

# **EE3080 UAVIONICS DIP Guide**

Micro-drone and Its Applications

Version 1.1.0  
(25 August 2021)

**School of EEE**  
**Nanyang Technological University**

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## Changelog

This section lists the changes to this document as it is updated. Version number format is MAJOR.MINOR.PATCH.

### Version 1.0 (12 August 2021)

Initial version.

### Version 1.0.1 (18 August 2021)

Add Git clone instruction under “The `espdrone` Project” section.

### Version 1.0.2 (19 August 2021)

- Add instruction on how to generate the `c_cpp_properties.json`, and `.vscode` under “The `espdrone` Project” section.
- Change the formatting of the `c_cpp_properties.json`.
- Add instructions on how to install and setup Python.
- Add `cd` instructions to navigate between directories.

### Version 1.1.0 (25 August 2021)

- Add the section “Assembling and Testing the ESP-Drone”:
  - Uploading firmware to the drone
  - Assembling the drone
  - Flying the drone manually with mobile app
- Add the section “Developing with Docker”.

## Overview

### DIP Overview

UAVONICS DIP is administered in 2 phases.

The first phase involves building and constructing a drone with a form factor of less than 10x10 cm. To achieve this, students will engage in building a flying drone equipped with a camera, powered by the [ESP32 Microcontroller](#).

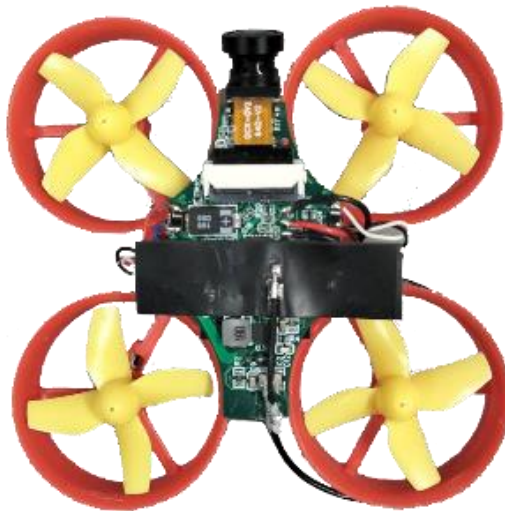
The second phase emphasizes on collaborative work to create a novel solution to a real-world problem scenario to be unveiled during the project. The application solution should demonstrate aspects of embedded AI, leveraging on the hardware built in phase one. The whole project brings forth a holistic experience of hands-on practicality; harnessing creativity to innovate and improvise in problem-solving.

In short, the objective of the first phase is building and getting familiar with the camera-equipped micro drone, while the aim of the second phase is to utilize the quadcopter for real-world applications.

### Overview of the Micro Drone Hardware

The quadcopter we will be using for this project is small and lightweight (also known as MAV; Micro Aerial Vehicle) for safety and legal reasons. The micro drone is based on [ESP-Drone](#), an open-source project for a micro drone powered by the ESP32 microcontroller.

For this DIP, we designed our own circuit board (PCB) for the drone and will use a modified version of the firmware of the ESP-drone project. We will refer to the micro drone as “ESP-drone” henceforth.



**Figure 1.** The ESP-drone specifically designed for this DIP project.

#### General specifications:

- Motor: 4x brushed motors
- Flight time: around 5 minutes
- Charge time: approx. 30 minutes (battery is removable)

- Dimension: approx. 85 x 85 x 30 mm
- Net weight: 26 gr
- Main processor: ESP32-S microcontroller
- Features: onboard Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, onboard camera, connector for external antenna

Due to the small size of the drone, it has **short flight time** and **small payload** (we cannot add much weight to the drone), which are one of the limiting factors for this project.

The main features of this drone are Wi-Fi connectivity and onboard camera. With the Wi-Fi capability, it can communicate with a computer (or **even other drones**) and exchange data. We discuss the main components of the ESP-drone circuit board below.

### i. ESP32 Microcontroller

A microcontroller is a device with multiple input/output pins that can be programmed to perform lots of different tasks. You can think of it as a single-chip, tiny computer that can interface with sensors and actuators (motors, etc.). Arduino boards are also development boards featuring microcontrollers on them.

The ESP32 is a widely popular family of microcontroller. It has a quite powerful CPU as well as Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capability built-in, which makes it highly suitable for IoT (Internet of Things) or applications requiring internet connectivity.



**Figure 2.** Various development boards featuring ESP32 microcontroller.

From <https://randomnerdtutorials.com/getting-started-with-esp32/>.

The ESP-drone is using the ESP32-S, a member of the ESP32 family featuring **dual-core** CPU, allowing us to perform multiple tasks concurrently. An example would be interfacing with a camera and streaming the image over Wi-Fi, maintaining communication with an external computer, and running control loops to stabilize the drone at the same time.

The ESP32-S board that we are using also features a connector for external antenna. We will use this to extend the range and signal quality of the drone's Wi-Fi.

### ii. Inertial Measurement Unit

To stabilize the drone's flight, we need an Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU). The IMU we will be using is a 6-axis IMU<sup>1</sup>; 3-axis accelerometer and 3-axis gyroscope. The accelerometer measures the linear

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we are using the popular MPU-6050 by Invensense.

acceleration (including gravity) while the gyroscope measures angular velocity (rotational speed). The data from this sensor will be used as an input to the control loop of the drone.

### iii. RGB Camera

Since the ESP32-S houses a dual-core CPU, we have enough processing power to integrate an onboard camera onto the drone. This is an RGB camera<sup>2</sup> which image can be streamed to an external computer via Wi-Fi. The computer can then perform image processing algorithms such as object detection or fiducial marker<sup>3</sup> detection. We will be using the camera for a vision-based positioning system for the ESP-drone.

### iv. Other Sensor Modules

The circuit board of the ESP-drone has pads for adding an additional sensor to the drone<sup>4</sup>. For example, a ToF (time of flight) sensor module can be handy to measure the height of the drone above ground accurately, which is hard to get from IMU sensor alone. We need to keep in mind of the **payload limitation** of the drone, though.

The full hardware schematics of the ESP-drone's circuit board is available in **Appendix A** if you are interested to check it out.

## Overview of The Software

Software is also a very important part of this project. The software part of this project can be divided into several categories based on the functionality:

### i. `espdrones-nh` – The Drone's Firmware

This is the firmware running directly on the ESP32 microcontroller on the drone. It is responsible for all low-level controls of the drone (e.g. controlling all 4 motors, talking with the onboard camera, reading sensor data and filtering them, generating flight trajectory, etc.) as well as handling Wi-Fi communication to and from the drone. The firmware is written in **C** and makes use of ESP32's official development framework, *ESP-IDF* (we will see this in later parts).

This firmware is based on the open-source `espdrones` project. We have made the necessary modifications to this project to suit our custom-designed hardware.

### ii. `espdrones-lib-python` (`edlib`) – The API

This is a library/API for communicating with the drone running on (external) computer. This API can be used to write scripts to fetch data and/or send instructions to the drone, or used by other software, as the backend engine, for similar purposes. It is written in **Python**.

---

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the camera model is OV2640 by Omnivision.

<sup>3</sup> This is a marker which can be used as point of reference placed on the environment where the camera operates.

<sup>4</sup> The sensor added via this pad communicates with the ESP32 on the drone using the [I<sup>2</sup>C communication protocol](#).

### iii. `espdrone-client` – GUI for Debugging and Testing

This is a graphical user interface written in Python with **PyQt5** for testing and debugging with the drone. With it we can view sensor and other readings, change the drone's parameters, and control the drone (e.g. using joysticks). This tool uses `espdrone-lib-python` as the backend.

### iv. Others

Apart from the three mentioned above, we will also be using a simple Android app to fly the drone manually, as well as some other software to augment the capability of the drone (e.g. **ROS**). All these will be discussed in later parts.

Before we start, we will setup the toolchain and software needed to develop with the drone, as well as assemble the drone. These are discussed in the following parts.



## Setting Up the ESP32 Toolchain

### Installing Necessary Software

In order to develop and upload programs to the ESP32 on the drone, we need to set up the toolchain. We are going to use **ESP-IDF** (Espressif IoT Development Framework), which is provided directly by the company behind ESP32. We are not going to use Arduino IDE as it is not powerful enough for the task.

Before setting up the toolchain, install these on your computer if you have not already:

1. **Git** (not to be mistaken with **Github**), a version control software. You do *not* need to install Github on your desktop. Link: <https://git-scm.com/download>
2. **Microsoft Visual Studio Code (VS Code)**, not to be mistaken with **Visual Studio**. This is a powerful code editor that we will use. Link: <https://code.visualstudio.com/download>

Additional setup for Mac users using terminal (in order):

3. **Homebrew**, MacOS package manager.

```
/bin/bash -c "$(curl -fsSL  
https://raw.githubusercontent.com/Homebrew/install/HEAD/install.sh)"
```

4. **CMake**, build process integration for cross environment.

```
brew install cmake
```

5. **Ninja**, a small build system for speed.

```
brew install ninja
```

### Installing ESP-IDF

After installing all the above software, launch VS Code and install the **ESP-IDF extension**.

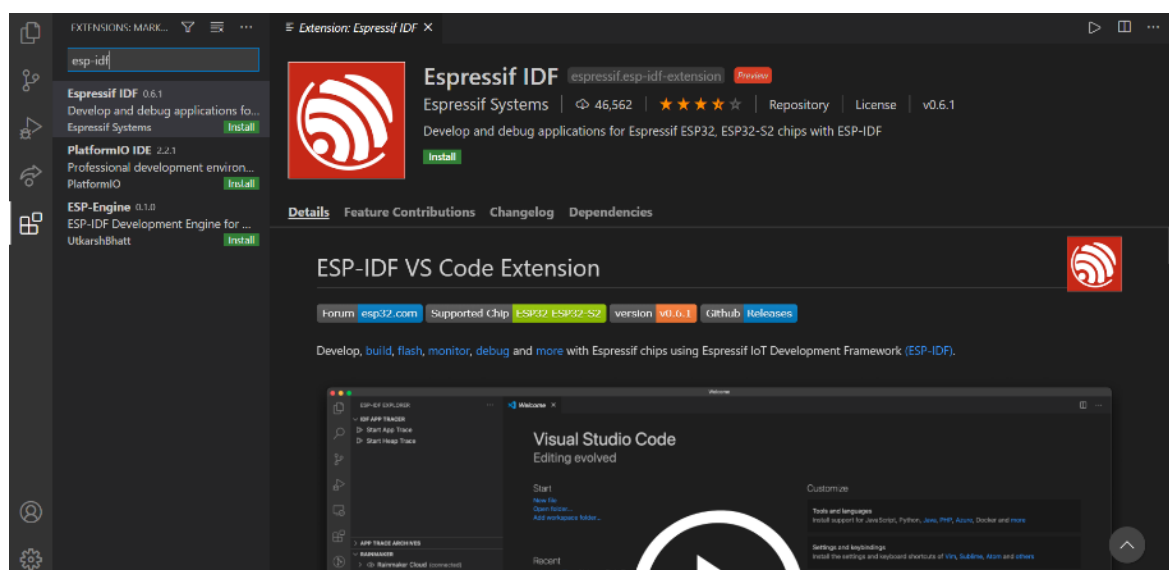
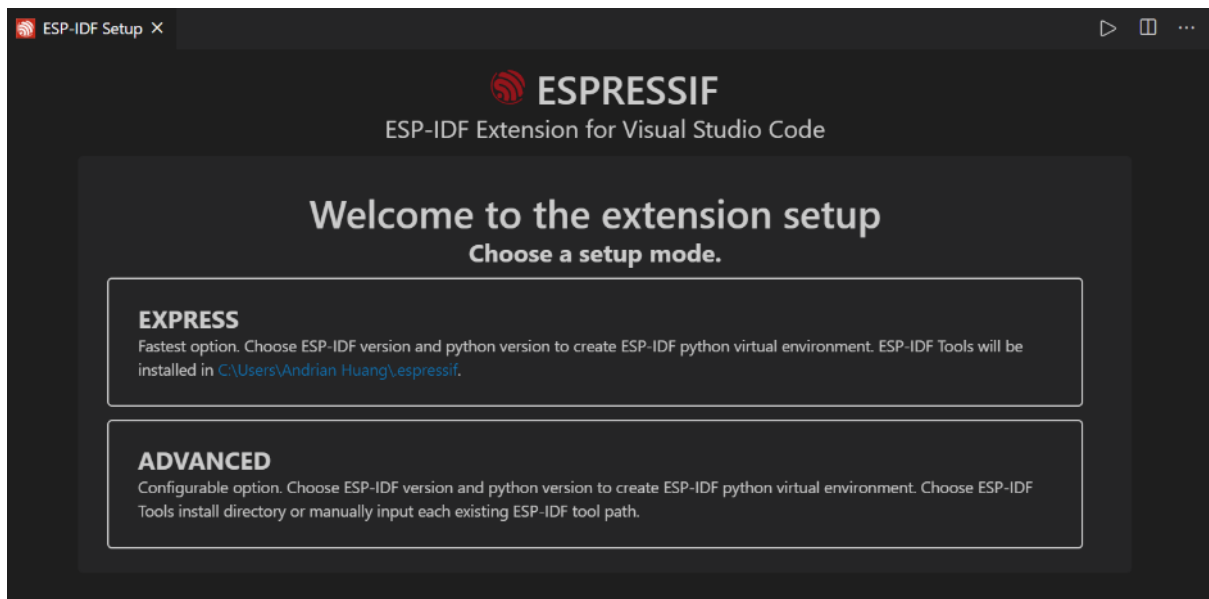


