

Drone technology to transform WCape agriculture following SACAA certification

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture has been granted the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operating Systems Certification (UASOC) by the South African Civil Aviation Authority. This certification places the Department at the forefront of utilising unmanned aerial vehicles to bring about transformative technological advancements in the agricultural sector.



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"This is good news for the sector as it will benefit the agricultural sector," says Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Dr Ivan Meyer.

Minister Meyer adds: "The WCDoA is committed to embracing cutting-edge technology and propelling the agricultural sector into a new era. The certification ensures that our drone operations comply with aviation regulations. It will also elevate our research and engineering efforts and service delivery."

"The Western Cape Government has taken up innovation and technology to improve service delivery to the citizens of the Western Cape. The latest aviation certification allows us to bring another innovative dimension to the agricultural sector and improve service delivery to our agricultural industries. Our SACAA accreditation aligns with our undertaking to embrace the 4th industrial revolution," states Minister Meyer.

Evolving agricultural needs

In anticipation of the certification and the agricultural landscape's evolving needs, the WCDoA has equipped itself with a diverse fleet of specialised drones, including spray, multispectral, LiDAR, and RTK drones.

"Our skilled drone pilots, having undergone specialised training, are adept at utilising the unique capabilities of each drone in our fleet. Their expertise ensures precision and efficiency in various applications, from precision agriculture to engineering endeavours," remarks Minister Meyer.

Minister Meyer highlights that integrating drones into our agricultural practices and related research aligns with the WCDoA's commitment to sustainability.

"Drones, backed by technology-supported research, enable us to optimise resource usage, reduce environmental impact, and contribute to sustainable farming practices. This achievement underscores our commitment to service delivery, leveraging technology to address the challenges faced by our farmers and supporting the sector in its sustainability journey."

"Innovation and technology are key focuses of the Western Cape Government's Growth for Jobs strategy. The WCDoA's UASOC Certification is but another building block towards strengthening the agricultural sector's ability to contribute to the growth of the Western Cape economy and create jobs.

"We will continue to invest in innovation in agriculture to ensure that the Western Cape remains the top agricultural region in South Africa," concludes Minister Meyer.

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