

LeoLabs Selects the Azores as Site for its next Space Radar; Accelerates Presence in Europe for LEO Services and Infrastructure

LeoLabs Investment in Portugal Aligned with Commitment to Space Sustainability

Menlo Park, CA, USA, June 16, 2021 -- [LeoLabs, Inc.](#), the world's leading commercial provider of low Earth orbit (LEO) mapping and Space Situational Awareness (SSA) services, today announced the Azores as the site for its next space radar. As a strategic addition to LeoLabs expanding global constellation of LEO sensors, the Azores Space Radar will go operational in the first half of 2022.

“We are very excited about our decision to locate in the Azores,” said Dan Ceperley, CEO and LeoLabs co-Founder. “This is a multi-decade investment on the part of LeoLabs, and a great opportunity for us to support the space sustainability goals of Portugal as they grow their presence in the global space community. It also signals LeoLabs commitment to a long-term presence in Europe.”

“The mission of LeoLabs remains clear: serve the growth of the LEO economy, and ensure the long-term survivability of LEO for future generations. Today we are the only end-to-end supplier of radar infrastructure and services that can execute on this mission,” continued Ceperley. “Our global network already produces the world's largest number of LEO observations, and the Azores Space Radar will build on that and expand our tracking of LEO objects by an additional 25%. This opens our ability to grow our LEO catalogue from tracking 15,000 objects today to a massive 250,000 objects. The Azores Space Radar also adds more timely updates on critical events in LEO, including collisions, breakups, maneuvers, new launches, and re-entries.”

Strategic Location, Strategic Partnerships

LeoLabs' Azores Space Radar investment also reflects alignment with Portugal's goals at the national and regional levels. “We welcome LeoLabs to Portugal with the installation of a new space radar in the Azores,” said Ricardo Conde, President of Portugal Space. “LEO has rapidly emerged as a sphere of commercial opportunity for innovators like LeoLabs, and it is important to build infrastructure that allows us to mitigate the risks of increased space debris. The radar will improve mapping and cataloguing services that identify the positioning and dynamics of these objects in LEO and inform our ability to set policies that address risks.”

“We are pleased to welcome this ground-breaking investment by LeoLabs in the Azores,” said Dr Susete Amaro, Azores Regional Secretary for Culture, Science and Digital Transition. “The Azores Space Radar represents an important contribution to the development of Santa Maria's space ecosystem. It further validates our Santa Maria Teleport as an innovative model capable of attracting international investment from the space sector. We look forward to a long-term engagement with LeoLabs, and for the Azores to become a bridge to space just as we are a bridge across the Atlantic.”

Investment in Portugal, Investment in Europe

LeoLabs investment in Portugal represents an important addition to LeoLabs' global radar constellation, and a key element of infrastructure to inform satellite operators, defense, space and regulatory agencies,

and the space insurance sector. “We are delighted LeoLabs chose Portugal as home for its first European space investment,” said Manuel Heitor, Portugal’s Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education. “This is clearly a strategic contribution to Portugal, consistent with our national ethic of promoting responsible stewardship of space, and a timely step toward increasing our contribution to the European space sector. In addition, LeoLabs and Portugal are clearly excited about expanding commercial and educational opportunities within Portugal itself, applicable to space. We look forward to a long and constructive engagement.”

“We are certainly grateful for the support of Minister Heitor and the Portuguese government,” stated Dan Ceperley. “As we scale our operations, and we look forward to building on our Portugal presence to engage more with ESA, the EU SST and member state initiatives, as well as engaging other European space actors in defense, space agency and commercial operators. In the near term,” continued Ceperley, “LeoLabs is looking to expand our engagement in Europe along two dimensions: 1) data licensing and services agreements, and 2) additional radar sites. The announcement today with Portugal is an encouraging and fortunate start for LeoLabs, and we will continue to build on this partnership to deepen our European operations.”

LEO Backdrop: Opportunities, Risks, and the “Data Deficit”

Low Earth Orbit is rapidly emerging as the commercial frontier in space. Rapid deployment of new satellite constellations, the demand for innovative services from imaging to broadband to IoT (internet of things), and the billions of dollars of new investment in space-based infrastructure are redefining a domain shared by governments, space agencies, regulators, commercial operators, and space insurance.

Against this backdrop of unprecedented opportunity are two challenges critical to investment and the long-term viability of LEO. The first is the need to develop LEO sustainably by addressing the threat posed by space debris. Approximately 250,000 dangerous pieces of orbital debris have gone untracked by government legacy systems that can no longer keep pace with increasing risks to satellite constellations. Sustainability is not just an arena for operators to address, but also for regulators to establish international best practices, set standards, and define rules of behavior.

A second challenge critical to the long-term viability of LEO is keeping it open and secure. As the number of private space enterprises and space-faring nations continue to grow, so does the need to track and make transparent the full range of events that threaten an open space environment.

“The single greatest challenge to both the sustainability and security threats in LEO is solving the “data deficit”, said Dan Ceperley, LeoLabs CEO. “The number of assets in LEO doubled last year, will double again this year, and is expected to grow 25x in the next five years. LeoLabs is already the largest provider of data for LEO today, and this lead will expand rapidly as we execute on our constellation of radars.” Ceperley continued, “The legacy government-built SSA infrastructures of the past simply cannot scale to track the new levels of LEO activity, and they have no path to get there. Our commercially driven infrastructure is the only viable and scalable way to address this “data deficit”.

The Azores Space Radar will make a critical contribution to solving these challenges. Because of its strategic Atlantic location, the radar complements other LeoLabs radar sites, and will increase the frequency of observations LeoLabs collects on each satellite and orbital debris. This improves response times, and supports effective tracking and safety of flight. Second, the additional two S-band radars at the Azores adds critical resiliency to the global network, improving operational service levels and persistent tracking. And third, the Azores Space Radar accelerates LeoLabs ability to discover, track and catalogue the objects never before tracked, those under 10 centimeters.

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 regulatory and 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.

Further information on LeoLabs is available at leolabs.space .

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