Figure 3. ESP-IDF extension on VS Code extension marketplace.

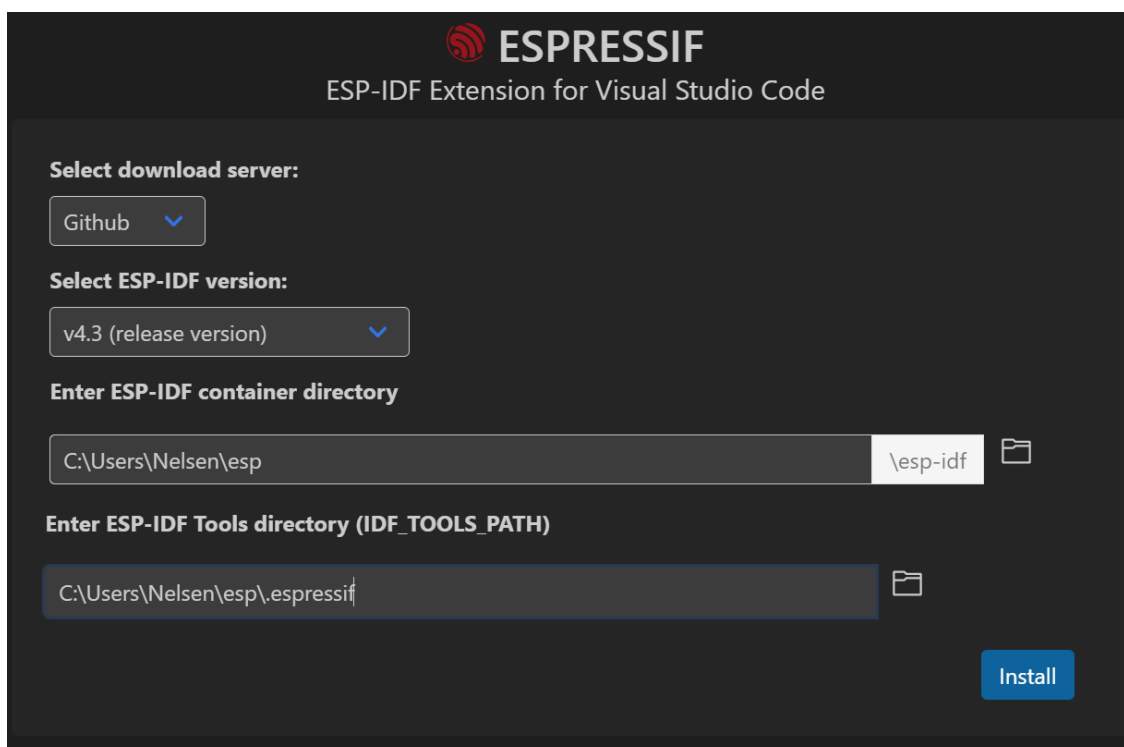
After you finish installing the extension, you should see this on VS code:



**Figure 4.** ESP-IDF setup screen after installing the extension.

Next, choose “Express”.

The ESP-IDF container directory **does not support directory with whitespaces in its full path**. As such, choose a folder which full path does not contain spaces.



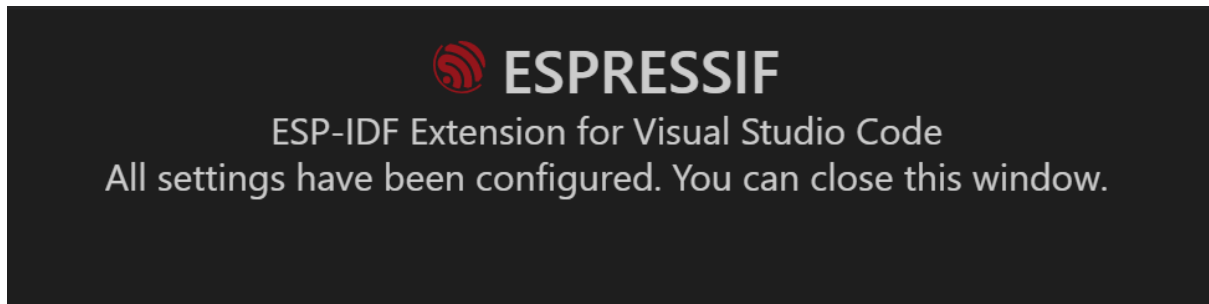
**Figure 5.** Choose the ESP-IDF container directory to be a path without whitespaces, like shown above.

For example, on Windows computer you may create a folder called “esp” on C: drive and choose this folder to be the directory for ESP-IDF container. For the other dropdown lists:

- Download server: we tested with Github but this choice should not matter.
- ESP-IDF version: “v4.3 (release version)”.

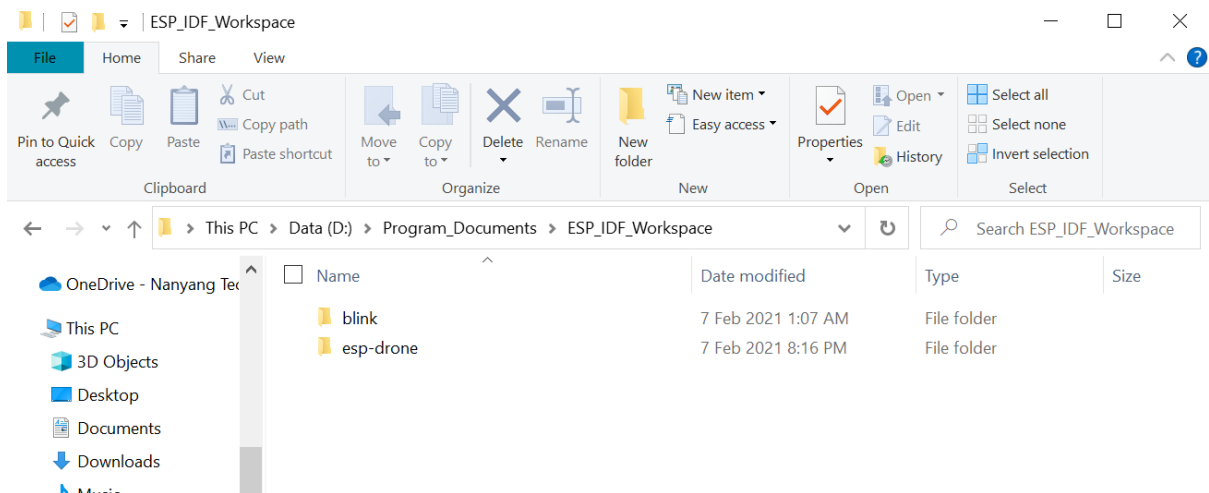
By default, ESP-IDF Tools is put under the folder “.espressif” (a hidden folder, **please remember this directory**). You can leave this as is as long as the full path has no spaces. In this case, it is put under the same directory as the ESP-IDF container directory inside the “esp” folder.

Then, click “Install” and wait for the installation to finish. After everything has been installed, you should see the following window:



**Figure 6.** ESP-IDF installation window after finishing the installation process.

Next, you can optionally create another folder where you will put all your ESP-IDF projects in. You can place this folder anywhere and name it whatever you like, as long as the full path **does not contain whitespaces**. An example is **C:/espressif/workspaces**. Another example is shown below:

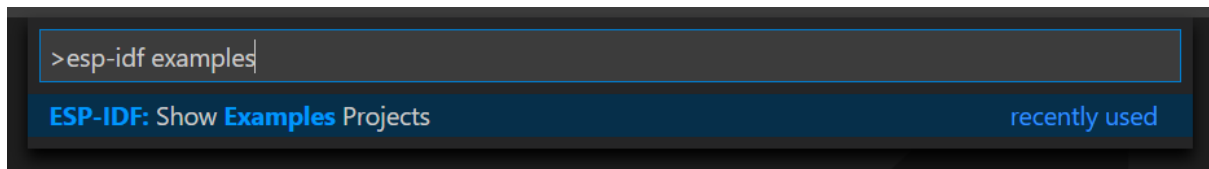


**Figure 7.** Example of a workspace folder with two projects inside it (the full path here is **D:/Program\_Documents/ESP\_IDF\_Workspace**). Notice that **there are no spaces in the full path**.

## Testing ESP-IDF Installation

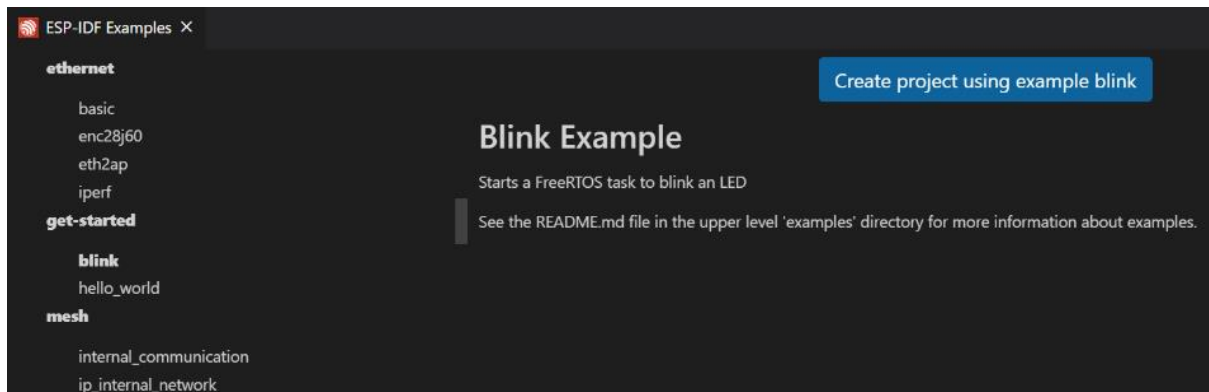
To confirm that the ESP-IDF installation works fine, we will try to compile a built-in example project in ESP-IDF. We will also look at several important things for working with ESP-IDF, such as how to build a project.

