CONSTRUCTION STARTS FOR VOLTAERO CASSIO ELECTRIC-HYBRID AIRCRAFT FACILITY AT ROCHEFORT – CHARENTE-MARITIME AIRPORT

News / Events / Festivals, Manufacturer

Bids are being sought for the construction of an industrial site at Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport in France's Nouvelle-Aquitaine region where VoltAero is to perform the assembly and deliveries of its Cassio electric-hybrid aircraft family. This construction project notification – issued by the regional association of airports, called the Syndicat Mixte des Aéroports de La Rochelle - Ile de Ré et Rochefort - Charente-Maritime – will lead to the creation of a facility with three Cassio aircraft final assembly lines, along with a workshop, logistics area and offices.

The move-in timing for VoltAero is expected within a year, targeted for June 2024. Covering a total area of 7,400 square meters – with the possibility for future extensions – the building initially will provide 2,412 square meters of floor space. Project management is the responsibility of the Syndicat Mixte association, and the prime contractor role has been entrusted to the Rochefort-based SDArchitectes agency.

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The project’s cost of €4.4 million (excluding tax) includes road access to the site, as well as a tarmac area for the assembled Cassio aircraft, and a taxiway that connects to the Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport’s runway. The French government will contribute €665,000 as part of the National Fund for Territorial Planning and Development. Discussions are underway with the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and the Agglomeration Community of Rochefort-Océan for their financial support of the project. The future presence of VoltAero at Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport is perfectly aligned with the Syndicat Mixte association’s strategy of attracting innovative aeronautical companies that will play a role in the decarbonized aviation of tomorrow.

Advantages of the Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport for the development of an aeronautical “industrial hub” include:

- Quality of the existing infrastructure, with a 2,280-meter-long X 45-meter-wide runway that accommodates medium-haul aircraft, along with three taxiways, a control tower, etc.;
- An overall available land surface of 16 hectares, with direct access to the runway;
- An absence of commercial air traffic, which is an advantage for the creation of activities that require frequent access to the runway and the airport infrastructure;
- Road access, regional attractiveness, and a central location on France’s Atlantic coast; and
- A well-established aeronautical industry presence in the greater Rochefort region.

Gérard Pons, President of the Syndicat Mixte des Aéroports de La Rochelle - Ile de Ré et Rochefort - Charente-Maritime, expressed his satisfaction with the construction launch for the facility: "VoltAero’s presence constitutes a go-ahead for the development of aeronautical industrial activities at the airport. I hope that this first facility will lead to test and development projects from other innovative aeronautical players.”

Jean Botti, VoltAero founder and the company’s CEO and Chief Technical Officer, congratulated the Syndicat Mixte on its construction go-ahead for the assembly site. “This is an important milestone in our development and represents one more step towards decarbonized aviation, which we will create together. We also are proud to contribute to the economic development of France’s Nouvelle-Aquitaine region.”

VoltAero is continuing the development of its Cassio electric-hybrid aircraft family, benefiting from the validation of the company’s proprietary electric-hybrid powertrain with flight tests of its Cassio 1 demonstrator – which has logged 135 flight hours while flying more than 10,000 km.

Cassio aircraft will be offered in three versions. The initial configuration to be produced is the five-seat Cassio 330, powered by a 330-kilowatt electric-hybrid propulsion system. VoltAero’s follow-on six-seat Cassio 480 will have an electric-hybrid propulsion power of 480 kilowatts, while the Cassio 600 is sized at a 12-seat capacity with electric-hybrid propulsion power of 600 kilowatts.

Certification of Cassio is expected at the end of 2024, with the first aircraft expected to be delivered from VoltAero’s Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport facility in early 2025.

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VoltAero currently employs 35 people. When the new facility is completed, the company will move its operations to Rochefort - Charente-Maritime Airport with some 60 employees. When the planned production output is reached, the plant will employ 150 people and contribute to the creation of 450 indirect jobs. The company is increasingly acknowledged for its e-aircraft vision for the future. At the recent AERO Friedrichshafen exhibition in Germany, VoltAero received the prestigious E-flight award, in recognition of its progress in defining and developing its Cassio aircraft family.

VoltAero will be present at the Paris Air Show, to be held at Paris' Le Bourget Airport in June, where the company is to unveil its latest program developments.

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