

# University Challenge Recognises Innovative Hail Suppression Project



In 2014, the University of Applied Sciences Rosenheim (Germany) won over the international expert jury with its hail suppression project, RO-BERTA, during the University Challenge. Recognising innovative ideas emerging from Europe's universities, this award is one of the highlights of the annual European Satellite Navigation Competition (ESNC).

The project team was awarded their prize on 23 October 2014 in Berlin at the festive ESNC Awards Ceremony among more than 300 guests, who represented the majority of the top European players in this dynamic sector. In addition to cash, the prize included support through the GNSS Research & Applications Centre of Excellence (GRACE) and a free ticket to the [Munich Satellite Navigation Summit 2015](#).

Project manager Dr Peter Zentgraf explains that winning this prize demonstrates that interdisciplinary cooperation is feasible and successful. Hail Navigator is designed to reduce damage caused by hail. Based on the premise of suppressing the formation of hail by injecting silver iodide into clouds, Hail Navigator combines navigation with a precipitation reporting system that can guide pilots to optimal locations for hail suppression missions. The system is complemented by weather observations (including precise times and locations) reported by local citizens via a smartphone app, which aids the validation of weather prediction models. These models constitute an important factor in deciding whether a hail suppression flight is necessary.

Since 2004, the [ESNC](#) has been rewarding the best services, products, and business cases that use satellite navigation in everyday life. This year, it received a remarkable 434 submissions from more than 40 countries. The broad scope and quality of these entries once again reflected the vast business potential of GNSS services. This year's submissions were evaluated by an international jury of more than 240 experts from public institutions and elements of research and industry. Meanwhile, more than 130 industry and research partners are now supporting past participants in taking the next steps with their business cases.

The University Challenge is now looking to recruit new sponsors for 2015. The objective of the University Challenge's special prize is to bridge the gap between academic research and innovative business involving GNSS by helping to turn good ideas into profitable commercial ventures. In addition to offering media exposure during the competition and ceremony and access to the leading global network of innovation and expertise in the GNSS sector, sponsor status can also lead directly to business opportunities and cooperations with the winning teams.

*Image: Awards Ceremony. Image courtesy: Jan Kobel.*