

LeoLabs Selects Costa Rica as Site for Next Generation Space Radar

Expansion into Equatorial Region Will Protect Satellites from Small Debris and Drive Sustainability in Low Earth Orbit

MENLO PARK, CA, USA July 22, 2020 -- [LeoLabs, Inc.](#), the leading commercial provider of low Earth orbit (LEO) mapping and Space Situational Awareness (SSA) services, today announced Costa Rica as the site for its next space radar.

“We are delighted to be working with an incredible team in Costa Rica, and proud to bring the first commercial phased-array radar to the equatorial region,” said Mike Nicolls, LeoLabs Chief Technology Officer and co-founder. “This improves our coverage of equatorial and low inclination orbits, filling a critical gap for tracking satellites and space debris.” LeoLabs’ Costa Rica radar will be capable of tracking small debris down to 2cm and work in concert with LeoLabs’ other radars.

This announcement also reflects the priorities of the Costa Rican government. “We welcome LeoLabs to Costa Rica,” stated Costa Rican President, Carlos Alvarado Quesada. “The vision of a LeoLabs space radar in Costa Rica takes our national tradition of environmental responsibility and extends it to space, offering our nation a way to contribute to preserving the LEO ecosystem for generations to come. In addition, this investment builds on an existing set of space achievements by Costa Rica, in human space flight as well as in satellites, and opens up opportunities for our nation in the growing new space sector,” continued President Alvarado.

The story of LeoLabs’ decision to locate its next radar in Costa Rica is also the result of a longstanding relationship between two former NASA astronauts, LeoLabs executive and co-founder, Dr. Edward Lu, and Ad Astra CEO and co-founder, Dr. Franklin Chang Díaz, both of whom went on to found innovative technology businesses. In the Spring of 2019, Dr. Lu reached out to his longtime colleague, Dr. Chang Díaz, to discuss the advantages of building a radar in Costa Rica. “From our mutual experience in space, Dr. Lu and I were both excited about the opportunity to address the threat to human spaceflight posed by space debris,” said Dr. Chang Díaz. “The project in Costa Rica offered us the chance to increase safety of flight in space and enable responsible stewardship to drive our mission of preserving critical ecosystems.”

“We are very appreciative of the partnership with Ad Astra in making this happen,” said Dr. Lu. “One of the priorities for LeoLabs is to locate its next radar in an environment where there is a national and strategic commitment to the space industry. We were especially encouraged by the knowledge and support from the government of Costa Rica through its Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Energy and Environment.”

“Today’s announcement is a significant step for LeoLabs, as this initiative in Costa Rica will integrate into a growing network of radars and nations around the globe committed to space sustainability” said Dan Ceperley, CEO and co-founder of LeoLabs. “We are grateful for the opportunity and look forward to implementing this vision.”

Background:

Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is the focus of commercial and public sector activity in space, and 2020 is emerging as the tipping point for new constellations and increasingly international engagement in space. As both a new economy and an emerging ecosystem shared globally across governments, space agencies, regulators, commercial satellite operators and insurance, LEO presents unprecedented opportunity for the new space sector. It also highlights the threat to satellites and astronauts posed by space debris, especially from the estimated 250,000 dangerous objects currently untracked today.

About LeoLabs

Founded in 2016 as a venture-funded spinout of Silicon Valley research pioneer, SRI International, LeoLabs provides access to critical mapping and SSA data for low Earth orbit. LeoLabs' services include collision prevention, risk assessment, constellation monitoring, and commercial SSA. LeoLabs today serves space agencies, commercial satellite operators, defense, and scientific/academic organizations that are driving generational change in LEO. LeoLabs' core technology includes a patent-pending global phased-array radar network which tracks debris and satellites in LEO. Observations generated from this network are the foundation of the LeoLabs mapping and SSA software platform, providing timely and accurate orbital and situational data.

Media Contact

Mary Devincenzi
mary@steele-alloy.com
408-761-4285