



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berlin, Germany and Colorado, USA – May 29, 2025

### **The Karman Project and Jaguar Space Unite to Launch World-First Cultural Crop Payload to the ISS**

Berlin, Germany and Colorado, USA – May 29, 2025 — Jaguar Space has joined forces with The Karman Project in a multinational collaboration that brings together Armenia, Egypt, Nigeria, and Pakistan under a shared vision: to connect cultural heritage and scientific inquiry through space-based agricultural research.

The mission centers on seeds of historical and cultural significance - Egyptian cotton, Armenian pomegranate, Nigerian egusi melon, and Pakistani wheat. These plants, integral to national identities and economies, will be sent to the **International Space Station (ISS)** for a multi-day stay in microgravity, before returning to Earth for continued research and public engagement.

By studying how these culturally meaningful crops respond to spaceflight, the project aims to deepen understanding of seed resilience and plant biology in extreme environments - knowledge critical for both long-duration space missions and Earth-based challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and resource scarcity.

This effort draws on the strengths of The Karman Project's global network of space leaders - spanning over 70 countries - and Jaguar Space's expertise in bioastronautics. United by a commitment to equitable access to space, the partners opened the opportunity to emerging space nations within the Karman Community. Payload allocations were awarded via a competitive process, with each selected country making a compelling case for inclusion. The national experiments are led by Karman Community Members **Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stepanian** (Armenia), **Sara Sabry** (Egypt), **Temidayo Oniosun** (Nigeria) and **Mahhad Nayyer** (Pakistan).

Additional contributions to the broader mission come from partners in seven other countries, including the **Maldives Space Research Organisation**, following a 2023 Karman delegation to support island nations in adopting space-based solutions.

"Our organizations share not only a strong vision for the future, but a strong history, with Jaguar Space's founder **Dr. Luis Zea** having been selected for the Karman Fellowship in 2023," said **Hannah Ashford**, Managing Director of The Karman Project. "This mission reflects the action-oriented spirit of our Fellowship - empowering our community to lead impactful projects across borders and build a more inclusive space future."

Reflecting on the importance of the mission, **Dr. Luis Zea**, Founder of Jaguar Space, added: “Integrating crops native to emerging space nations is essential for building a sustainable human presence beyond Earth. These collaborations advance nutritional diversity, preserve cultural identity, and open new scientific frontiers. Jaguar Space is proud to enable this progress and support the next generation of global space explorers.”

**Payloads are currently being prepared for integration and launch to the ISS**, with mission details to be announced shortly. For more information on the collaboration or media inquiries, please contact: [contact@JaguarSpace.net](mailto:contact@JaguarSpace.net).

### **About Jaguar Space**

Jaguar Space is a bioastronautics and business consulting firm dedicated to advancing science and commerce in space. The company leverages a unique combination of expertise in space science, engineering, project management, cross-cultural affairs, and business development to help its customers reach their goals faster and more effectively.

<https://jaguarspace.net/>

### **About The Karman Project**

The Karman Project is a global non-profit foundation promoting peace and security in space through international cooperation. The foundation’s unique convening power enables it to bring together public and private sector decision-makers to build common understandings and impactful projects that serve sustainability, education, science, security and capacity building efforts. To date, The Karman Project’s highly curated community of entrepreneurs, astronauts, space executives, researchers, and artists from over 70 nations have initiated projects servicing the immediate needs of more than five million people worldwide. The foundation is headquartered in Berlin, Germany.

<https://www.karmanproject.org/>