

Space Economy

A Strategic Investment Opportunity
in Cape Town & the Western Cape

July 2025





Pioneers | Space Innovation in Cape Town & the Western Cape 7th Edition

Sector Overview

The Western Cape is at the forefront of South Africa's rapidly expanding space economy. As global demand surges for satellite connectivity, navigation systems, and AI-powered space insights, the region is becoming a critical node in the global space value chain.

With clear skies, minimal radio interference, and a strategic Southern Hemisphere location, the Western Cape offers ideal conditions for space observation, satellite tracking, and even launch operations.

The global space economy is projected to surge from US\$630 billion in 2023 to US\$1.8 trillion by 2035, with potential to hit US\$2.3 trillion. The Western Cape is perfectly positioned to seize this growth, with a solid industrial base, strong export capacity, and a vibrant innovation ecosystem.

In 2024, the province drove over 55% of South Africa's space navigation exports and nearly 94% of spacecraft and launch vehicle exports, reaching major markets including the U.S., UK, Japan, France, and Thailand.

The Western Cape is a leader in satellite systems, optical payloads, and radio-frequency components manufacturing, supported by an expanding ecosystem of research institutions, tech companies, and public-private partnerships.

Key segments include:

- **Manufacturing and Core Inputs:** Including satellite and component manufacturing, and the development of ground control facilities.
- **Operations:** Focused on satellite testing, transmission of commands, launch services, and data reception.
- **Applications:** Includes navigation, communications, and Earth observation for sectors such as agriculture, logistics, climate monitoring, and disaster management.



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WHY CAPE TOWN & THE WESTERN CAPE

1. Somerset West-Stellenbosch Corridor

A key node in Africa's space economy, this corridor is a hub for satellite innovation, home to firms like CubeSpace, Dragonfly Aerospace, and Simera Sense.

2. Cost-Effective Space Ecosystem

Home to Africa's most advanced and cost-effective space ecosystem, spanning the full value chain from manufacturing and testing, to institutions like the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) and South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO).

3. Academic Leadership

World-class universities power space innovation, from SA's first satellite at Stellenbosch to cutting-edge research in astronomy and Cube Sats at UWC, CPUT, and UCT.

4. Strong STEM Talent Pipeline

With over 120 000 software developers in South Africa, top universities, and strong English proficiency, the region is a hub for STEM talent.

5. Venture Capital Investment

Local universities actively invest in start-ups, with recent funding rounds led by the University Technology Fund supporting biotech and aerospace ventures.

6. Export-Ready Space Components

Local manufacturers serve global markets, with components used in agriculture, mining, disaster response, and climate monitoring—showcasing space tech's broad impact.

7. Space-Enabling Infrastructure

With diverse terrain, and top-tier infrastructure, the province is ideal for space missions—from research, development, and testing, to full-scale deployment.

8. Square Kilometre Array Project

The Western Cape hosts the South African offices of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), the world's largest radio telescope project, aimed at exploring the universe in unprecedented detail.

9. Stable Regional Government

The Western Cape's stable governance, strong infrastructure, and business-friendly policies make it a secure, strategic base for global space investment and innovation.

10. Incentives

For additional information scan here:



Space Economy Companies Shaping Cape Town & the Western Cape

ASTROFICA
TECHNOLOGIES



LAMBDA G
Applied Electromagnetics



SIMERA
SENSE



Contact us for more information

For further information on setting up or expanding your business in Cape Town & the Western Cape please contact Wesgro's Investment Team

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