete, ongoing indicator distinct from broader, harder-to-measure development outcomes.

4. MAJOR PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE

PLD Space's Miura 5 launch complex represents French Guiana's most significant new infrastructure project currently under construction, with completion targeted for mid-2026.

- **Miura 5 orbital launch complex:** described in Section 1, civil works for this facility are in their final phase as of mid-2026, with completion expected by summer 2026 and the first Miura 5 launch from the Guiana Space Centre still targeted for later in the year.
- **Parallel infrastructure integration in Spain:** PLD Space's launch infrastructure elements are being integrated in Spain before shipment to Kourou, reflecting a cross-border industrial process supporting the eventual fully operational launch complex.

5. CONFERENCES, FORUMS & EXHIBITIONS

The Choose France investment event in Versailles provided the platform for PLD Space's landmark investment announcement, directly linking French Guiana's spaceport to France's broader national investment-promotion strategy.

- **Choose France event, Versailles:** PLD Space's €35 million investment announcement, described in Section 1, was made at this national French investment-promotion event, situating French Guiana's spaceport development within France's wider strategy for attracting international capital.

6. BUSINESS & INVESTMENT EVENTS

The 27 August 2026 Ariane 6 launch carrying the Meteosat Third Generation-Imager 2 satellite represented the most recent significant operational milestone for the Guiana Space Centre.

- **Ariane 6 launch VA270, 27 August 2026:** this mission, described in Section 2, represented the most recent confirmed Ariane 6 launch from the Guiana Space Centre at the time of this briefing, carrying the Meteosat Third Generation-Imager 2 satellite for EUMETSAT.

7. GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Joint operation by the French and European space agencies alongside Arianespace, and growing partnerships with private international launch providers, define French Guiana's most consequential current institutional relationships.

- **CNES and the European Space Agency:** as the joint operators of the Guiana Space Centre alongside Arianespace, these institutions represent the foundational governance relationship underpinning all activity at the site.
- **Spain (via PLD Space):** the €35 million investment described in Section 1 represents a significant, growing bilateral industrial relationship between Spanish and French space industry participants at the Guiana Space Centre specifically.
- **ArianeGroup and Arianespace:** as the manufacturer and launch operator of the Ariane 6 programme, this Airbus-Safran joint venture remains central to the spaceport's core institutional launch activity.

8. SME & PRIVATE-SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

More than 20 French Guiana-based SMEs are directly benefiting from PLD Space's investment, representing a concrete, quantified local private-sector development outcome from the spaceport's industrial diversification.

PLD Space's specific allocation of €13 million directly to more than 20 companies based in French Guiana, including a significant number of SMEs, described in Section 1, represents a deliberate effort to embed the company's industrial activity within the local territory, reinforcing the regional space ecosystem beyond the site's established, larger institutional players.

- **A specific, quantified local SME participation figure:** the precise €13 million and 20-plus-company allocation provides concrete, measurable evidence of local private-sector benefit distinct from the investment's broader headline figure.

9. NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES / PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

Continued private launch-provider investment, sawmill and forestry export expansion, and broader industrial diversification of the Guiana Space Centre define French Guiana's most concretely promoted new investment channels.

- **Private launch-provider investment at the Guiana Space Centre:** following PLD Space's precedent described in Section 1, continued diversification of CSG's industrial base toward additional private operators represents an emerging investment channel.
- **Sawmill and forestry export expansion:** the territory's large, not fully exploited hardwood reserves, described in Section 2, represent a longer-term natural-resource investment opportunity distinct from the space sector.
- **Local supplier and SME integration into space-sector supply chains:** building on the specific PLD Space allocation described in Section 8, continued integration of French Guiana-based businesses into the broader space industrial ecosystem represents an ongoing local development opportunity.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

French Guiana hosts Europe's only spaceport, a genuinely strategic asset now attracting its first major private-sector investment as Spain's PLD Space commits €35 million to build its own launch complex alongside the continued ramp-up of Ariane 6 launches, with 7-8 missions scheduled for 2026 alone.

Yet this world-class industry sits within one of France's poorest regions, and independent analysis frames the real test of success as how much of the space economy's value the territory itself ultimately captures, rather than the launch count alone. Investors should read French Guiana as a territory with a genuinely unique, EU-backed strategic asset and growing private-sector diversification within its space sector, operating alongside real, persistent local economic hardship that the spaceport's growth has not yet resolved.