VOLTAERO UNVEILS THE PRODUCTION CONFIGURATION OF ITS CASSIO 330 ELECTRIC-HYBRID AIRCRAFT FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

News / Events / Festivals, Manufacturer

VoltAero presented the production version of its Cassio 330 electric-hybrid aircraft for sustainable regional transportation. The production configuration represents an evolution of the Cassio 330's design that reflects VoltAero's close working relationship with EASA airworthiness certification agency throughout the aircraft's development, applying the company's Design Organization Approval. Multiple factors led to this evolution, resulting in decreased complexity for the Cassio 330's airworthiness certification and aligning its overall design in compliance with EASA's latest CS.23 certification specifications for normal category airplanes.

Jean Botti, VoltAero's CEO & Chief Technology Officer commented: "As we take another step toward the Cassio 330's production, our strategy remains unchanged: using safe and efficient electric-hybrid propulsion and power technologies that are realistically available today, applying them to a conventional takeoff/landing aircraft for sustainable regional transportation using existing airport infrastructure."

At the heart of VoltAero's evolution for the Cassio 330 production version is the use of a series-

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hybrid architecture. A “pusher” electric motor is installed on each side of the aft fuselage, and a thermal engine inside the aircraft serves as a range extender by recharging the onboard batteries. During taxi, takeoff and initial flight phases, the Cassio 330 operates on all-electric propulsion for eco-efficient and quiet operations. The thermal engine recharges the batteries during cruise flight as a range extender.

This series-hybrid architecture reflects a changeover from the Cassio 330’s original parallel-hybrid configuration, which incorporated an in-line combination of an electrical motor and thermal engine to drive a single propeller. Another visible difference for the Cassio 330’s production configuration is VoltAero’s adoption of a T-tail instead of the original design’s twin booms that supported a high-set horizontal tail. This change eliminates the potential of damage to the twin booms in the event of a propeller blade failure.

The new configuration has a fully redundant architecture for operational safety. This begins with the two aft-fuselage-mounted Safran ENGINeUS smart electric motors, placing the Cassio 330 in the multi-engine aircraft category and opening its potential use in commercial air transport operations.

Contributing to the configuration’s designed-in redundancy is VoltAero’s use of two individual, independent battery strings that are coupled with the ENGINeUS motors. Additionally, Safran’s ENGINeUS motor design has two separately-powered stator winding channels that can operate independently – which is referred to as “half-engine-inoperative” functionality.

The Cassio 330’s interior layout remains unchanged, accommodating the pilot and up to five travelers in a spacious cabin – retaining the modularity for passenger transportation, cargo operations, and medical evacuation/air ambulance missions. A large door forward of the wing facilitates access for passengers with reduced mobility, especially on Public Service Obligation flights serving airports that are not on primary airline routes.

VoltAero will produce the Cassio 330 at a purpose-built 2,400-square-meter industrial facility at Saint Agnant in the Charente-Maritime department of France’s Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region. Inaugurated last November, this location serves as 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 created in other key geographical markets.

15 JUNE 2025

ARTICLE LINK:
https://50skyshades.com/index.php/news/manufacturer/voltaero-unveils-the-production-configuration-of-its-cassio-330-electric-hybrid-aircraft-for-regional-transportation

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