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BUILDING LEVERAGE FOR A SPACE AGENDA CREATED IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY: THE  
EXPERIENCE OF ACAE IN CENTRAL AMERICA**Abstract**

The Central American Association for Aeronautics and Space (ACAE), is a non-profit organization created in 2009, with the aim to engage a new generation of Central American professionals in the space technology global value chain. ACAE coordinates efforts with the government, industry and academia, with the objective to create a coordinated strategy that will maximize the benefits for society of investing in space development. After almost 10 years of work and the support of a wide and comprehensive number of stakeholders from the public and private sector, ACAE is launching in 2018 the first Central American satellite, a CubeSat project developed in partnership with the Costa Rica Institute of Technology (TEC).

This paper will summarize the experiences of ACAE as the first Central American member of the International Astronautical Federation, the impacts and contributions of the association in Costa Rica, as well as in other countries of the Central American region. It will be covered the collaboration strategies that ACAE has implemented to thrive and gain public leverage, the lessons learned and future initiatives to engage with other similar organizations around the globe.