To open example projects, press “F1” or “Ctrl+Shift+P” to open the Command Palette, then type “esp-idf examples”, then choose “ESP-IDF: Show Examples Projects” -> “Use current ESP-IDF”.



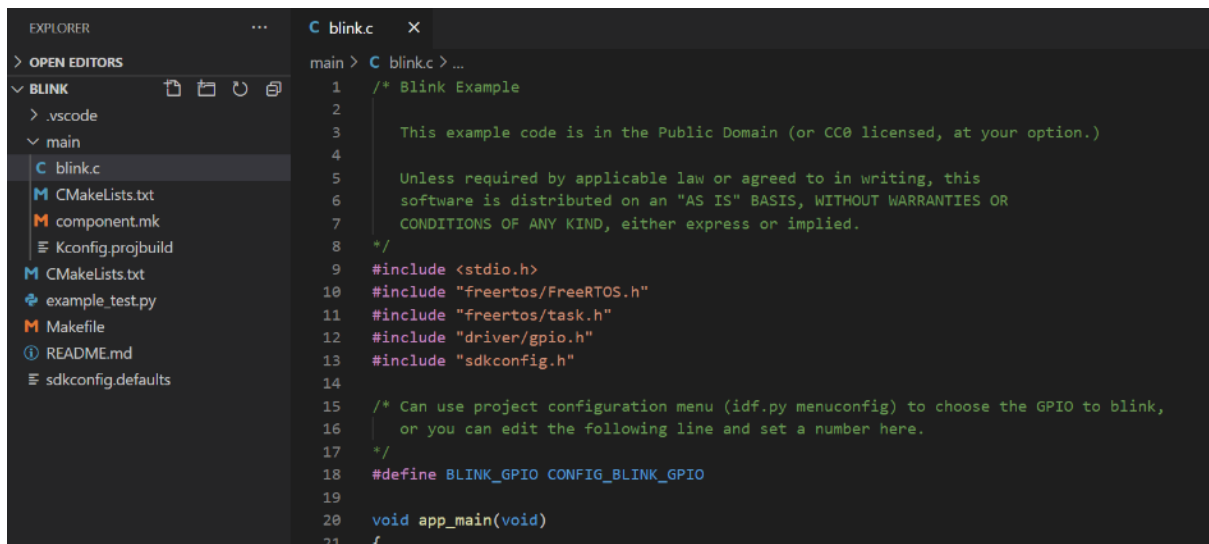
**Figure 8.** Accessing ESP-IDF example projects.

We will try a simple example: the blinking LED. Find the project `blink` under `get_started` and click “Create project using example blink”.



**Figure 9.** Opening the `blink` example.

You will be asked to choose the folder in which you want to put the new example project in. Choose the folder that you have created previously. You should now see the new example project open automatically.



**Figure 10.** Example project `blink`.

The code here has been written as this is an example project, so we only need to set the configuration and build the project.

## ESP-IDF SDK Configuration

Every ESP-IDF project has its own SDK configuration to set many aspects of the ESP32 for the project (including pins that are used in the code). For the `blink` example, the pin which the LED is attached to is configured in the SDK configuration.

To access the SDK configuration editor, click the gear icon on the bottom left of the screen. You should then see the following window:

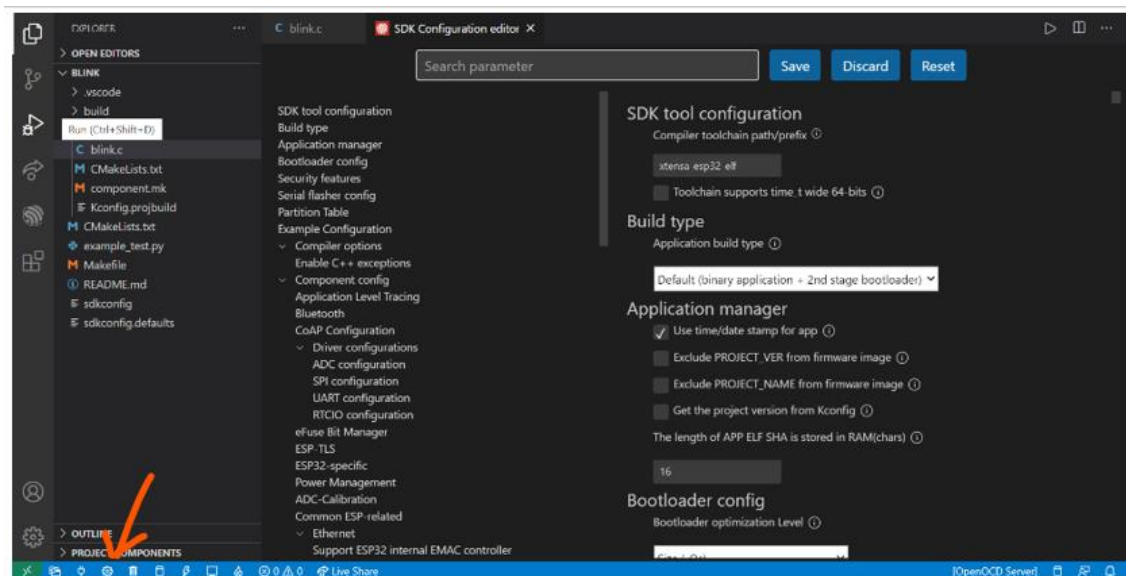


Figure 11. ESP-IDF SDK Configuration editor window.

Scroll down to find “Blink GPIO number” in the configuration. Change it to **33** since the red LED on our drone PCB is on that GPIO pin (you can also use GPIO 13 for the blue LED if you want to). After that, click “Save”. You should see a new `sdkconfig.old` file appear on the left<sup>5</sup>.

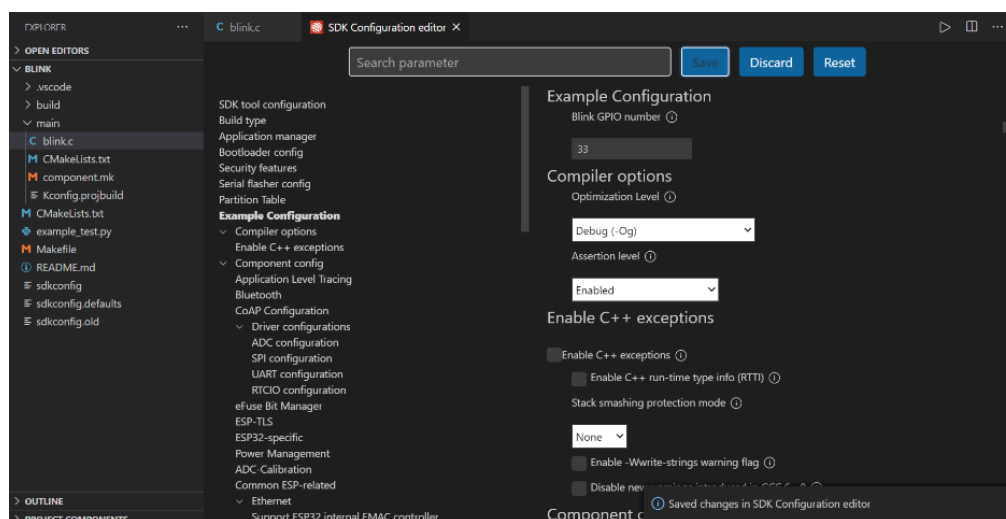


Figure 12. Configure the GPIO pin number to blink to either 33 or 13 in the SDK Configuration editor.

<sup>5</sup> This `sdkconfig.old` file is actually the former `sdkconfig` file. The `sdkconfig` file contains all the configuration that will be used when compiling the code. When we modify the blink GPIO number and save the configuration, a new `sdkconfig` file is generated, hence the old one is automatically renamed into `sdkconfig.old`.

## Building the Example Project

After modifying and saving the configuration, we can build (compile) the project. To do so, click the cylinder icon on the bottom left of the screen (to the right of the trash can icon). Wait for the build process to finish. A successful build should look like the following:

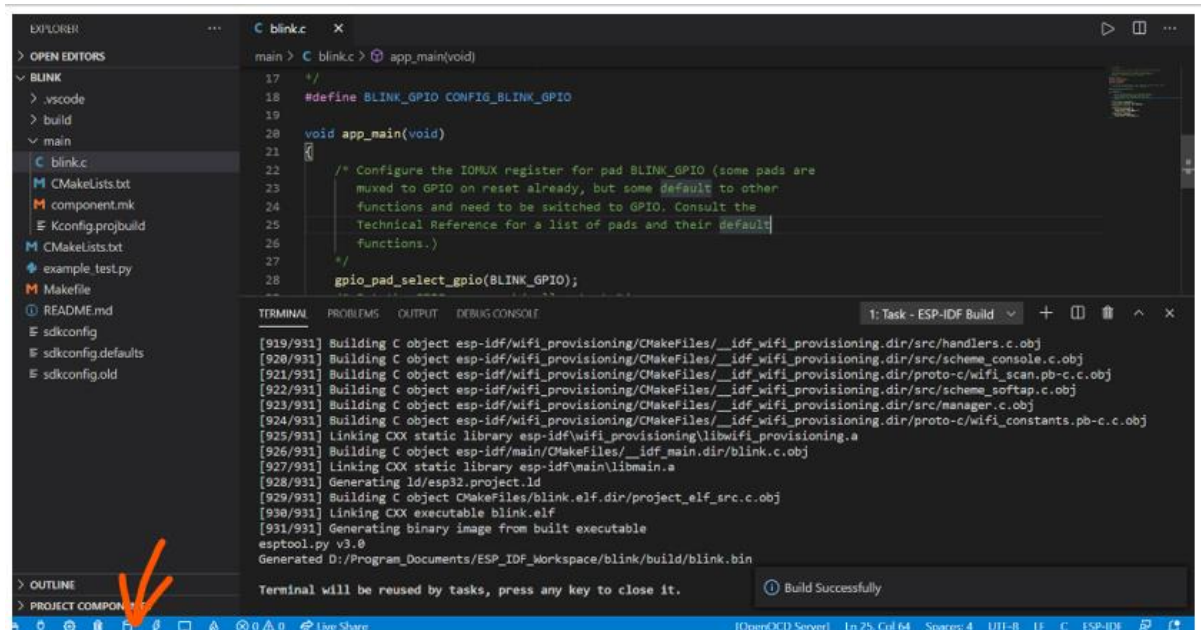


Figure 13. Example of a successful build.

If your build is successful, great! You have installed ESP-IDF correctly.

(Optional) While building, you may encounter an error similar to:

```
Invalid escape sequence \o
```

If this happens, do the following modifications:

1. Find the Python script `idf.py` inside `esp-idf/tools` directory. For example, if you chose `C:/espressif` as the directory to install ESP-IDF into, find the Python script inside `C:/espressif/esp-idf/tools`.

