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The drone that combats climate change: a collaboration between Sweden and Colombia

To address the urgent issue of climate change, the Minister for Climate and the Environment of Sweden, the Minister of Science of Colombia, Saab, EAFIT University in Colombia and KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden present a new Combat Climate Change (C-3) UAV Project, which aims to facilitate climate research.

Contact

Saab Press Centre
+46 (0)734 180 018
presscentre@saabgroup.com

A successful collaboration project between EAFIT University in Colombia, KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden, and Saab has resulted in a new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) able to collect data for climate monitoring. The project was officially launched in the framework of COP16, by Romina Pourmokhtari, Minister for Climate and the Environment of Sweden, Yesenia Olaya, Minister of Science of Colombia, Eva Axelsson, Head of Group Sustainability at Saab, and Olga Lucía Quintero, academic supervisor for the project by EAFIT.

“We are pleased to announce this landmark initiative, which not only exemplifies the robust cooperation between Colombia and Sweden but also celebrates our shared commitment to technological innovation for environmental protection and monitoring,” says the Minister for Climate and the Environment of Sweden, Romina Pourmokhtari.

The unmanned aerial vehicle will be equipped with specialised sensors and will be deployed to measure greenhouse gas concentrations, such as carbon dioxide and methane, as well as other pollutants and aerosols in the atmosphere. Furthermore, the UAV can be deployed to assess the health of the Amazon rainforest, agricultural lands, and other ecosystems, detecting any changes in vegetation patterns and soil conditions.

By correlating these measurements with ground images taken by the aircraft, the mission seeks to complement existing satellite data. The ultimate objective is to apply the measured concentrations within large-scale mathematical and AI-based prediction models, which can help better understand and manage the complexities of our global climate system.

“Contributing to mitigating climate change is one of the priorities of President Petro’s government and with the project announced today we move forward towards this goal that is of vital importance for all. Monitoring biodiversity and climate change will help us anticipate and find solutions from science,



technology and innovation to the challenges that this poses,” says Yesenia Olaya, Colombia's Minister of Science.

“At Saab, we believe innovation and cooperation are key to counter climate change, while making people and society safe. By supporting, founding and supervising the different steps, Saab have been seeking to foster academic collaboration and promote the Triple Helix model between Colombia and Sweden,” says Eva Axelsson, Head of Group Sustainability at Saab.

About the project

Since February 2023, a multinational group of research engineers from KTH Royal Institute of Technology and EAFIT University have worked together to design and construct the UAV.

Combat Climate Change Project has been an opportunity for research engineers to experience collaboration in an international context. As advisor to the project, Saab has supported the project with the aim of promoting the Triple Helix model, aligning scientific, societal and market interests.

Saab is a leading defence and security company with an enduring mission, to help nations keep their people and society safe. Empowered by its 24,000 talented people, Saab constantly pushes the boundaries of technology to create a safer and more sustainable world. Saab designs, manufactures and maintains advanced systems in aeronautics, weapons, command and control, sensors and underwater systems. Saab is headquartered in Sweden. It has major operations all over the world and is part of the domestic defence capability of several nations.

Saab AB (publ)
SE-581 88 Linköping
Sweden

Registration no.: 556036-0793