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Halima Frost
Features Reporter

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Head- Drone & NDT firm join forces

Body Copy-

Materials testing and inspection service provider Dekra Industrial has joined forces with aerial solutions and drones services company Sky Africa Drones to offer a drone inspection service that combines the technologies of high scope non-destructive testing (NDT) systems with the manoeuvrability of a drone.

Sky Africa Drones is a fully licensed drone company specialising in security surveillance and provides quality aerial data fast and accurately. It also has [the accreditations and licenses required to legally fly and inspect national key point installations - such as power stations or petrochemical plants, for example – and is fully compliant with national safety requirements and the requirements of the South African Civil Aviation Authority \(CAA\).](#)

“In forming this partnership, Dekra Industrial will leverage its existing and recently developed inspection software, and artificial intelligence with the expertise and experience of Sky Africa Drones,” says Dekra Industrial MD **Johan Gerber**.

He adds this synergy will provide remote-testing and inspection services paired with drone technology and capabilities across various industries in South Africa.

Further, Dekra Industrial has developed software in house that enables the drone to fly autonomously – independently, without a pilot – in confined spaces, such as

tunnels and pipelines, and underground, in areas such as mines, to conduct three-dimensional (3D) laser imaging.

These inspections can also be performed in dangerous areas, which may be too dangerous for humans to access or inspect, such as post-accident or rock fall safety inspections in underground mines.

Gerber says the drones will easily and swiftly access these areas to perform sophisticated visual inspections.

Dekra Industrial's partnership with Sky Africa Drones allows for access to this technology locally, as well as the resultant drone inspection services capability and offerings.

“Instead of developing a new drone department, which would have resulted in a market delay and the lack of substantial drone flying and piloting experience to continue in the meantime, we have now secured a robust partnership with all these requirements and capabilities already in place,” says Gerber.

In the Wind

Research and development by Dekra Industrial shows that it will be able to effectively apply its inspection capabilities to wind turbines in the wind renewable-energy sector using drone technologies.

Drones can fly autonomously and complete a 360° inspection on all three blades on a wind turbine within 40 minutes.

Previously, a traditional inspection of wind turbine blades could take several days.

Gerber points out that the company is also aiming to penetrate the renewable-energy market through establishing relationships and contracts with the manufacturers of the relevant infrastructure and products – such as the wind turbines and solar panels – which are required by and contracted to independent power producers (IPPs).

Subsequently, making the power generated available for State-owned power utility Eskom to use.

"We are in an ideal situation, as Dekra Industrial, in Europe, currently has contracts and relationships with many of these international manufacturers and we can, therefore, offer our services to them," says Gerber.

He adds that, supported by the technology, reputation and assurance of the global Dekra brand, Dekra Industrial will be able to offer its local facilities and inspection services at cost-competitive South African rates.

This will contribute to the local-content requirements of manufacturers and IPPs (Independent Power Producers) building new renewable-energy plants in South Africa.

Dekra Industrial will also apply the same technology to autonomously fly over and inspect concrete and steel outdoor structures using 3D laser mapping.

The company will also have the capacity to conduct ultrasonic wall-thickness inspections remotely using drone inspection.

Traditionally, these inspections were performed with the assistance of scaffolding structures, cradles, aerial work platforms or rope access to reach remote and elevated areas.

Rope access inspections, whereby technicians use ropes and industrial climbing or working-at-height methods, have historically posed hazards to the technicians conducting the testing, due to the inherently dangerous nature of the work.

Drone inspections decreases the risk of injury or damage commonly experienced when conducting working-at-height inspections in person.

Such inspections also open more service possibilities in more applications, which previously may have not have been possible or if possible only at a high cost.

“. . . the partnership with Sky Africa Drones is very attractive, as the company is well entrenched in the local mining and petrochemicals industry, currently offering security surveillance. [As safety is closely aligned with experience, Dekra Industrial can not only offer our global software and hardware but with it, the combined industry experience to ensure that drone inspections can be performed safely and according to legislative and client requirements,](#)” Gerber concludes.

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Factbox:

Caption 01:
Waiting for Image

Caption 02:

Mapping:

Noise Vibration & NDT

Manufacturing

Instrumentation & Control

Services

Quality Assurance & Standards

Contact:

Name: Kendal Hunt

Company: Kendal Hunt Communications

Title: Owner

Tel: 11-462-6188

Email: kendal@kendalhunt.co.za

Website: www.kendalhunt.co.za

Source:

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