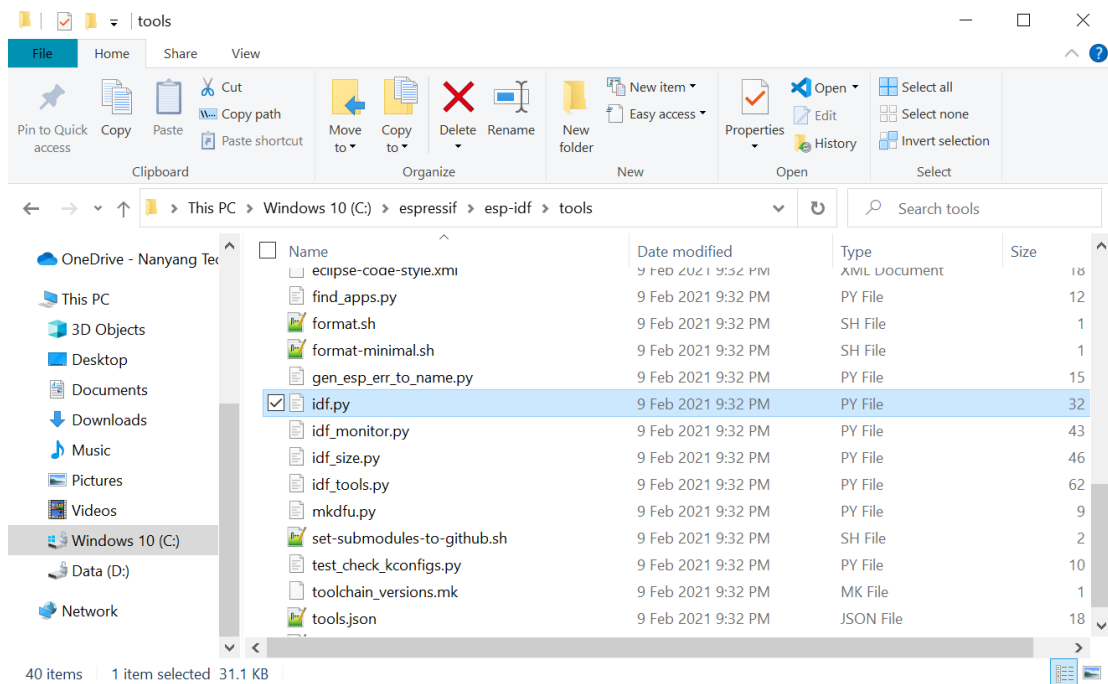
Now, inside the Python script, change the code at line 52

```
os.environ["PYTHON"] = sys.executable
```

into

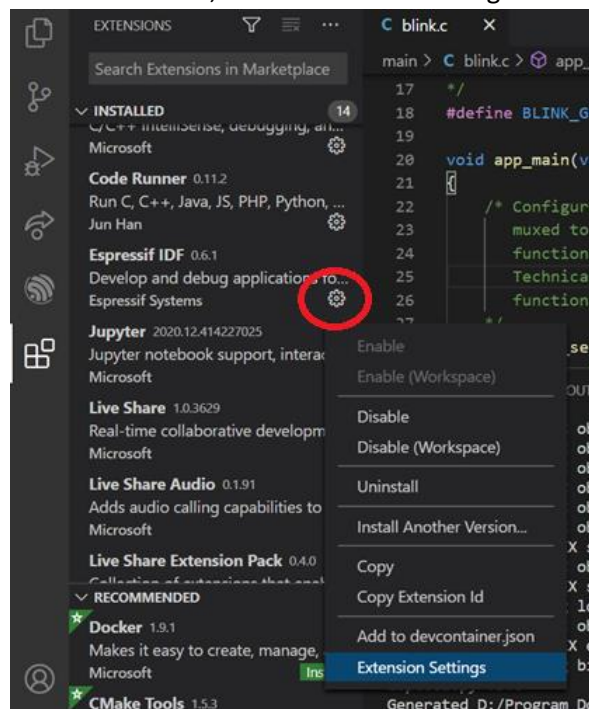
```
import pathlib
os.environ["PYTHON"] = pathlib.Path(sys.executable).as_posix()
```

Save the modified script (do not rename or save as).



**Figure 14.** Example of where to find `idf.py` (if you installed ESP-IDF in C:/espressif).

2. Open the ESP-IDF extension setting window. To do so, click the gear icon to the right of “Espressif IDF” under Extensions. Then, click “Extension Settings”.



**Figure 15.** Accessing extension settings.

Then, find “Idf: Python Bin Path Win” and replace all backslashes (\) with forward slashes (/).

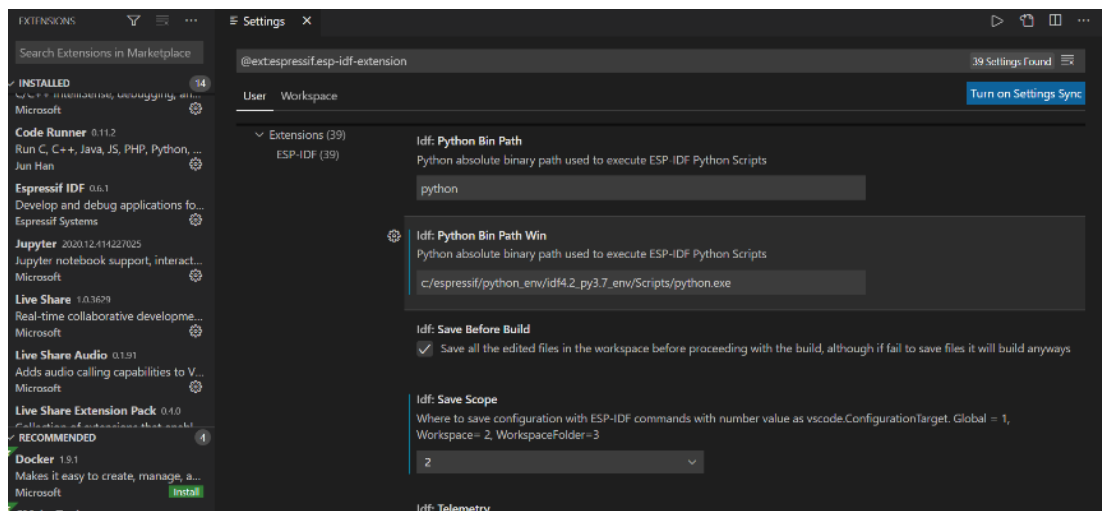


Figure 16. Python Bin Path Win under Extension Settings.



## Preparing the Drone Software

### The espdrone-nh Project

As a reminder, this is the firmware that runs directly on the drone (ESP32). In the following weeks, we will base our developments on this project. You can fetch it from Github:

```
git clone https://github.com/NelsenEW/espdrone-nh.git
```

You can put this inside the folder that you have previously created.

To use this project, two project link scripts must be modified.

1. Go to "C:\Users\Username\esp\esp-idf\components\esp32\ld" and find the script `esp32.project.ld.in`.

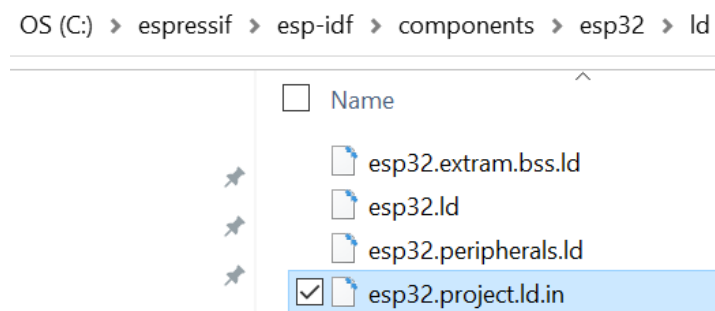


Figure 17. ESP32 project link script.

Right click on the script and click "Open with Code" to open the script. Then, add the following lines before `} >default_rodata_seg`:

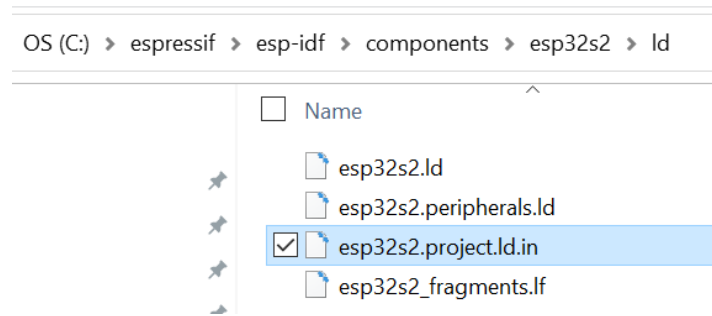
```
/* Parameters and log system data */
_param_start = .;
KEEP*(.param)
KEEP*(.param.*)
_param_stop = .;
. = ALIGN(4);
_log_start = .;
KEEP*(.log)
KEEP*(.log.*)
_log_stop = .;
. = ALIGN(4);
```

The newly added lines (highlighted in green) should look as follow:

```
311     _thread_local_end = ABSOLUTE(.);
312     . = ALIGN(4);
313     /* Parameters and log system data */
314     _param_start = .;
315     KEEP*(.param)
316     KEEP*(.param.*)
317     _param_stop = .;
318     . = ALIGN(4);
319     _log_start = .;
320     KEEP*(.log)
321     KEEP*(.log.*)
322     _log_stop = .;
323     . = ALIGN(4);
324 } >default_rodata_seg
325
326 .flash.text :
```

Figure 18. ESP32 project link script modification.

2. Similarly, go to "C:\Users\Username\esp\esp-idf\components\esp32s2\ld" and find the script `esp32s2.project.ld.in`.



**Figure 19.** ESP32S2 Project link script.

Add the same lines to the script at the same location:

```
296     _rodata_reserved_end = ABSOLUTE(.);
297     . = ALIGN(4);
298     /* Parameters and log system data */
299     _param_start = .;
300     KEEP(*(.param))
301     KEEP(*(.param.*))
302     _param_stop = .;
303     . = ALIGN(4);
304     _log_start = .;
305     KEEP(*(.log))
306     KEEP(*(.log.*))
307     _log_stop = .;
308     . = ALIGN(4);
309     } >default_rodata_seg
310
311     .flash.text :
```

**Figure 20.** ESP32S2 Project link script modification.

## Testing the `espdrones-nh` Workspace

Once you have downloaded the `espdrones-nh` project, open VS Code and click "Open Folder..." on the menu bar and choose `espdrones-nh`. To generate the `".vscode"` directory, and the `c_cpp_properties.json`, go to the command palette by pressing **View -> Command Palette** and type Edit configurations (JSON).



**Figure 21.** Command Palette for creating `c_cpp_properties.json`

Now, go to `".vscode"` inside the `espdrones-nh` directory. You should add the following:

```
{
  "configurations": [
    {
      "name": "ESP-IDF",
      "compilerPath": "C:\\\\Users\\Nelsen\\esp\\.espressif\\tools\\xtensa-esp32-elf\\esp-2020r3-8.4.0\\xtensa-esp32-elf\\bin\\xtensa-esp32-elf-gcc.exe",
      "cStandard": "c11",
      "cppStandard": "c++17",
      "includePath": [
        "${config:idf.espIdfPath}/components/**",
        "${config:idf.espIdfPathWin}/components/**",
        "${config:idf.espAdfPath}/components/**",
        "${config:idf.espAdfPathWin}/components/**",
        "${workspaceFolder}/**"
      ],
      "browse": {
        "path": [
          "${config:idf.espIdfPath}/components",
          "${config:idf.espIdfPathWin}/components",
          "${config:idf.espAdfPath}/components/**",
          "${config:idf.espAdfPathWin}/components/**",
          "${workspaceFolder}"
        ],
        "limitSymbolsToIncludedHeaders": false
      },
      "compileCommands": "${workspaceFolder}/build/compile_commands.json"
    }
  ],
  "version": 4
}
```

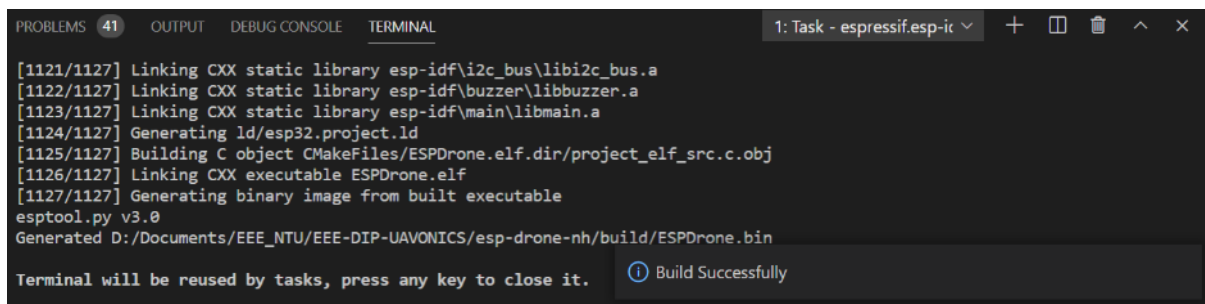
**Figure 22.** Visual Studio Code with espdrone-nh c\_cpp\_properties.json.

