

COSTA RICA HAS 22 COMPANIES IN THE INDUSTRY

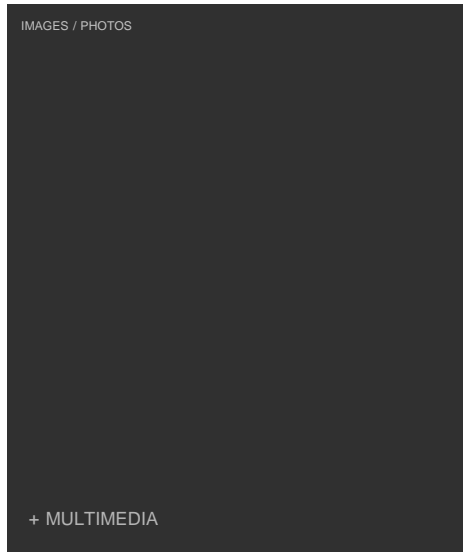
# Country moves to consolidate aerospace sector

- State Industry and rush work to give life to a 'cluster', and a decree
- Companies: one of the biggest obstacles is difficult access to bank loans

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Costa Rica advances in the consolidation of the aerospace sector, but still faces major challenges.



Among the highlights major initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MICIT) special funds to help entrepreneurs in these fields.

Another is the different state institutions, such as the Foreign Trade Promotion and the Foreign Ministry with the support of the Coalition of Development Initiatives, drive to breathe life into an industry *cluster*.

The formation of this *cluster* will allow transnational and local companies have more credibility with potential customers, said its representatives.

In Costa Rica there are 22 companies, among them Olympic Precision Machine, Tech Shop, West Star, L3 Communications, Sensor Group, Agilis, Coopesa, Helicorp, Tico Trimpot and Electronic.

The jobs that these companies are going from the manufacture of parts for aircraft and satellites to the maintenance of aircraft and helicopters.

Which are also research and develop complex processes, such as the laboratory performing the Ad Astra Rocket in the creation of a plasma engine (VASIMR). This engine will allow space travel to

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distant sites.

However, one of the most important hurdles to overcome is the difficulty of these companies to access bank credit lines, as indicated by representatives of several of them.

The National Bank said its leaders no plans of financing for this sector. In Bancrédito discussed the possibility and the People's Bank has an agreement with Ad Astra Rocket. The Bank of Costa Rica did not answer the query.

**Progress.** Clotilde Fonseca, Minister of Science and Technology, said that his ministry has a special aid fund called Propymes.

Under this support, he said, the state supports companies who venture into technological developments of the labor research centers.

This is the case of Costa Rican Aerospace Alliance SA (Coraal), a conglomerate of six Costa Rican SMEs that joined two years ago to expand his duties in northern areas such as metalworking, industrial and *software*.

MICIT Coraal awarded a game close to \$ 200,000 for working on the design and subsequent creation of a model of the platform that will connect the rocket that will carry the VASIMR with the International Space Station.

These resources are non-refundable and are used in the training of employees of six companies, said Angela Garcia, president of the group.

As for the formation of the *cluster*, this has the backing of Avionix, one of the multinational aviation industry, said her manager Gustavo Cubas.

This company has been working for almost six years of *software* testing and has 34 employees, mostly engineers.

Tico Electronics is another company that would support this *cluster*, said Marco Mileeta, a partner at the firm.

**Variety.** From its facilities of 6,000 square meters in the zone Bes, in Alajuela, join Minimotor, brushless motors, rotary connectors, cables, hydraulic parts, coils and electronic cards for the aviation industry. One of the first initiatives in this direction was stamped in the decree that was signed on July 25.

This decree gives rise to a national council to "observe and cast reflections, guidelines and actions in the field of aeronautics and space industry," explained the Minister Fonseca.

This council is made up Procomer, Cinde, MICIT, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Education and the National Training Institute, among others.