

# *Costa Rica Plans To Launch Region's First Satellite By 2016*

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San José, April 25 (RHC) – Central America is joining the space race with plans to launch the region's first satellite in 2016 to monitor climate change and carbon dioxide levels in one of Costa Rica's most biodiverse national parks, the Fox news network reports.

The Central American Aeronautics and Space Association (ACAE) announced earlier this week that it will build in Costa Rica a satellite that it hopes to launch in the next two years to study the effects of climate change in the tropical forests of the Santa Rosa National Park, in the country's northwestern province of Guanacaste. Data collected from the satellite will be relayed back to researchers at the Technological Institute of Costa Rica (ITCR) for analysis and processing.

The decree was signed on Monday by Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla, who leaves office in May.

The satellite, which when completed is expected to weigh less than 22 pounds, was developed over a three-year period by ITCR experts and two Costa Rican

scientists, former NASA astronaut Franklin Chang Díaz and NASA engineer Sandra Cauffman.

Much like Bolivia's first satellite, which was developed and launched last December in China, the Costa Rican-made device will have to be sent into orbit from outside the Central American nation, as Costa Rica has no launch infrastructure.

The development of the satellite comes amid greater efforts in the region to tackle climate change.

A Forum on Global Risks and Opportunities organized by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE), on Thursday also insisted on such issues.

According to the participant experts, Central America must take urgent action to mitigate the effects of climate change, which in the past four decades has caused losses to the region by 80 billion USD.

The figure includes the destruction of infrastructures and crops caused by hurricanes, droughts and landslides.

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