

D-Orbit Signs IOD Agreement with Instituto Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC)

The New Space company will launch and operate IAC's Drago payload in the upcoming ION Satellite Carrier's mission, scheduled for January 2021

Fino Mornasco, 30.11.2020: D-Orbit, a space transportation company headquartered in Italy, has signed an agreement with Instituto Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC) to integrate IAC's Drago payload into D-Orbit's ION Satellite Carrier to conduct in-orbit demonstration (IOD) operations during the upcoming PULSE mission, which will take place in January 2021.

ION Satellite Carrier is a satellite platform designed, manufactured, and operated by D-Orbit. While its main purpose is to deploy a batch of smaller satellites into precise orbital slots, as demonstrated during the inaugural ORIGIN mission launched in September 2020, the vehicle is also able to carry on IOD activities using an innovative plug-and-play approach.

DRAGO, which stands for Demonstrator for Remote Analysis of Ground Observations, is a short-wave infrared space camera for Earth observation. For the purpose of this mission, the Drago payload has been integrated into a standardized CubeSat structure that will be connected with ION Satellite Carrier's electrical and data interface, enabling ground operators to test it as if it was one of the spacecraft subsystems. This approach to payload integration, a standard feature on the second-generation ION Satellite Carrier, enabled IAC to get DRAGO approved as a hosted payload in record time.

"We are honored to collaborate with a leading Spanish institution," said Renato Panesi, D-Orbit CCO. "While this is not our first IOD mission, it is the first time we use our plug-and-play approach. We are sure the industry will appreciate the value of a service that significantly reduces the time and cost needed to prepare and fly a payload on a demonstration mission, while simplifying at the same time the integration and operation phases".

As Álex Oscoz, the Principal Investigator of IACTEC-Space explains, *"DRAGO is the first instrument developed by our team, so its integration in a structure such as ION is a real achievement for the project. We hope that DRAGO will be the first of many technological developments by IACTEC-Space, for both Earth observation and Astronomy, and that the collaboration with ION is maintained and strengthened in the future".*

D-Orbit will operate the IOD mission in coordination with IAC. As primary goal, the payload will take infrared images of the Canary Islands. Afterwards, the payload will be used to carry other measurements deemed interesting by both partners. In the future, IAC plans to use DRAGO as the main payload of a nanosatellite called ALISIO (Advanced Land-Imaging Satellite for Infrared Observations).



About D-Orbit

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D-Orbit is a service provider for the traditional and new space sectors, with capabilities in satellite manufacturing, launch, deployment, satellite operations, end-of-life strategies and solutions, space propulsion and related critical software. Its products and services cover the entire lifecycle of a space mission, including mission analysis and design, engineering, manufacturing, integration, testing, launch, and end-of-life decommissioning.

Founded in 2011, the firm is based in Como, Italy, in Washington DC, United States, Harwell, UK, and Lisbon, and Portugal.

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