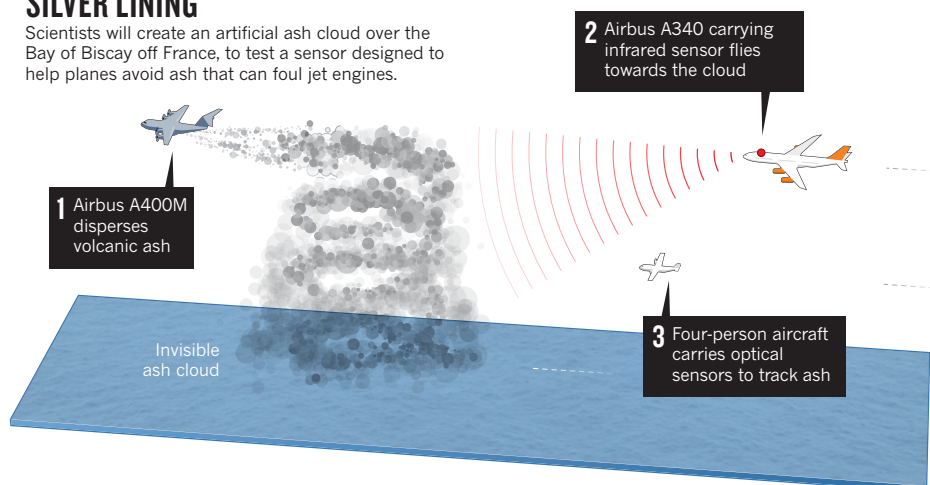


## SILVER LINING

Scientists will create an artificial ash cloud over the Bay of Biscay off France, to test a sensor designed to help planes avoid ash that can foul jet engines.



will be visible to the human eye, although scientists on a German research jet did spot Eyjafjallajökull ash in 2010, at concentrations below 0.2 milligrams of ash per cubic metre (U. Schumann *et al. Atmos. Chem. Phys.* **11**, 2245–2279; 2011). The artificial cloud is likely to dissipate in 6 to 12 hours, falling out harmlessly over the ocean, says Prata. The experiment will cost roughly €500,000 (US\$680,000) and, he says, “We have only one shot.”

The researchers will know just how much ash is released, and its precise geometry, so the

experiment will provide the best test yet for AVOID. But many hurdles remain before the system can be used commercially, including the need to integrate it into a working cockpit, and to scale up production. “It’s really not clear what we will do next,” says Prata. The decision rests mostly with Airbus, which would need to decide whether to develop the technology further. Prata hopes that AVOID could one day be used on planes flying in volcanically active regions from Indonesia to Chile or Alaska.

Back where it all began, a major

initiative called FUTUREVOLC is focusing on improving monitoring of Icelandic volcanoes. Led by the University of Iceland in Reykjavik and the Icelandic Meteorological Office, researchers are beefing up networks of equipment including seismic stations, cameras and gas detectors. “We’re working on all aspects, from magma generation inside the crust to how it progresses into eruption plumes and how this is dispersed,” says Freysteinn Sigmundsson, an earth scientist at the University of Iceland and co-coordinator of the project.

Even Prata is involved in FUTUREVOLC: he plans to deploy three of Nicarnica’s infrared cameras on the ground in Iceland. They will measure how fast and how high ash plumes rise — on their way to disrupting airspace somewhere. ■

### CORRECTIONS

The News story ‘Study aims to put IPCC under a lens’ (*Nature* **502**, 281; 2013) said that Jean-Pascal van Ypersele was at the Catholic University of Leuven. He is at the Catholic University of Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve. The Editorial ‘The maze of impact metrics’ (*Nature* **502**, 271; 2013) wrongly located the University of North Texas — it is in Denton, Texas.