

Bluesky and University of Leicester Join to Tackle Air Pollution

EarthSense Systems, a joint venture between aerial mapping company Bluesky and the University of Leicester, is set to spearhead innovations in air quality monitoring. Building on more than four years of collaboration between the two organisations, the new company will initially focus on delivering static sensors, data modelling and derived datasets to UK local and central government organisations. Projects to date have already included trials of an airborne air quality mapper, air pollution monitoring equipment on a rocket and mobile mapping with air quality sensors mounted in electric cars. Future plans include the establishment of a nationwide network of air quality monitoring sensors, feeding live data for up to the minute air quality predictions.

James Eddy CEO of EarthSense Systems and Technical Director Bluesky commented, "Bluesky and the University of Leicester have been working together for many years, developing an in-depth understanding of the issues, opportunities and challenges surrounding air quality monitoring and management. Utilising the strengths of each party, EarthSense will maximise on the work to date to launch a range of products and services to market, addressing the growing requirement for accurate and up to date, real-world information to inform critical decision making. The project is ideally placed to become the UK's – if not the world's – lead player in air quality monitoring and measurement."

The current global air quality monitoring market is predicted to grow by almost 10%, rising to £4.2 billion by 2019 with increasing diseases, regulation and pollution identified as key drivers for this growth. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) reports that an estimated 29,000 deaths per year in the UK are attributed to particulate air pollution, a reduction in average life expectancy by around six months and a cost of £16 billion per annum.

Eddy continued, "The University of Leicester has an outstanding record in academic excellence and leadership in air quality sensor design and analysis, providing advice and support to government and industry globally. The combination of technical expertise and academic credibility with Bluesky's business experience will allow EarthSense to provide impact at an international scale and realise commercial applications of research outputs."

Professor Roland Leigh, Technical Director of EarthSense Systems and a member of the University of Leicester's Department of Physics and Astronomy, added, "Bluesky is a recognised and respected brand with a reputation for innovation, quality and service within the geographic data acquisition sector. In addition to their business acumen, the team also provides significant geospatial data and processing resources which will enable EarthSense to deliver actionable insights to decision makers at regional, national and international levels."

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