SKYPORTS DRONE SERVICES WRAPS UP SUCCESSFUL DRONE DELIVERY PROOF OF CONCEPT IN COLLABORATION WITH JAPAN KAGA CITY COUNCIL

News / Business aviation

Skyports Drone Services successfully completed a drone delivery proof of concept (PoC) in partnership with Kaga City and Kanematsu Corporation. Kanematsu Corporation has partnered with Kaga City since 2021 for the promotion of regional revitalisation through the use of drones and aerial vehicles. Transporting simulated blood and other materials of up to 3kg between Kaga Medical Centre towards locations at *Kaga Onsen Care Centre* and *Yamanaka Onsen Nukumori Clinic*, the PoC flight paths mirrored actual high demand transport routes and sought to establish the time and cost savings that can be achieved with Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone operations.

The closed-door milestone event was marked with a ceremony attended by Mr Riku Miyamoto,

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Mayor of Kaga City, and invited guests that include business leaders and key stakeholders from and beyond Kaga City.

Mayor of Kaga City, Mr Riku Miyamoto commented: **"**Kaga City is proud to be at the forefront of introducing drone delivery services to Japan, and believe that the PoC demonstrates the strong potential of drone technology in bridging pressing logistical challenges. We are committed to leveraging on innovative and impactful technologies to elevate the lives of our residents and bring new socio-economic opportunities in the months and years ahead. With this first step, we look forward to further collaboration to expand on the types of services and deliveries we can provide to the community in Kaga, and set a standard for the rest of the country."

Skyports' Japan Country Manager, Mr Atsushi Okada said: "We are thrilled to have successfully completed the PoC with the tremendous support of the Kaga City Council and our investor and board member, Kanematsu Corporation. Japan has a diverse landscape that encompasses mountainous terrain and thousands of islands and water bodies, making it a prime location to benefit from drone technology. We are confident that our drone delivery operations have proven their impact in addressing logistical challenges and elevating safety standards. With each successful PoC, we are building on our repertoire of capabilities and proven use-cases. This milestone is a significant step forward that will provide a strong roadmap for the wider-scale adoption of drone technology in Japan."

Proof of concept reinforces strong proposition of drone deliveries

Following an in-depth planning phase that included consultations with and approvals from the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB), and significant on ground support and knowledge from Kaga City, the PoC flights were designed to assess the feasibility and impact of BVLOS drone deliveries in enhancing speed, connectivity and safety in the delivery of medical supplies to remote and hard-to-reach areas in the region.

The flights effectively demonstrated the ability of drone deliveries in reducing transport times by over 50 per cent as compared to movement via land transport. It also provided valuable insight towards developing frameworks for evaluating and selecting take-off and landing sites, as well as mapping optimum flight paths that account for both high level airspace users and ground elements. It also accounted for environmental factors such as temperature fluctuations with temperatures ranging between 2 and 9 degrees Celsius, as well as rain, snow and wind conditions.

The PoC serves as an important stepping stone for the expansion and extension of drone delivery services in Japan. Drawing from Skyports Drone Services' global portfolio of experience that includes cross-island deliveries for the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK, the company intends to similarly move towards scaling up the frequency, speed, payload capabilities and network of the service for on-demand medical deliveries in Japan.

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Skyports deepens work in Japan

The successful PoC is the latest milestone in Skyports' progress in Japan over the past two years, as the company continues to scale up operations in the country. Skyports has made significant strides in both its Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) infrastructure and drone services business units.

On the AAM front, Skyports signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2021 with Kanematsu Corporation for the eventual launch of commercial AAM operations in Japan. In 2022, Skyports commenced the development of a Concept of Operations in collaboration with Eve Air Mobility for the JCAB.

In October 2022, Skyports opened its local Japan office in Tokyo, and appointed Atsushi Okada as its Country Manager. Working in close partnership with Kanematsu Corporation, Skyports plays an active role in supporting the country’s authorities and regulators in sharing its global expertise and on-ground insight into the development of a range of projects.

Key to introducing the technology into any market, Skyports also focuses on public education and advocacy efforts through local events and exhibitions, such as the public exhibition at Tokyo’s Haneda Airport in September 2022 and the Mie Prefecture exhibition in January 2023.

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