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DSTO and industry to develop new Australian radar mapping capability

The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) and Darwin-based private sector company GecOz Pty Ltd have signed a multi-million dollar memorandum of agreement to build a new airborne ground mapping radar system unique in Australia.

Under the agreement the existing DSTO airborne X Band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) will be enhanced with the addition of a high fidelity L Band mapping capability.

The upgraded system will have enhanced defence and civilian applications including the ability to map soil salinity, terrain types, floods and oil spills in all weather, day and night.

As well the new combined L and X Band radar will significantly improve DSTO research capabilities in surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring.

With a combined L and X Band mapping capability the system will be one of only a handful of systems in the world available for commercial use.

The development will depend upon GecOz attracting sufficient venture capital investment and continued Defence Department funding of an existing DSTO-leased aircraft, a Beech 1900C. Once funding has been secured GecOz and DSTO will enter into a contract under which DSTO will modify the existing airborne X Band synthetic aperture radar (SAR), to be flown in the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Testbed on the Beech aircraft.

GecOz was founded by researchers from the Charles Darwin University and has been operating in Darwin since February 2001. The company has already won investment of nearly three quarters of a million dollars and is expecting a further injection of over three million dollars by the middle of this year. Part of this money will be put towards the construction of the combined L/X Band SAR system.

This MOA continues the relationship DSTO has held with GecOz since October 2002.

Further information:

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