When you copy the entire thing from above, the text could be unformatted, to solve this, right click anywhere on the document and press **"Format Document"**.

**Don't forget to change the compilerPath!** Compiler path is the path to .espressif directory followed by tools\xtensa-esp32-elf\esp-2020r3-8.4.0\xtensa-esp32-elf\bin\xtensa-esp32-elf-gcc.exe. Don't forget to change single back slash (\) to double back slash (\\) between each directory name.

The purpose of the c\_cpp\_properties.json is to let vscode know that we are working with an ESP32 microcontroller, and setup the include path for smoother development. Do not worry if the compile\_commands.json is not found, it will be generated when you build the project.

Next, try building the workspace by clicking the cylinder icon on the bottom left of the screen (to the right of the trash can icon). Wait for the build process to finish. A successful build should look like the following:



```
PROBLEMS 41 OUTPUT DEBUG CONSOLE TERMINAL 1: Task - espressif.esp-ic + □ ✕
[1121/1127] Linking CXX static library esp-idf\i2c_bus\libi2c_bus.a
[1122/1127] Linking CXX static library esp-idf\buzzer\libbuzzer.a
[1123/1127] Linking CXX static library esp-idf\main\libmain.a
[1124/1127] Generating ld/esp32.project.ld
[1125/1127] Building C object CMakeFiles/ESPDrone.elf.dir/project_elf_src.c.obj
[1126/1127] Linking CXX executable ESPDrone.elf
[1127/1127] Generating binary image from built executable
esptool.py v3.0
Generated D:/Documents/EEE_NTU/EEE-DIP-UAVONICS/esp-drone-nh/build/ESPDrone.bin
Terminal will be reused by tasks, press any key to close it. Build Successfully
```

Figure 23. espdrone-nh successfully built.

*For future developments with this repository, you can refer to the documentation:*

<https://github.com/NelsenEW/espdrone-nh/blob/main/docs/esp-drone-docs.pdf>

## Installing and Setting Up espdrone-lib-python and espdrone-client

Before setting up, install these on your computer if you have not already:

1. **Python 3.6 only!** You can install **Python 3.6** using Anaconda, although you do not have to. Link: <https://www.python.org/downloads/release/python-368/>

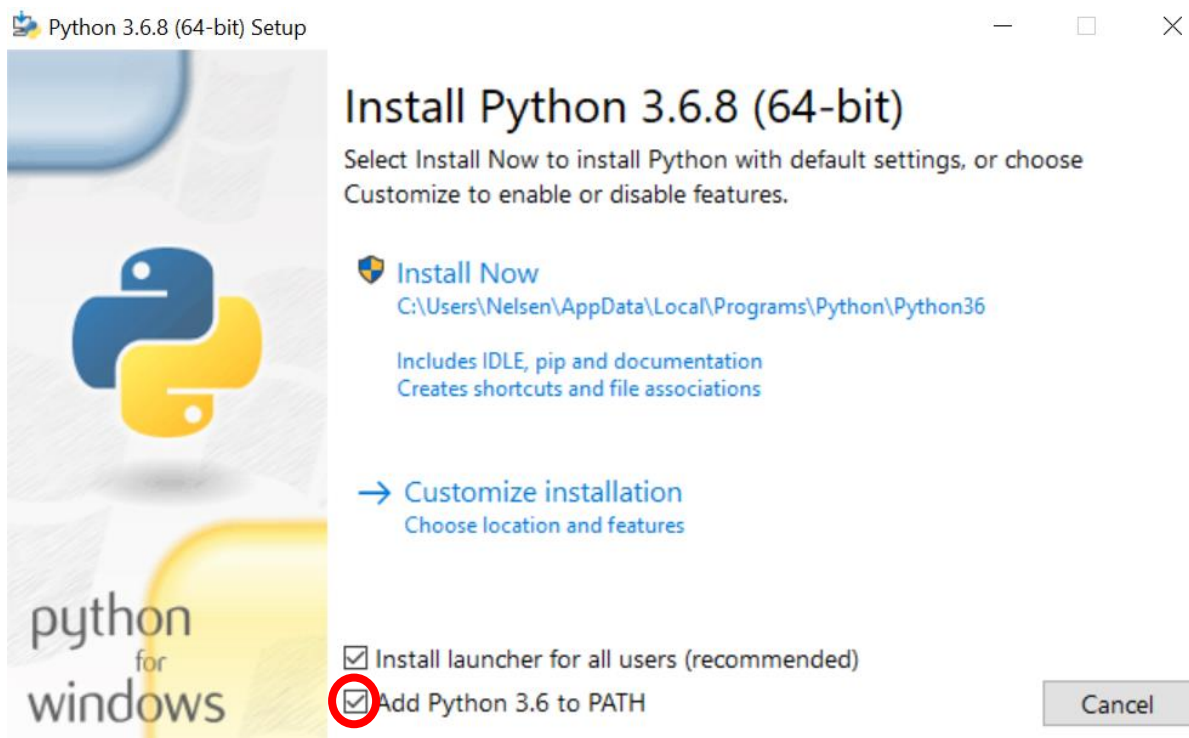


Figure 24. Installing Python.

Don't forget to tick **Add Python 3.6 to PATH** if you are installing it with the python installation, then press Install Now.

Now, open the command prompt, update pip to the latest version

```
python -m pip install --upgrade pip
```

We will use `espdrone-client` (`edclient`) to interface with the drone (e.g. read sensor readings). To use it, clone it (as well as `espdrone-lib-python`, which it uses as backend) from Github:

```
git clone https://github.com/NelsenEW/espdrone-clients  
git clone https://github.com/NelsenEW/espdrone-lib-python
```

Then, the next step is to navigate to the folder `espdrone-lib-python` and install the required packages:

To navigate to the `espdrone-lib-python` directory, do the following command

```
cd espdrone-lib-python
```

To install the dependencies of the `espdrone-lib-python` package, do the following command

```
pip install -r requirements.txt
```

Then, install the `espdrone-lib-python` in the editable mode:

```
pip install -e .
```

Finally, return to the previous directory

```
cd ..
```

The next step is to install the `espdrone-client`, to do that navigate to `espdrone-client`.

To navigate to the `espdrone-client` directory, do the following command

```
cd espdrone-client
```

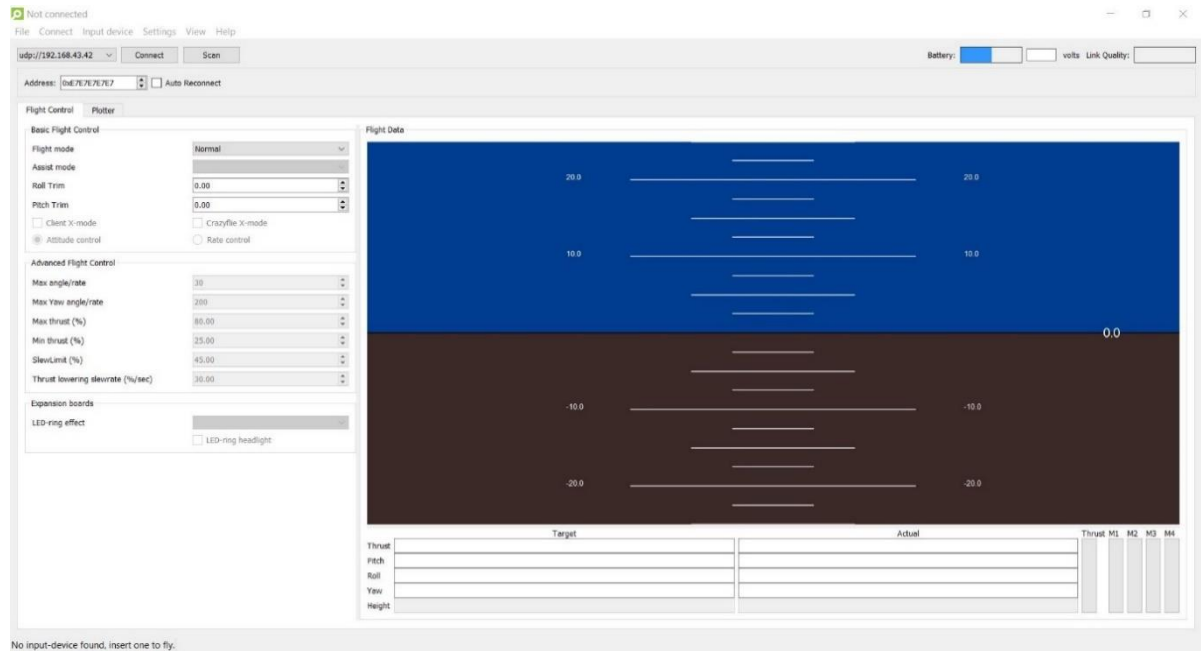
Then, install the `espdrone-client` in the editable mode:

```
pip install -e .
```

Finally, inside the same directory, launch the GUI interface (`edclient`):

```
edclient
```

You should then be greeted with the following window:

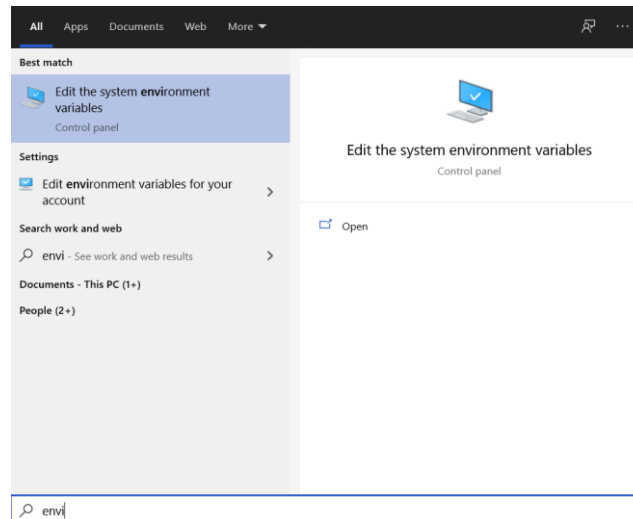


**Figure 25.** The `edclient` GUI.

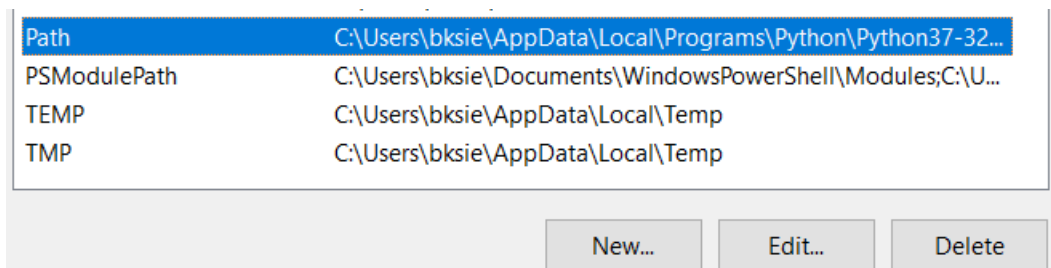
## Additional Setup (for Windows)

Up to now, you need to navigate to the `espd drone-clients` directory inside command prompt (CMD) in order to run `edclient`. To call `edclient` in CMD without needing to navigate to that directory, you can add a new Path pointing to it in system environment variables. You only need to do this if Python is not added to your system Path variable.

