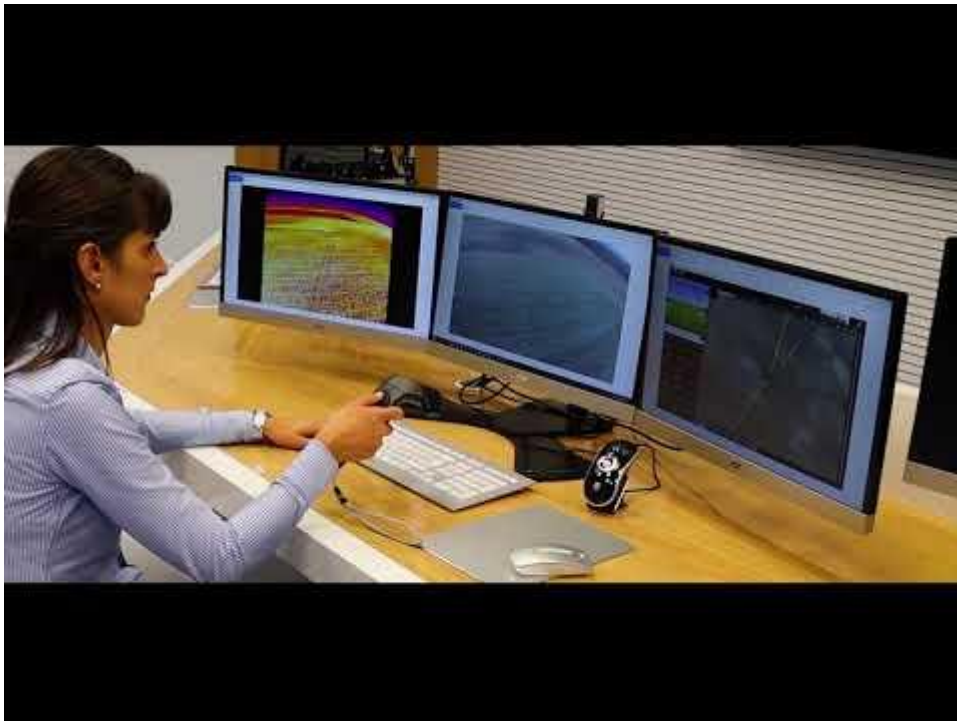




The first project of its kind in Europe

Naturgy, Vodafone and the start-up FuVeX employ the help of cellular-connected drones for power line inspections



- **Vodafone is supplying the mobile technology needed for these new drone inspections of Naturgy's power grids**
- **After partnering with the start-up FuVeX, the companies have won the first indefinite authorisation for drone flights beyond line-of-sight from the State Aviation Safety Agency**
- **Naturgy, Vodafone and FuVeX have teamed up to make Europe's first ever remotely controlled long-distance flights to inspect power lines in 2021**
- **The first of its kind, this initiative will prevent 6 million-plus tonnes of carbon from being released into the atmosphere and eliminate operational risks**
- **The technology also means the drones can be operated remotely, which is a step forward in terms of efficiency, ease of use and implementation potential**



Barcelona, 17th December 2020- Vodafone, Naturgy and FuVeX announce today that they have teamed up to **revolutionise powerline inspections by using cellular-connected drones beyond visual line-of-sight. This is the first flight of its kind.**

AESA, the Spanish State Aviation Safety Agency, and ENAIRE, a public corporate entity attached to the Ministry of Development, responsible for safe and organised operations within Spanish Airspace, **have made the flights possible by granting the country's first authorisation to fly drones over power lines beyond line-of-sight**

The authorisation is still subject to operational limitations, which is why the partnering companies are working within the framework of the European RIMA (Robotics for Infrastructure Inspection and Maintenance) project to boost the European long-range drone industry enabling Beyond Radio Line Of Sight (BRLOS) drone flights. This means that very soon Naturgy can start inspecting its thousands of kilometres of power lines using **drones controlled remotely from its headquarters for the first time in Europe.**

Vodafone, Naturgy and FuVeX are committed to operating the first long-range drone flights next year, to begin the inspection of all Naturgy's power lines.

The project is set to put Spanish industry at the forefront of Europe in using cellular-connected drones to monitor the state of power lines remotely and safely far beyond the current 500-metre limit.

Safe, controlled drone flying involves robust communication systems such as 4G and 5G, and Vodafone RPS (Radio Positioning System) technologies for positioning and controlling the drone throughout the flight. RPS technology uses the network data associated with the drone's SIM card to track its position very accurately, providing an alternative source to traditional GPS coordinate-based tracking.

A planet sustainable initiative

This pioneering initiative aims to significantly improve powerline inspection operations and make such work, which until now has been carried out with traditional means, far more simple and sustainable.

It is estimated that this solution could prevent 6 million-plus tonnes of carbon from being released into the atmosphere, minimising the environmental impact through efficient technology use, a goal shared both by Naturgy and Vodafone.

With the support of the European Union through its H2020 Innovation Programme within the framework of the RIMA Network funded under grant agreement No 824990, this project demonstrates the extent to which effective partnerships between corporations and start-ups can revolutionise the connected-drone sector