



On-Air Trials Underway: Iridium NTN Direct Prepares to Enter Beta as Testing Continues

The first mobile-originated message sent over the Iridium NTN Direct service read: "To Iridium and Beyond."

MCLEAN, Va., Jan. 21, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- [Iridium Communications Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: IRDM), a leading provider of global voice, data, and PNT satellite services, today announced successful on-air testing of [Iridium NTN DirectSM](#), including two-way message transmission over its low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite network. This milestone marks a significant step forward as Iridium prepares for beta testing and commercial service of Iridium NTN Direct in 2026.

Iridium NTN Direct is being developed as the world's first truly global, standards-based NB-IoT and direct-to-device (D2D) non-terrestrial network (NTN) service. With Iridium NTN Direct, mobile network operators (MNOs) can extend coverage beyond terrestrial networks, while chipset makers and device manufacturers can integrate standardized satellite capability into their products to support this expanded reach.

"Iridium NTN Direct is no longer a concept, it's on the air, sending messages, and now being rigorously tested to meet our elite performance standards," said Matt Desch, CEO of Iridium. "This milestone reinforces why mobile network operators and chipset makers are engaging with Iridium. We offer a low-risk, globally coordinated, and operational network designed to complement what they do, not compete with what they do."

The successful testing is leveraging new 5G waveform algorithms implemented on Iridium's software-defined satellites, supporting the NB-IoT standards-based protocol defined by 3GPP. Activated via software update to the Iridium constellation, the first mobile-originated messages were transmitted using the low power [nRF9151](#) LTE-M/NB-IoT/NTN module from [Nordic Semiconductor](#), a global leader in low power wireless connectivity solutions, reflecting Iridium's previously [announced collaboration](#).

"This successful test proves that global connectivity is no longer limited by infrastructure – we can now deploy battery-powered connected devices anywhere, using a standard, low-power module such as Nordic's nRF9151," said Oyvind Birkenes, EVP Long-Range BU at Nordic Semiconductor. "Our roadmap is fully aligned with Iridium's 2026 plans, and we are committed to accelerating mass-market adoption of standards-based, space-enabled IoT for everyone."

Iridium NTN Direct is designed for a broad set of use cases in both consumer and industrial markets, including emergency and safety messaging, asset tracking, automotive and transportation monitoring, utilities, logistics, agriculture, and remote infrastructure maintenance. For MNOs, the service represents an incremental opportunity to eliminate coverage gaps, enhance subscriber retention, and unlock new revenue streams without the need to build or maintain additional terrestrial infrastructure. For chipset makers and OEMs, it enables a single, standards-based hardware platform capable of supporting global connectivity across both terrestrial and satellite networks.

Unlike regional or cellular spectrum-based satellite solutions, Iridium NTN Direct is designed to deliver 100% global coverage, leveraging the existing constellation that already supports mission-critical communications worldwide. This approach reduces technical, regulatory, and commercial barriers for partners, accelerating time to market.

Iridium plans to continue expanding on-air testing and partner integrations in the months ahead as it advances towards commercial availability of Iridium NTN Direct in 2026.

For more information about Iridium NTN Direct and how to start your path toward integration, visit www.iridium.com/ntn-direct.

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium[®] is the only mobile voice, data, and PNT satellite network that spans the entire globe. Iridium enables connections between people, organizations, and assets to and from anywhere, in real time. Together with its ecosystem of partner companies, Iridium delivers an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions for markets that require truly global communications. In 2024, Iridium acquired Satelles and its positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) service. Iridium Communications Inc. is headquartered in McLean, Va., U.S.A., and its common stock trades on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the ticker symbol IRDM. For more information about Iridium products, services, and partner solutions, visit www.iridium.com.

Forward-Looking Statements Disclosure

Statements in this press release that are not purely historical facts may constitute forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The Company has based these statements on its current expectations and the information currently available to us. Forward-looking statements in this press release

include statements regarding the capabilities, benefits and availability of the Iridium NTN Direct service. Forward-looking statements can be identified by the words "anticipates," "may," "can," "believes," "expects," "projects," "intends," "likely," "will," "to be" and other expressions that are predictions or indicate future events, trends or prospects. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, performance or achievements of Iridium to differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, uncertainties regarding the development, marketing and availability of the Iridium NTN Direct service, the company's ability to maintain the health, capacity and content of its satellite constellation, as well as general industry and economic conditions, and competitive, legal, governmental and technological factors. Other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements include those factors listed under the caption "Risk Factors" in the Company's Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2024, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") on February 13, 2025, and the Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2025, filed with the SEC on October 23, 2025, as well as other filings Iridium makes with the SEC from time to time. There is no assurance that Iridium's expectations will be realized. If one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if Iridium's underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those expected, estimated or projected. Iridium's forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release, and Iridium undertakes no obligation to update forward-looking statements.

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