



CENTAURIUM UAS AND THALES JOIN FORCES TO OPEN SWISS SKIES TO LONG-RANGE DRONE OPERATIONS

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Centaurium UAS and Thales signed cooperation agreement which also comprises the delivery of two Thales UAS100 drone systems and ground control stations to the Switzerland-based company ahead of testing in the spring of 2024 and the planned start of commercial operations in 2025. From risk monitoring on large-scale infrastructure to border surveillance, event security, fire detection and location of missing persons, the UAS100 meets the requirements of a wide range of mission scenarios while operating in full compliance with general aviation regulations. Centaurium UAS will operate the drones and offer services tailored to the specific needs of public and private players in Switzerland, with lower operating costs and 90% lower energy consumption than current piloted aircraft.

Ernest Oggier, CEO, Centaurium UAS, commented: "With Thales, we're delighted to have found the ideal partner so we can operate on-demand long-range commercial drone services for our customers in the near future. The partnership agreement between Thales and Centaurium UAS marks the start of a new era for drone operations in Switzerland."

Jean-Paul Ebanga, Vice President Flight Avionics, Thales, said: "Centaurium UAS isn't only a first customer but the ideal partner to optimise drone operations with a view to achieving system certification and offering commercial services with lower costs and environmental impact."

Centaurium UAS is positioned as a service provider for monitoring, surveillance and alert missions. Use cases include inspection of critical infrastructure and industrial installations such as high-voltage lines and transport routes, monitoring of natural disasters, border surveillance and security for major events, as well as flights to locate missing persons and provide situational awareness in support of search and rescue and other emergency operations. Centaurium UAS will rely on Thales's UAS100 technology for the necessary flight avionics, benefitting from its highly robust design, built-in security, versatility and scalability, and a latest-generation ground control station that meets the criteria for EASA certification.

The avionics of the UAS100 combines the certified levels of flight safety and security of Thales solutions for the aerospace sector with the lightweight and compact design needed for integration on a light UAV. With an aerostructure developed by light aircraft manufacturer Issoire Aviation, the UAS100 concept offers levels of performance, integrity and reliability with no equivalent in Europe.

The UAS100 is powered by two electric motors and a small internal combustion engine, ensuring the necessary endurance and resilience to failure. Equipped with a jam-resistant navigation system, a redundant computer for critical missions and a smart communication system, it can fly autonomously in complete safety. The UAS100 will be marketed in two versions: the UAS100-1, which is already available and has a wingspan of 3.34 metres, a length of 1.78 metres and a payload capacity of 1 kilogram; and the UAS100-10, which is twice the size and offers a payload capacity of 10 kg to accommodate very high-performance sensors.

The ground control station — the nerve centre for planning, control and supervision of drone operations — will be supplied to Centaurium UAS in November, with delivery of the first UAS100-1 in March 2024 for initial trials. Centaurium UAS plans to begin commercial operations in 2025, once authorisation is obtained from the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation.

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