1. Open the “Edit system environment variables” window by typing “path” or “environment” in the Windows search box.

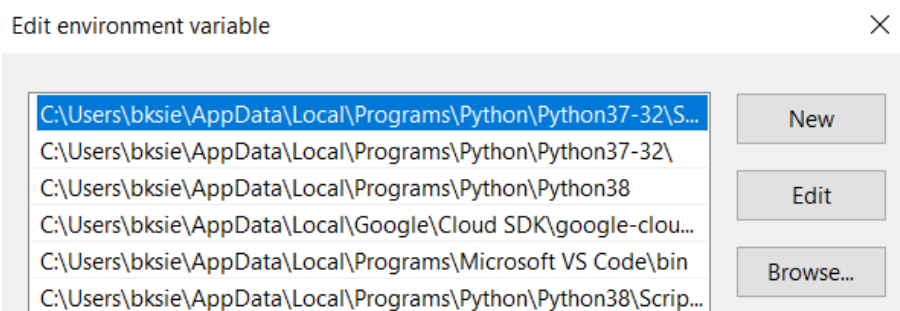


2. On that window, click Path and press Edit...



3. Create a new path pointing to python scripts, e.g.

C:\Users\< your username >\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python36\Scripts  
or to other directories where Python stores its scripts at.

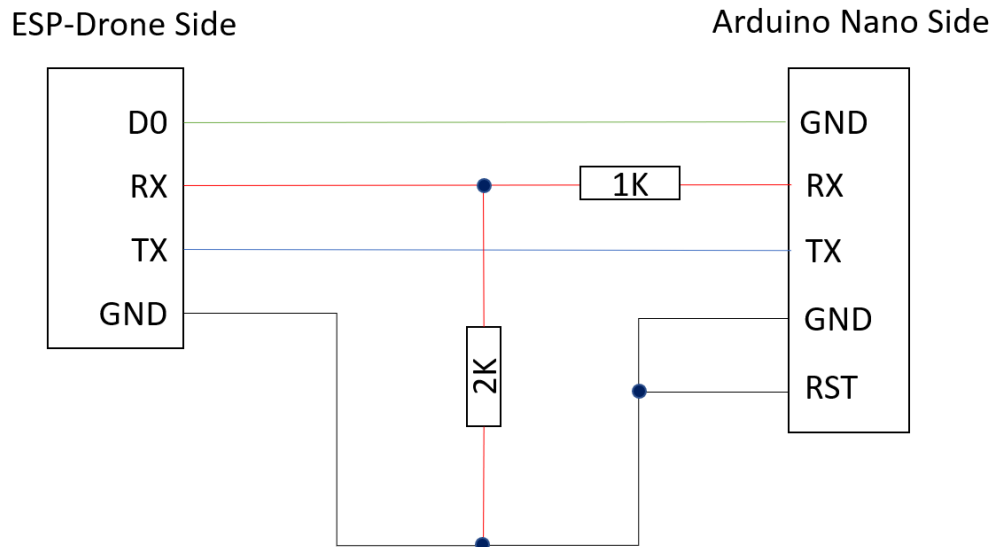


## Assembling and Testing the ESP-Drone

### Uploading Firmware to ESP-Drone PCB

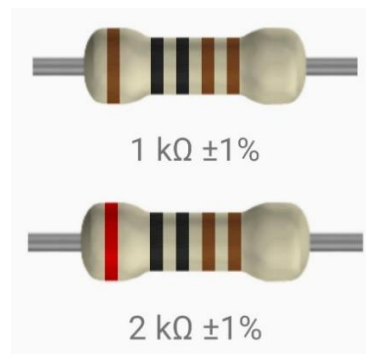
The ESP-drone PCB does not have onboard USB connector, so an external programmer is required to upload program to it. We will use an Arduino Nano as the programmer.

Make the following connection on your breadboard:



**Figure 26.** Configuration to upload program to ESP-Drone.

You can identify which resistor is which by looking at the color bands on them.



**Figure 27.** Resistor value as indicated by their color bands.

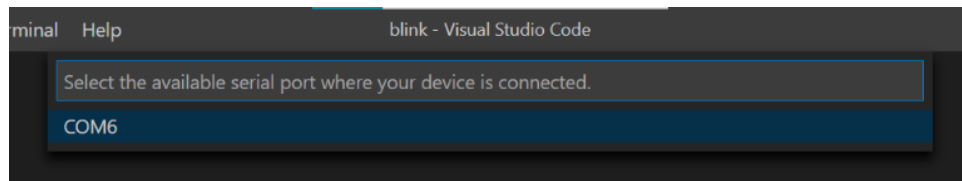
Please **remember this configuration and do not dismantle the circuit you have built on your breadboard**; we will keep using this for uploading firmware to the drone in the future.

Now that the hardware has been set up, open the `espdrone-nh` project in ESP-IDF (recall that this is the firmware, we will upload this onto the drone PCB). Perform the following steps in VScode/ESP-IDF to upload the firmware to the drone:

- Build the project by clicking the cylinder icon on the bottom left of the screen. Wait for it to finish.

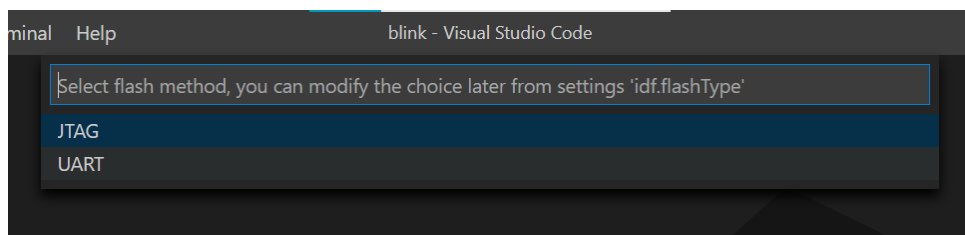


- Choose the correct port that the board is connected to by clicking the plug icon on the bottom left of the screen (to the left of the gear icon). A selection list will then appear on the top of the screen:



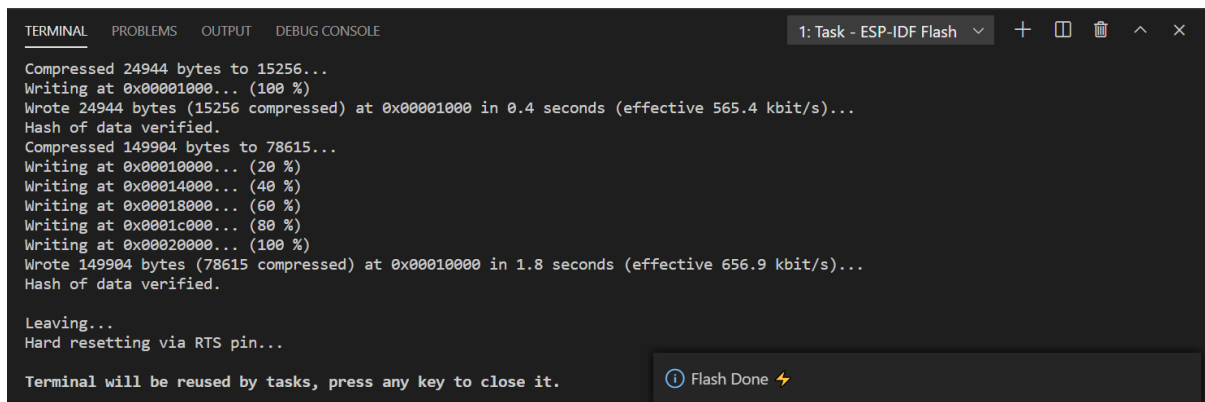
**Figure 28.** Selecting the port before uploading. One way to check which port is correct is to unplug the drone PCB (the Arduino) from the computer and see which port disappears.

- Finally, upload to the board by clicking the flash icon on the bottom left of the screen (to the left of the monitor icon). A selection list will then appear on the top of the screen. **Choose “UART”**.



**Figure 29.** Uploading the program to the ESP32. Choose “UART” (which is the serial communication protocol we use to upload the program to the board).

A successful upload should look like this:



**Figure 30.** Terminal output after a successful upload to the ESP32 board.

## Assembling the Drone

Before assembling the drone, please **check if you have all the necessary parts**:

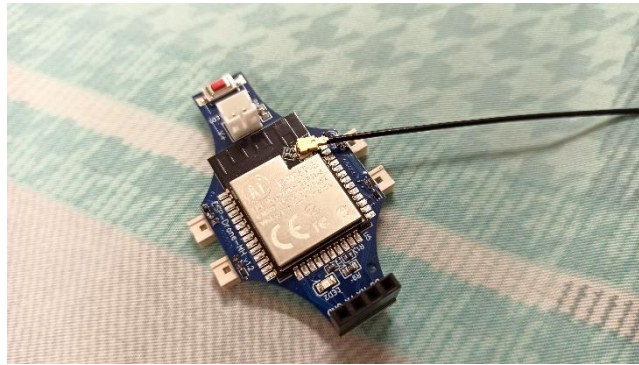
- The drone PCB **with the `espd drone-nh` firmware programmed to it**
- Drone plastic frame
- 4 brushed motors; 2 with red-blue wires (clockwise), 2 with white-black wires (counterclockwise)
- 4 propellers; 2 clockwise, 2 counterclockwise (see below)
- Paper antenna

- Wide-angle camera
- Drone battery

Also, **please pay attention to texts in bold** as they are important.

### Step 1: Attach the antenna to the PCB

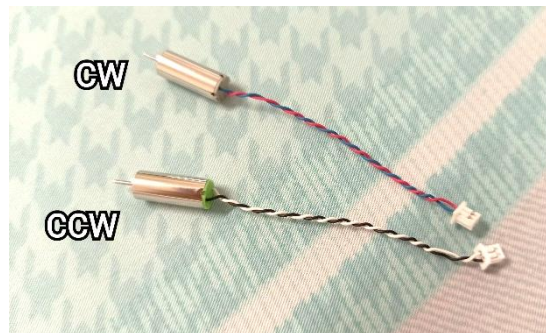
Make sure that the antenna is firmly attached to the connector.



**Figure 31.** The drone PCB with antenna attached.

### Step 2: Twist the motor wires

This helps reduce electrical noise and makes the wires fit better in the wire slot on the drone frame.



