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FIRST EVER DRONE OLYMPICS IN FINLAND ACCELERATES GLOBAL DRONE INDUSTRY

The use of remotely controlled aircraft, or drones, in various sectors of industry and business, as well as in support of social activities, is advancing. In an unprecedentedly wide drone competition, new players are attracted to the industry, pursuing innovations and presenting the potential of drones.

- According to the latest market research, the global drone service market is estimated to increase at least tenfold over the next five years from the current approximately four billion euros. Drones are revolutionizing trade, logistics, agriculture and forestry as well as research and security, says Ultrahack CEO Mikko Järvilehto.

Approximately 50 teams around the world are expected to compete in the Drone Olympics 2019 competition, some of which will focus on solving drone tasks and others on software development. Ultrahack, who is responsible for organizing the event, has already raised the topic by organizing the Aurora Arctic Drone Hackathon, the world's first drone in Arctic innovation competition, in 2017.

“We believe that such competition will be a great tool for developing new solutions, and an open-minded Finnish innovation ecosystem provides an excellent framework for it,” says Järvilehto.

The competition will start at the application and pre-competition stage on June 1 and will culminate in the final event in Helsinki, Espoo and Vihti from 2nd till 5th of September. An open competition for the public is organized in the Central Library in Oodi and in Kansalaistori 5.9.

Subheading: Drones Helping Smart Cities

- There are seven series in the competition with their own partners, award criteria and judges, says Järvilehto.

In the Toxic Waste Problem by the City of Helsinki and the Finnish Geospatial Research Institute of National Land Survey, it is the role of the drone to identify and document waste deposits from the sea area in front of the city. In the Building Care by the City of Espoo and the Finnish Geospatial Research Institute of National Land Survey, the need for maintenance for roofs of buildings through drones is surveyed.

Subheading: Safely Towards the Heights

Technical Research Centre of Finland’s (VTT) Extreme Conditions Series weighs drone performance and battery life in both cold and cloudy winter conditions that can be created in the VTT's frost room and their ice wind tunnel.

In the Emergency Response Challenge by the Police and Western Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso Rescue Services, ways are developed to safely utilize drones in the event of traffic accidents, in particular, to provide relevant information to authorities.

In the Fly High and Back Challenge by the Finnish Meteorological Institute, competitors must be able to operate the drone safely as high and long as possible, while collecting information from the atmosphere.

Subheading: More Efficient Agriculture and Resource Management

The task by the Resource Center (LUKE) and the National Institute for Land Survey Flowering Forest is to investigate the occurrence of spruce flowers and estimate the condition of the trees in the area. Count the Grass Challenge of the same actors, using a drone, to evaluate and map the grass harvest in a particular area.

- Drone remote sensing has a great potential to enhance and automate agriculture. In the Count the Grass challenge, competitors must be able to determine the amount of grass harvest. From the point of view of efficiency, it is essential to determine the variation of the crop quickly and accurately in different parts of the field, says Eija Honkavaara, Research Manager at the National Land Survey of Finland.

Other partners in addition to the above are Business Finland, Infradex, UAS Center Finland, RPAS Finland RY, DJI, Dronefactory, Central Federation of Agricultural and Forestry Producers, Rural Network and University of Helsinki.

Check out the competition at www.droneolympics.org.

More about the competition:

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