



AGUSTAWESTLAND PLANS TO FLY NEXT-GEN TILTROTOR IN 2021

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AgustaWestland is planning to fly its **next-generation civil tiltrotor** (NGCTR) in 2021, two years later than previously anticipated. The 20-passenger rotorcraft, which is much larger than the in-development nine-seat AW609 tiltrotor, is in the conceptual design phase. “Preliminary design will start in 2016,” senior vice president of helicopters and services marketing James Wang told **AIN**. Manufacturing of components is expected to begin in 2017, he added.

The NGCTR’s cruise speed would be close to 300 knots. The research portion is funded under Europe’s Clean Sky 2 joint technology initiative, meaning the Clean Sky joint undertaking will choose AgustaWestland’s initial partners, Wang said.

Meanwhile, certification of the AW609 is slated for December 2017 and the production rate is targeted at 20 to 30 aircraft per year, according to Wang. AgustaWestland believes that a pressurized tiltrotor fills the gap between helicopters and turboprops in terms of speed and altitude, the latter allowing flight above the weather. An AW609 prototype recently covered 627 nm in two hours 18 minutes, he said.

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