**Figure 32.** Twisted Motor Wires

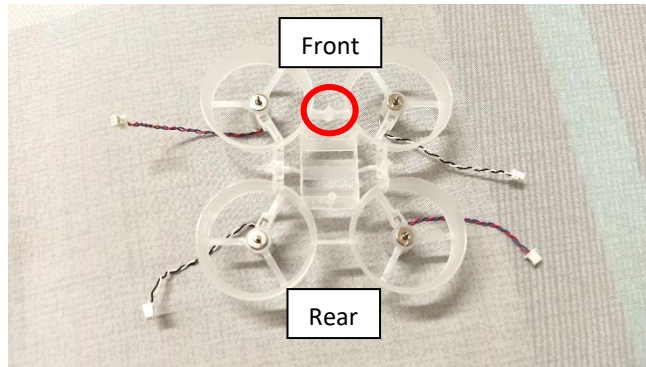
Do note that you should have 1 pair of counterclockwise and 1 pair of clockwise motors for each drone. The counterclockwise motors have black and white wires, while the clockwise ones have red and blue wires.

### Step 3: Install the motors onto the drone frame

You need to apply some force to insert the motors. You can use a long nose plier to help insert the motor. **Be careful not to deform or damage the drone frame, especially the propeller guard ring** as the clearance between the ring and the propeller is small.

Also, **mind which motor goes to which hole:**

- The clockwise (red-blue) motors should go to the front-left and rear-right sides.
- The counterclockwise (white-black) motors should go to the front-right and rear-left sides.
- Note the front side of the drone frame.



**Figure 33.** Top view of the drone frame with motors installed.

Make sure to insert the motors all the way in, as depicted below.



**Figure 34.** Side view of the drone frame.

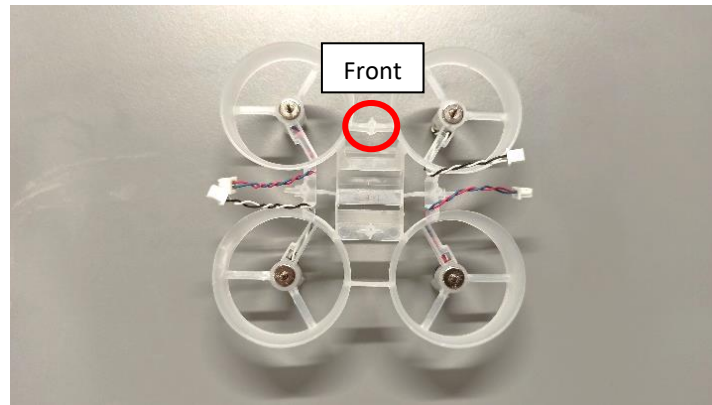
#### Step 4: Motor wire management

After installing the motors, slip the wires into the slot on the drone frame. Each slot has a small hook to keep the wires in place.



**Figure 35.** Insert the motor wires into the slots on the frame and secure the wires under the hook.

The result should look like the following:



**Figure 36.** Top view of the frame after motor wire management.

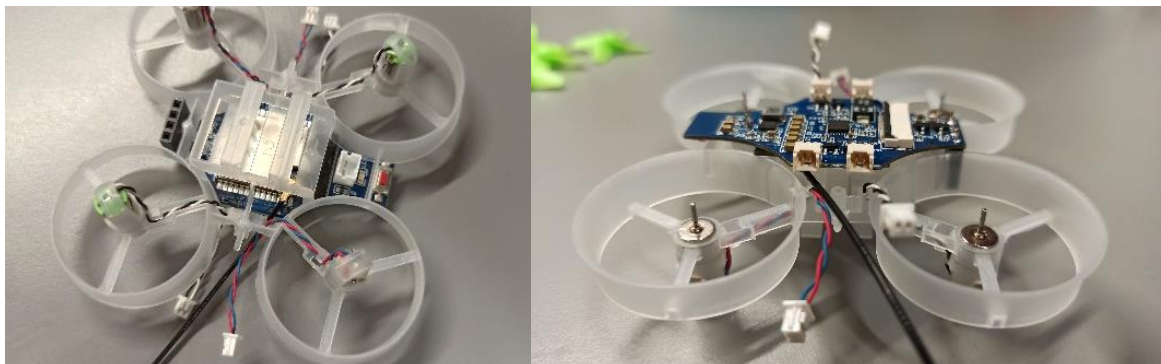
#### **Step 5: Place the PCB on the drone frame**

The shape of the PCB should align with the curvature of the propeller guards. **Match the orientation of the PCB with the orientation of the drone frame.** The front side of the PCB is the side with the camera connector.



**Figure 37.** The PCB on the frame.

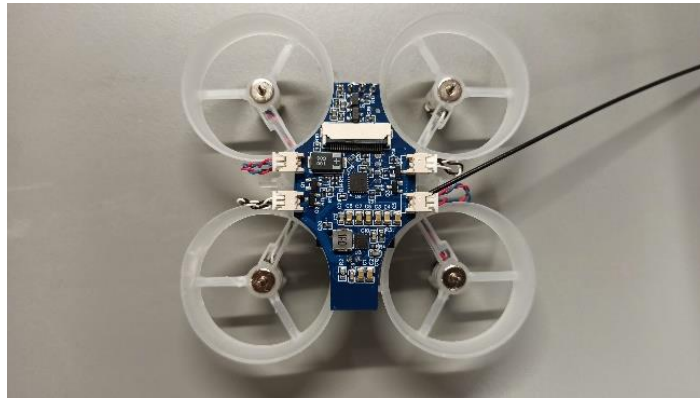
The PCB should lay flat on the frame, as depicted below.



**Figure 38.** The PCB should lay flat on the frame.



### Step 6: Connect the motors to the PCB

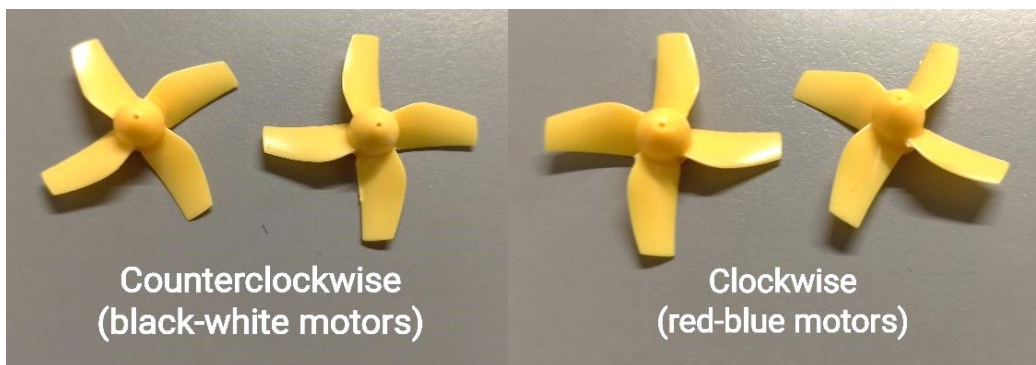


**Figure 39.** The drone PCB with the motor connectors plugged in.

Plug the motor wires into the motor connectors on the PCB. The front-left motor should go to the front-left connector on the PCB, as so on. **Be careful not to twist the PCB connector sideways or apply too much force to it** as it is quite fragile. Make sure you plug the connectors all the way in.

### Step 7: Install the propellers to the motors

Just like the motors, the propellers have spin direction. **Make sure to install the correct propeller to the correct motor** (counterclockwise propeller is for counterclockwise motor and vice versa).



**Figure 40.** Propeller spin direction.



**Figure 41.** The drone with the propellers attached to the correct motors.

### Step 8: Install the camera and test the drone

Proceed by installing the wide-angle camera onto the PCB:

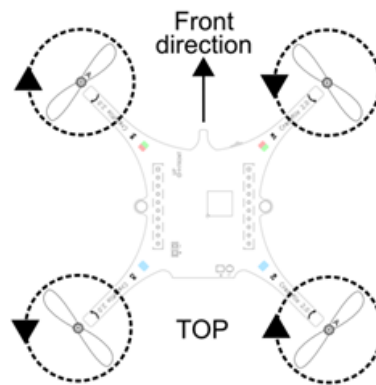
- Unlock the camera connector by lifting up the black flap on the camera connector. **Avoid applying too much force on the camera connector as it is fragile.**
- Insert the camera's ribbon cable into the slot on the camera connector. **The camera should face up, not down.**
- Re-lock the camera connector by pushing the camera connector's black flap back down. This will secure the camera to the connector.

Congratulations, you have completed the assembly of the drone! You can now plug the battery to power the drone.

**Please put the drone on the table right after plugging the battery in and do not move it until you see a quickly blinking red LED (twice every second).** This is to allow the drone's IMU to calibrate.

If you have done all the assembly steps correctly, the drone should indicate that it is working properly by showing these signs:

- All motors spin one-by-one in the correct orientation (motor test)



**Figure 42.** The motors' spin direction.

- The motors sound a start up tone when spinning (during the initial motor test)
- The red LED blinks twice in a second (not 5 rapid blinks every few seconds)



**Figure 43.** The drone fully assembled. It is now ready to fly!

## Flying the Drone Manually using Mobile App

The ESP-Drone app is available for Android and iOS. We can use it to control the drone (i.e. the app acts as remote control).

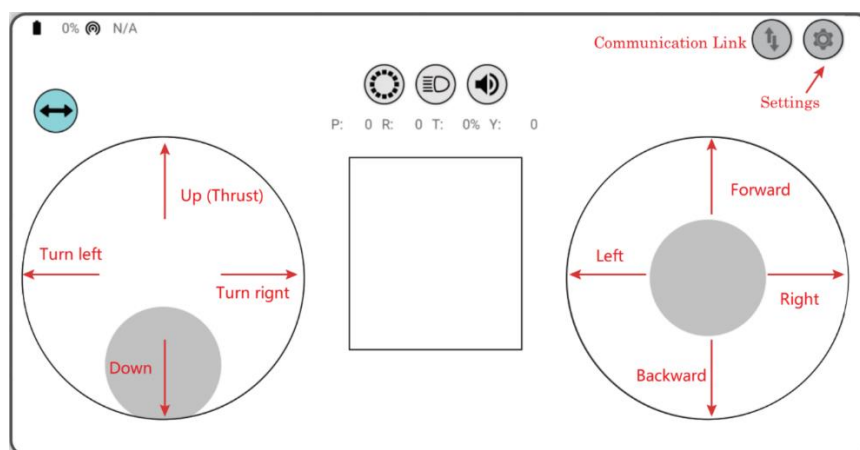
For Android, please scan the QR below to download the app (APK). For iOS, please search and download the ESP-Drone APP in App Store.



**Figure 44.** QR code to installation of ESP-drone App for Android.

Launch the app and connect your phone to the drone's Wifi network. Then, tap the "Connect" button/icon on the top right of the screen. **The blue LED on the drone should light up**, indicating established connection between the phone and the drone.

You can now try gently increasing thrust (sliding the left joystick slightly upwards) to fly the drone. See the figure below for the manual control.



**Figure 45.** Android app Interface.

## Developing with Docker

Docker is a containerization system that allows us to package and ship software with their dependencies. Using Docker, we can avoid the hassle of setting up the system or dependencies and even ship software intended to run on specific Operating Systems (OS) on another OS.

For this DIP, we will be developing with [Robot Operating System \(ROS\)](#) in addition to all the repositories we have introduced so far. We will be using ROS Noetic, which is recommended for Ubuntu 20.04. However, with Docker we can run ROS Noetic and all the packages we have for this DIP on computers running OSes other than Ubuntu 20.04.

First, make sure you have downloaded and installed docker on your device. You can follow the guide [here](#). **Make sure to follow the installation guide according to your computer's OS.**

### Getting Espdrone Docker Images

The following repository hosts the Docker image for `espdrone` project.

