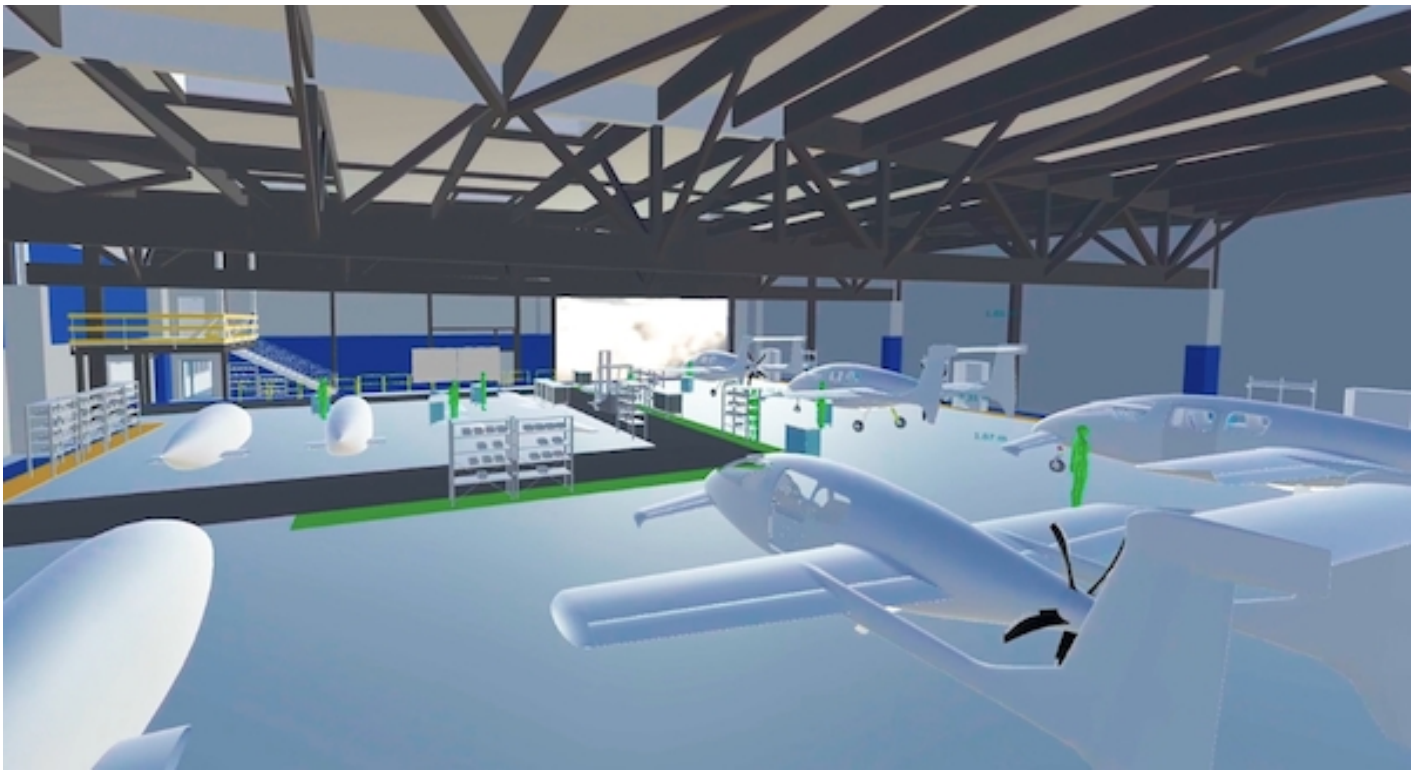
VOLTAERO READIES THE PRODUCTION OF CASSIO ELECTRIC-HYBRID AIRCRAFT AT ITS NEW INDUSTRIAL FACILITY IN NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE, FRANCE

News / Manufacturer



The inauguration of VoltAero final assembly facility and headquarters at Rochefort Airport marks a major new step toward certification and production of the company's Cassio electric-hybrid aircraft family, ushering in a new era of sustainable regional air transportation. Located at Saint Agnant in the Charente-Maritime department of France's Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, this purpose-built 2,400-square-meter facility is the primary hub for production and delivery of Cassio-family aircraft, supported by VoltAero's on-site design, engineering, flight test and administrative departments. It is sized for the assembly of 150 Cassio airplanes annually at full rate, to be backed by additional production sites that are to be created in other key geographical markets.

Jean Botti, the company's CEO & Chief Technology Officer commented: "We are addressing the highly important market requirement to connect thousands of communities and regions around the world with truly sustainable and efficient advanced regional air mobility – while remaining fully compatible with the airport and air traffic control infrastructure," he said. "Additionally, our patented electric-hybrid propulsion system for Cassio provides the dual-source power to fly safely, and is based on electric battery technology that is available today."

Botti noted that France's Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region has been at the heart of e-aviation since 2008

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– when Botti and members of his team built and flew the pioneering Cri-Cri and E-Fan all electric airplanes while at Airbus. This was followed by VoltAero's development of the company's electric-hybrid propulsion system, which will serve as the functional heart of the Cassio airplane family, and has been validated on the Cassio S testbed aircraft.

Alain Rousset, the President of Nouvelle-Aquitaine, said VoltAero's Cassio production site and headquarters at Rochefort Airport further reinforces Nouvelle-Aquitaine's position as an innovative leader in decarbonization and sustainability: "VoltAero's presence here underscores the capability of Nouvelle-Aquitaine to offer resources for the development of skills and solutions for tomorrow; as well as attracting, guiding and training talent to meet recruitment challenges for the new professions in sustainability."

Aligned with VoltAero's strategy of developing Cassio as a highly eco-efficient aircraft, the company's Rochefort Airport industrial facility has been designed with the emphasis on sustainability. In addition to meeting or exceeding the requirements of France's RT 2005 regulations for energy-efficient buildings, the project management team went further with features that include a mixed concrete/wood structural design and the use of wooden floors where appropriate, integration of skylights for natural lighting, along with rainwater harvesting and photovoltaic panels for electrical power.

The facility has direct access to Rochefort Airport's 2,280-meter-long X 45-meter-wide runway, as well as the availability of the region's road, rail and sea transportation links. Its master plan includes the potential for future growth, as well as enabling suppliers and service providers to develop their own presence as they support the Cassio production.

"With VoltAero's cornerstone presence, we look forward to the future evolution of an industrial ecosystem for sustainable aviation at Rochefort Airport and in the vicinity," stated Gérard Pons, President of the Syndicat Mixte des Aéroports de La Rochelle - Ile de Ré et Rochefort - Charente-Maritime.

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Cassio electric-hybrid aircraft family consists of three versions that seat from five to 12 persons, and which are tailored for regional commercial operators, air taxi/charter companies, private and business owners/operators, as well as in utility-category service for cargo, postal delivery and medical evacuation applications. VoltAero's first production aircraft version will be the Cassio 330, with a four/five-seat interior configuration and operating on a combined electric-hybrid propulsion power of 330 kilowatts. It is to be followed by the six-seat Cassio 480 with a combined electric-hybrid propulsion power of 480 kilowatts, and the Cassio 600 – sized at a 10/12-seat capacity with electric-hybrid propulsion power of 600 kilowatts.

By integrating VoltAero's patented electric-hybrid propulsion system into the company's purpose-designed airframe, the Cassio aircraft will deliver an order of magnitude higher performance as compared to the current competition and provide significantly lower operational costs.

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