

Full-fledged Drone Service for Better Local Life, including Commercialization of Drone Delivery

Released Date: 17 March 2023

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The MOLIT selected 15 local governments as drone demonstration cities in 2023

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT, Minister WON Hee-ryong) and the Korea Institute of Aviation Safety Technology (KIAST, President LEE Dae-sung) announced that they had selected 15 local governments* through open competition in drone demonstration city for this year.

* Seoul Capital City, Incheon Metropolitan City, Ulsan Metropolitan City, Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Seongnam-si in Gyeonggi-do, Yeongwol-gun in Gangwon-do, Eumseong-gun in Chungbuk-do, Seosan-si and Taean-gun in Chungnam-do, Jeonju-si and Namwon-si in Jeonbuk-do, Goheung-gun and Yeosu-si in Jeonnam-do, Gimcheon-si in Gyeongbuk-do, Changwon-si in Gyeongnam-do

This year, 40 local governments applied for the open competition in drone demonstration city (20 Jan. – 28 Feb. for 40 days), and the evaluation committee composed of private experts comprehensively estimated the environment for demonstration, performance capability, and appropriateness of businesses and commercialization.

Selected local governments receive differentiated support (less than KRW 1.4 billion) from the national budget depending on the size of the project and the contents of the service.

The MOLIT has been expanding and supporting the drone demonstration city project* since 2019 to broaden the possibilities of drone utilization projects and to test and apply utilized drone models suitable for various regional characteristics of each local government.

* Number of demonstration cities by year (budget supported): 2 in 2019 (KRW 2 billion), 4 in 2020 (KRW 4 billion), 10 in 21 (KRW 10.5 billion), 9 in 2022 (KRW 13 billion), 15 in 2023 (KRW 14 billion)

Based on the achievements so far, priority tasks such as 'drone delivery business' and 'heavy cargo transportation of 50kg or more', etc., which are tasks with great social demand as well as require rapid commercialization, are announced in advance this year encouraging local governments to participate.

As a result, a number of drone delivery services were included in the demonstration models of local governments selected this year, and the MOLIT will operate a consultative group for drone delivery involving local governments and delivery & distribution businesses for demonstrating drone delivery in the future.

It had a plan to gradually expand the commercialization of drone delivery*, starting from island areas where it is difficult to receive parcels, to park areas in the city center.

* Commercialization of drone delivery means that the delivery model using drones is not just a demonstration, but is converted into a paid service that can be used by the public.

The major projects of the local governments selected this time are as follows.

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province plans to start the first paid drone delivery in earnest in the second half of this year for 130 households on Gapado Island.

To this end, the infrastructure necessary for drone delivery, such as preparing take-off and landing fields, setting up drone flight routes, and establishing drone identification systems and drone safety management systems, etc., will be promoted first.



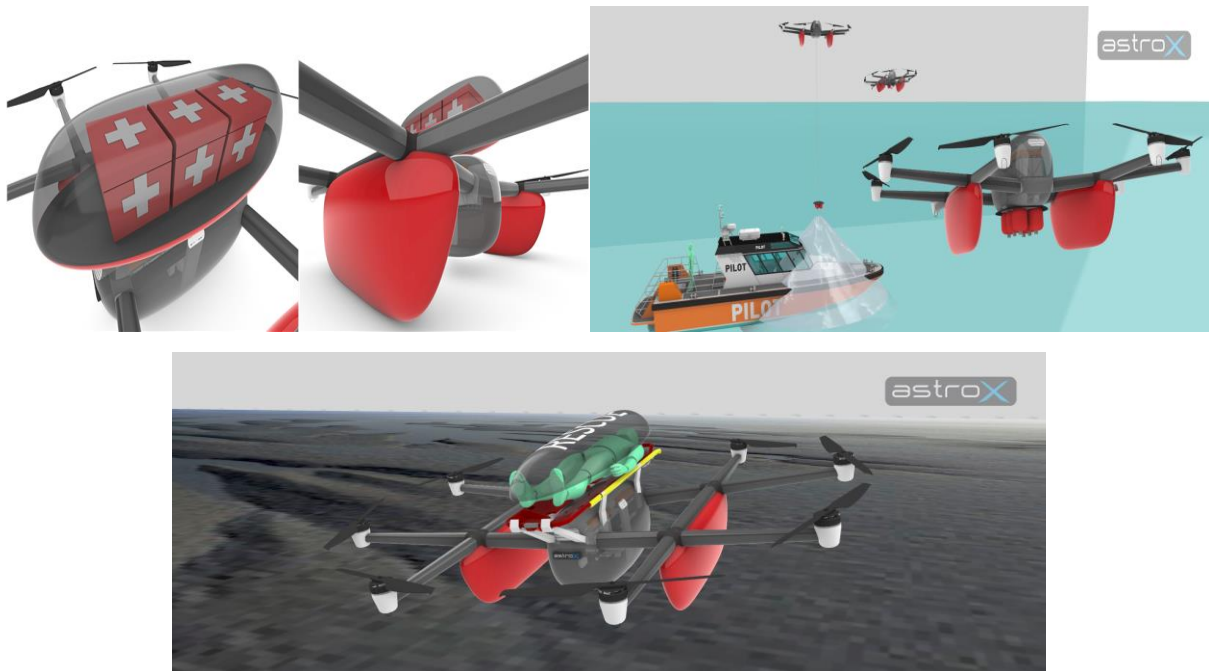
[Drone Delivery Prediction of Gapado Island in Jeju]

In addition, Seongnam-si plans to set up drone delivery points around Central Park and Tancheon Riv. to enable ordered items of convenience store to be delivered by paid drone service within the park.

Moreover, Gimcheon-si, Jeonju-si, Yeongwol-gun, Seosan-si, Taean-gun, Eumseong-gun, Changwon-si, Goheung-gun, and Yeosu-si will demonstrate drone delivery service over islands and mountainous villages.

There has been also projects to promote the establishment of a social safety system using drones selected.

Incheon Metropolitan City remodels a large drone capable of transporting 100kg to demonstrate transporting equipment and items necessary for maritime rescue.



[Demonstration of transportation and rescue of emergency goods over sea in Incheon]

Ulsan Metropolitan City demonstrates a drone transport operation model for protective goods in response to a nuclear power plant disaster and promotes the establishment of a disaster safety situation control system, such as real-time measurement of nuclear power plant radioactivity with drones, etc.

On the other hand, in relation to drone leisure sports, which has been recently getting popular, the advanced drone sports system development and demonstration project promoted by Namwon-si in the wake of the FAI (World Air Sports Federation) World Drone Racing Championship to be held in October this year was also selected.

KIM Yeong-guk, Director General of Aviation Policy in MOLIT, emphasized, “We will declare this year as the first year of K-Drone Delivery, which will be commercialized in earnest by drone delivery system equipped with drone identification system and drone flight routes, etc., and develop it into a sustainable business by increasing safety and efficiency.”

Adding, “For the successful implementation of K-Drone Delivery, we requested close cooperation between the central and local governments, the drone industry, delivery & distribution companies, academia, and other related organizations”.

The MOLIT is going to sign the ‘2023 Drone Demonstration City Agreement’ in Sejong City on 28 March with the local government and the Korea Institute of Aviation Safety Technology to actively promote this year’s selected projects for enhancing safety levels while improving more convenience of the people through the use of drones.