<https://hub.docker.com/r/nelsenew/espdrone>

To pull the Docker image:

```
docker pull nelsenew/espdrone
```

### Setting Up GUI with Docker

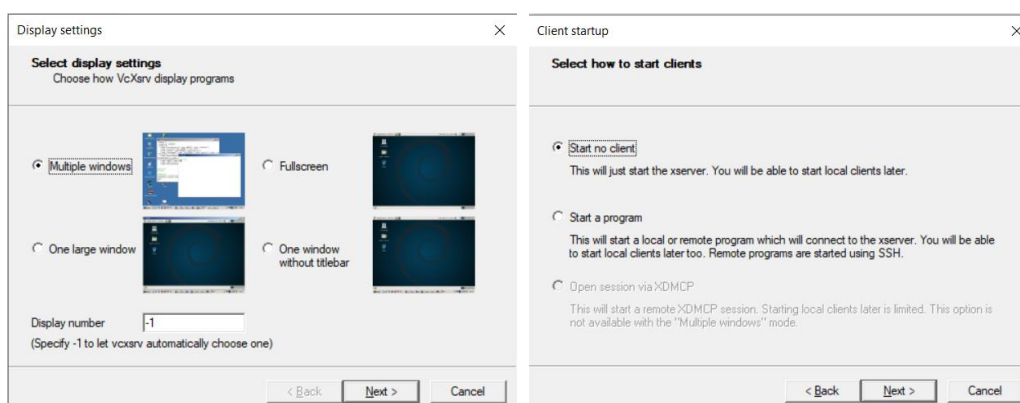
To run GUI applications inside the docker container (i.e Rviz, Gazebo), X11 port forwarding is required.

#### i. For Windows Users:

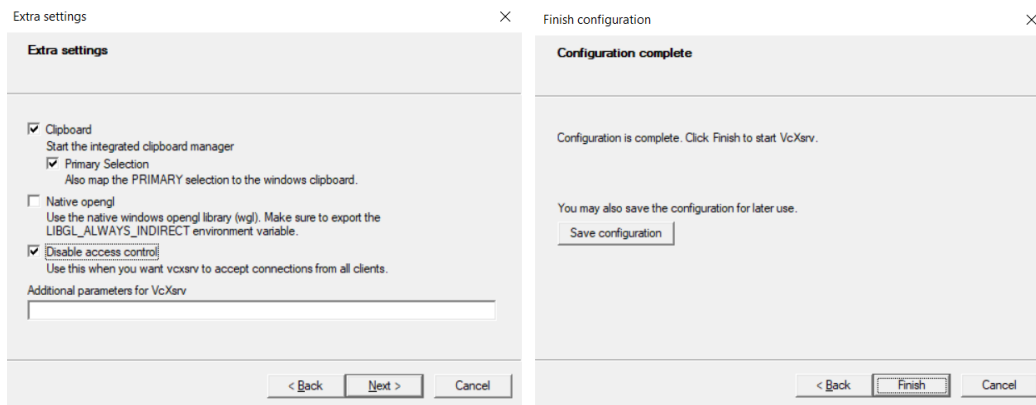
##### 1. Installing VcXsrv and Configuration

Install VcXsrv Windows X Server. (Xming can be used also but the package hasn't been updates since years ago).

After installation, run Xlaunch from the start menu and follow the configuration steps below:







**Figure 46.** VcXsrv Configuration

## 2. Running the Espdrone Container

Open a terminal in Command Prompt and input the following command:

```
docker run -it --volume="<path/to/catkin_ws>:/catkin_ws" --
volume="<path/to/espdrone-lib-python>:/espdrone-lib-python" -e
DISPLAY=host.docker.internal:0.0 -e LIBGL_ALWAYS_INDIRECT=0
nelsenew/espdrone:latest
```

Remarks: remember to change <path/to/catkin\_ws> and <path/to/espdrone-lib-python> to the corresponding to the path on your computer.

Do also note that if you must have espdrone-lib-python from the github on your working directory. If you do not have a catkin\_ws directory, just create a folder with the name catkin\_ws or you can type the following on your command line

```
mkdir catkin_ws
```

### Additional Info

The two environment variables (-e) are important for connecting to X11 server.

```
DISPLAY=host.docker.internal:0.0
```

This is what allows the application to find the X server. In Docker, there will be a special IP to designate your container.

```
LIBGL_ALWAYS_INDIRECT=0
```

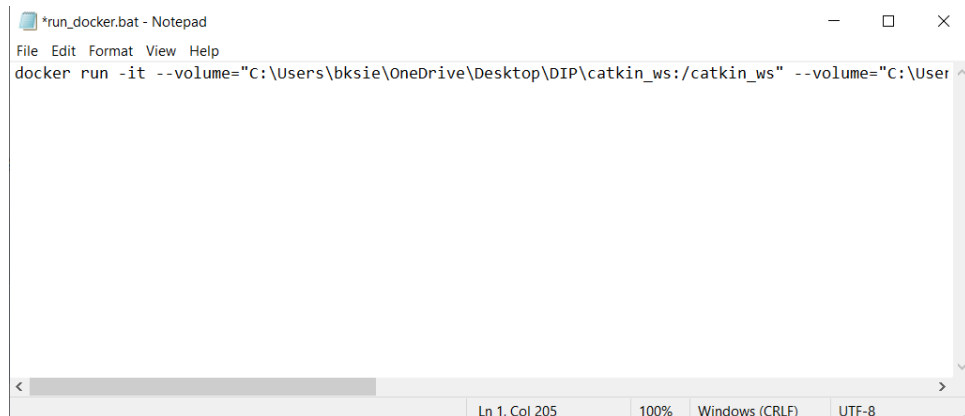
This designates how your application will be rendered.

Tips: You can save the command into a .bat file so that you can just double click to launch the docker container next time.

To create a bat file, follow these 5 easy steps:

1. Open your notepad.
2. Add your commands (see the figure below).
3. Save with the extension **.bat**

4. Go to the directory where you saved the .bat file and click it to run
5. To edit just right click and select **Edit**



**Figure 47.** Bat file

## ii. For Ubuntu Users:

### 1. Run the bash file

In ubuntu, X11 port forwarding has been installed. The following bash script is sufficient to run the docker container with GUI applications.

#### ***run\_espdrome\_container.bash:***

```
XAUTH=/tmp/.docker.xauth

xauth_list=$(xauth nlist :0 | tail -n 1 | sed -e 's/^.../ffff/')
if [ ! -f $XAUTH ]; then
    if [ ! -z "$xauth_list" ]; then
        echo $xauth_list | xauth -f $XAUTH nmerge -
    else
        touch $XAUTH
    fi
    chmod a+r $XAUTH
fi

file $XAUTH
ls -l $XAUTH

docker run -it \
    --env="DISPLAY=$DISPLAY" \
    --env="QT_X11_NO_MITSHM=1" \
    --volume="/tmp/.X11-unix:/tmp/.X11-unix:rw" \
    --env="XAUTHORITY=$XAUTH" \
    --volume="$XAUTH:$XAUTH" \
    --volume="<path/to/your_catkin_ws>:/catkin_ws" \
    --volume="<path/to/espdrome-lib-python>:/espdrome-lib-python" \
    --net=host \
    --privileged \
    --runtime=nvidia \
    nelsenew/espdrome:latest \
    bash
```

## 2. Making the script executable

```
chmod a+x run_espdrone_container.bash
```

## 3. Execute the script

```
./run_espdrone_container.bash
```

For more information on GPU acceleration with docker on Ubuntu, please check [this link](#) from ROS Wiki.

### iii. For Mac Users:

#### 1. Install XQuartz for X11 forwarding

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

#### 2. Launch XQuartz. Under the XQuartz menu, select Preferences

Go to the security tab and ensure “Allow connections from network clients” is checked.

#### 3. Running the espdrone container

```
docker run -it --volume="<path/to/catkin_ws>:/catkin_ws" --  
volume="<path/to/espdrone-lib-python>:/espdrone-lib-python" -e  
DISPLAY=host.docker.internal:0.0 -e LIBGL_ALWAYS_INDIRECT=0  
nelsenew/espdrone:latest
```

## Launching ROS Applications with Docker

In the terminal where you typed the command line, try running roscore. If you are able to run roscore, that means docker container has been setup successfully. Note that it would not work for a new terminal where you have not put the docker run command!

```
roscore
```

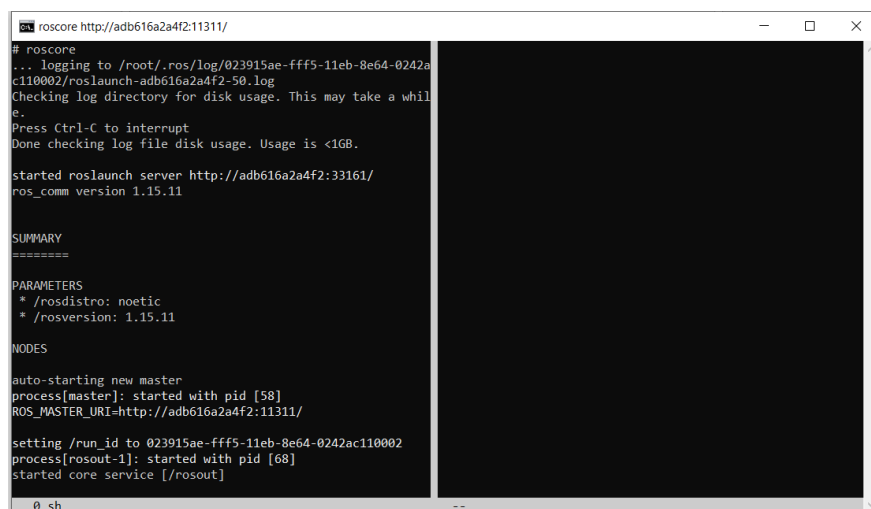


Figure 48. Launching roscore

Next, try running rviz in a new terminal. You should see Rviz launch immediately as shown below:

```
rviz
```

You can also use this command line if you want to run both on the same tab/terminal

```
roscore > dev/null & rviz
```

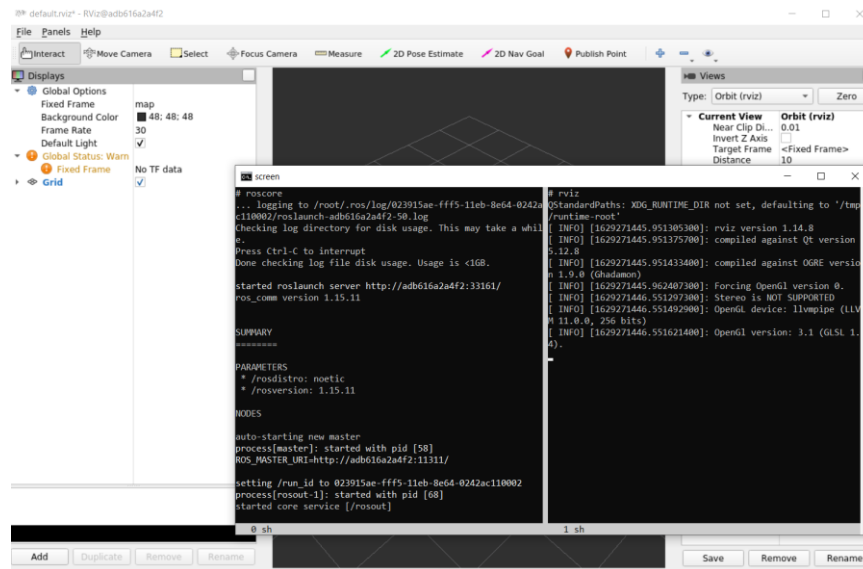


Figure 49. Launching Rviz

## Appendix A – Hardware Schematics of the ESP-Drone

