

Airbus unit, CAAS to trial using drones for parcel delivery

The Skyways Experimentation Project will be carried out in two phases: The first to establish a parcel stations network at the National University of Singapore, and the second for the delivery of goods to anchored ships.

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SINGAPORE: Airbus Helicopters, a division of Airbus, and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to conduct Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) trials in Singapore.

The agreement, signed at the sidelines of the [Singapore Air Show](#) on Wednesday (Feb 17), will see the two parties collaborating on the Skyways Experimentation Project, which aims to develop an airborne infrastructure solution to address the sustainability and efficiency of parcel delivery business in large urban environments.

This will be carried out in two phases. Airbus Helicopters has begun work with the National University of Singapore (NUS) on the planning and development of the first phase, which entails the establishment of a parcel stations network on NUS campus, both parties said.

The network will enable users to send important and urgent items such as documents via a drone to other parts of the campus and will serve as a supply and distribution platform for suppliers across Singapore to deliver their goods to customers across the NUS campus, they said.

The second phase, which may be carried out if the first trial is successful, will cover the delivery of goods such as urgent medicine, oil samples and spare electronic parts from a parcel station located at the Singapore coast to ships anchored at bay, according to the press release.



(From left): Mr Jean-Brice Dumont, Executive Vice-President, Engineering, Airbus Helicopters; Mr Tom Enders, Chief Executive Officer of Airbus Group; Mr Pang Kin Keong, Permanent Secretary of Singapore's Ministry of Transport; and Mr Kevin Shum, Director-General of CAAS. (Photo: CAAS)

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The project is facilitated by the [inter-agency UAS Committee](#) chaired by the Ministry of Transport, which was set up early last year to encourage the use of UAS to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of agencies' operations.

Director-General of CAAS Kevin Shum said there was a need to prepare for the greater use of unmanned aircraft in the urban environment to help address the new and future needs of the society.

"We want to facilitate their use by industry and the public sector, and also hobbyists, but we must at the same time ensure that the regulatory regime keeps pace with these changes to enable such uses, whilst ensuring public and aviation safety and security," he said.

Airbus Helicopters said it intends to set up a Special Purpose Company in Singapore to conduct the Skyways Project, and the Republic will be the Asia Pacific headquarters for the business and any commercialisation plans originating from the project.

Executive Vice-President of Engineering at Airbus Helicopters Jean-Brice Dumont said the company's vision was the seamless integration of UAS into logistics networks and daily life in a safe, secure and economically efficient manner.

The Skyways project, he added, would help "turn consumer services unimagined only a decade ago into a reality very soon".