

Local aviation innovation company wins big at 2019 AVI Awards

Sentian Aerospace has been awarded Overall and SMME winner accolades at the fifth annual AVI Awards 2019. The awards ceremony took place at the eighth 8th AVI AFRIQUE Summit at The Canvas in Riversands, Fourways, Gauteng. The AVI Awards High School Winner was awarded to Samuel Nkgoeng from N.M.Tsuene High School in Ga-Rankuwa, Gauteng.



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The annual AVI Awards, hosted by the Air Traffic and Navigation Services SOC Limited (ATNS), recognise those individuals who contribute to innovation, elevate the aviation industry through intelligent design of products and processes, and enhance the capabilities of the aviation industry.

"Our awards winners truly impressed us with their innovative and unique aviation concepts which speaks volumes of the sheer talent we have and also bodes well for future innovation and development," says Thomas Kgokolo, interim CEO of ATNS.

Sentian Aerospace won the Overall Winner award for the design of its Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that can carry up to 15kg of payload over 1,400 kilometres nonstop. This eliminates the need for runways and heavy, complex launch equipment. Furthermore, the hovering ability allows for stationary surveillance of infrastructures such as stockpiles, power lines and pipelines.

After take-off, the Sentian Aerospace UAV switches to cruise mode in the fixed-wing mode to save on energy consumption, allowing for long-distance and endurance missions while carrying payloads. Muzi Dune, CEO of Sentian Aerospace explains: "The idea behind our design was reduce the cost of aerial transport. A typical helicopter can cost in excess of R10,000 an hour and we'd like to cut it down to about R2,000 an hour.

"We believe Sentian Aerospace is uniquely positioned as we can in the future also offer services and products that can save lives such as delivering critical medical supplies to rural hospitals."

The Sentian Aerospace UAV features the following technical specifications:

- Cruise speed - 120km/h
- Maximum speed - 280km/h
- Minimum speed - 0km/hr (hover)
- Endurance -12 hours (Engine: Payload as fuel)
- Endurance -2 hours (Full electric)
- Range - 1400km.

The AVI Awards High School Winner was awarded to Samuel Nkgoeng from N.M.Tsuene High School in Ga-Rankuwa, Gauteng. Samuel Nkgoeng won his awards for his unique concept of lowering a wind turbine in an aircraft to provide energy to power small electrical items.

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