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International cooperation in using space for sustainable development: Towards a “Space2030” agenda (1)

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AN INNOVATIVE FRAMEWORK TO BOOST EMERGING CENTRAL AMERICAN SPACE
COOPERATION TO CONTRIBUTE IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: MORAZAN
MRZ-SAT CUBESAT PROJECT

Abstract

The Central American Association for Aeronautics and Space (ACAE, in Spanish) is a non-profit organization (NGO), which leads the efforts to introduce the Central American region in the world's technological paradigm of aerospace development since the year 2009. Its vision is to inspire the Central American talent to participate in the development of the aerospace field. ACAE is working with the private sector, the governments and academic institutions of the region, through initiatives such the development of the aerospace related law framework, promotion of research, generation of innovative projects and promotion and diffusion of knowledge in the aerospace field.

On May 11, 2018, ACAE successfully completed Project Irazu when launching the first Central American satellite (named Batsu-CS1) from the International Space Station (ISS). This achievement was the result of almost 10 years of coordination of ACAE with a diverse number of national and international stakeholders that worked intensively under a common objective: Taking Costa Rica to space and motivate the new generations to pursue careers related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In February 2019, one year after Project Irazu's success, ACAE decided to take the next step on international cooperation with the announcement of Project Morazan, the first satellite designed and built by three countries: Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica, with the support of Japanese expertise.

Morazan is a project for the integration of the Central American nations to solve common issues through collaboration in space as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations. Central America is a region with high exposure to natural disasters and its territories ranked among the highest risk in the world. Morazan satellite's scientific mission will be the development of an early warning system for floods and landslides. This paper will explain the process of integration of governments, academia, industry and civil society of the Central American region in space activities, from the perspective and role of a catalyzer-NGO from the civil society (ACAE), as well as the challenges in terms of identifying financial support (contributions from public and private funds from each country and international collaboration opportunities), resources for development of the administrative structure, and the required management-cooperating framework between the participating countries.