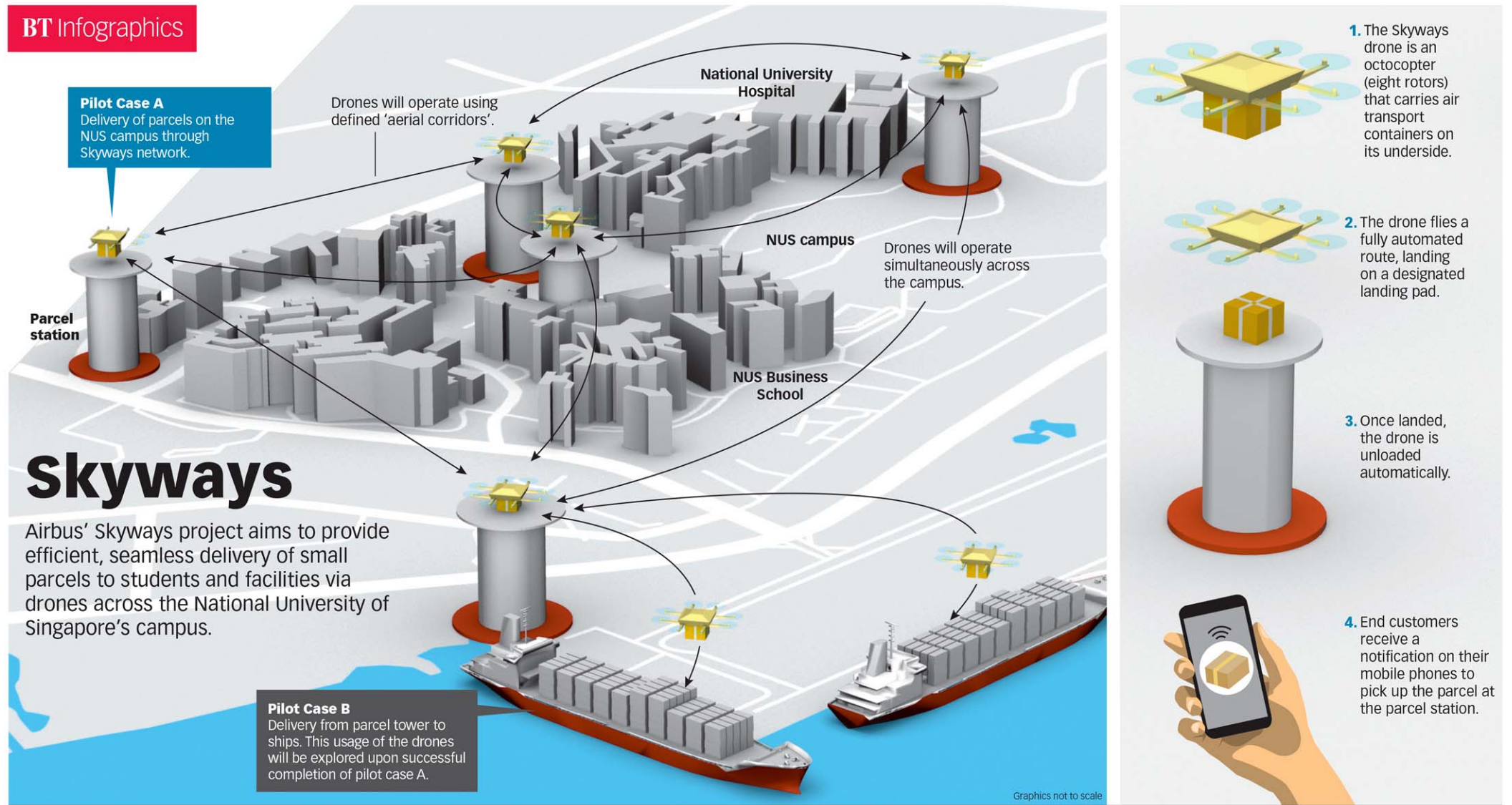


BT Infographics



# Drone delivery to start on NUS campus by early next year

**If test succeeds under Airbus Helicopters-SingPost tie-up, drones will be deployed to deliver parcels across Singapore**

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ANYONE visiting the National University of Singapore (NUS) early next year might be treated to the sight of drones flying across the campus, delivering small parcels to students and facilities. And if Airbus Helicopters' idea succeeds, these drones will eventually deliver parcels right across Singapore.

The project, named "Skyways", comes to fruition almost two years after the Civil Aviation Authority of

Singapore and Airbus Helicopters, a unit of Airbus, signed up to develop a safe and economically viable aerial unmanned delivery system for parcels in urban environments. The NUS campus is a test bed for the project.

This vision took one step closer to reality on Tuesday with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Airbus Helicopters and Singapore Post (SingPost) on the sidelines of the annual Rotorcraft Asia exhibition in Singapore.

Said Jean-Brice Dumont, Airbus Helicopters' executive vice-president

of engineering and chief technical officer: "We welcome SingPost onboard as our logistics partner in this critical phase, as we work in tandem to develop a robust autonomous parcel delivery system that will revolutionise the logistics industry."

Under the partnership, SingPost will provide expertise in software systems that manage delivery networks. In addition, it will contribute "logistics domain knowledge" of first-mile transportation (point of collection) and last-mile transportation (point of delivery), joining "the various working parts into one seamless point-to-point solution".

The collaboration will also leverage SingPost's parcel locker techno-

logy, allowing customers to pick up their parcels after delivery by drones.

"Drones and other autonomous vehicles are in the future of the logistics industry," said Mervyn Lim, SingPost's covering group chief executive. "The demonstrator that Airbus Helicopters and SingPost will be developing is designed to address real-world challenges such as safe and accurate flight in high-rise cities, while meeting the needs of customers."

The R&D (research and development) phase of the project is at an advanced stage. Mr Dumont told reporters on Tuesday the firm is aiming at total automation. This includes the loading and unloading of packages on specific infrastructure, navigation

of the drones from one delivery station to another, and the recharging of the drone's battery.

Safety is a priority, added Mr Dumont; the flight paths of the drones will follow identified air routes.

Two prototypes are undergoing tests in France, while one is undergoing tests indoors in Singapore. The final drone will be able to carry loads of 2kg to 4kg. The project will also allow the government to develop new regulations that promote the application of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in Singapore.

Said Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Low Yen Ling, during the opening ceremony of Rotorcraft Asia and Un-

manned Systems Asia: "This type of deployment (for the Skyways project), which require Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) and autonomous operations, is currently not permitted under existing regulations."

Ms Low, who is also Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Education, said there are "currently no global standards for commercial UAS technologies or applications" and that "the UAS segment is also constantly evolving".

"Hence, we will continue to work closely with the industry to facilitate new use cases which are not covered under existing regulations, as well as co-develop new standards and regulatory requirements," she said.