



UNOOSA AND AVIO SELECT A TEAM FROM UNIVERSITY IN NAIROBI FOR CUBESAT LAUNCH OPPORTUNITY USING THE VEGA C LAUNCHER

Vienna, 10 February 2023 – The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and **Avio** have selected a consortium led by the University of Nairobi in Kenya, joined by the University of Arizona from the United States of America and a non-profit organization Space Trust as the first awardee of the “**Accessing space with Vega C**” programme. **The selected team will launch a CubeSat at no cost on board the Vega C rocket.**

The “NaSPUoN-OGPM2030” satellite is a 3U class CubeSat aiming at building capacity in Kenya by bringing together international partners with existing technical capabilities. The technology and skills gained through this collaborative mission will enhance the capacity of spacecraft engineering and satellite operation in Kenya.

The “Accessing space with Vega-C” programme is delivered under the **Access to Space for All** initiative, specifically its Satellite Development Track. The track is dedicated to building capacity for designing, developing, operating and utilizing satellites with a focus on developing countries.

VP, Strategy and Innovation at Avio Angelo Fontana said: "Avio and Arianespace are thrilled to give our Kenyan friends this opportunity to launch on board Vega C, as well as to support UNOOSA in their initiative to develop space related activities for the non-Space Faring Nations. Vega C is the new born of the Vega Family: with the successful Maiden Flight on July, 13th 2022, Vega C has demonstrated its improved capabilities, not only in terms of performance but also flexibility and versatility. It is particularly suited for SmallSats aiming to go to Low Earth orbit along with a main Payload, like the University of Nairobi NaSPUoN-OGPM2030 3U CubeSats. Other similar missions will follow in the upcoming years."

Acting Director of UNOOSA Niklas Hedman said: "We are thrilled that the Access to Space for All initiative keeps delivering unique programmes for the benefit of the UN Member States. Kenya has been strategically utilizing the different hands-on opportunities to develop their space sector and we hope that the launch of their 3U CubeSat through Vega C will advance their capabilities. I would like to thank our partner Avio for providing this opportunity as a great contribution to bridging the space divide. We look forward to working together to support Kenya realize this mission."

NaSPUoN-OGPM2030 Mission Principal Investigator Mwangi Mbuthia said: “This is a great opportunity for the University of Nairobi (UoN) to continue its nanosatellite capacity-building, which is a huge positive for the nascent space sector in Kenya. We are very grateful to UNOOSA and Avio S.p.A. for granting us the opportunity to launch a 3U CubeSat, free of charge. This will go a long way

in enhancing spacecraft engineering and satellite operation capacity not only at UoN, but in Kenya in general”.

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Avio in short

Avio is a leading international group engaged in the construction and development of space launchers and solid and liquid propulsion systems for space travel. The experience and know-how built up over more than 50 years puts Avio at the cutting-edge of the space launcher sector, solid, liquid and cryogenic propulsion and tactical propulsion. Avio operates in Italy, France and French Guyana with 5 facilities, employing approx. 1,200 highly-qualified personnel, of which approx. 30% involved in research and development. Avio is a prime contractor for the Vega programme and a sub-contractor for the Ariane programme, both financed by the European Space Agency (“ESA”), placing Italy among the limited number of countries capable of producing a complete spacecraft.