



MERLIN SECURES EXPERIMENTAL CERTIFICATE OF AIRWORTHINESS IN NEW ZEALAND, ACCELERATING CERTIFICATION FLIGHT TESTING

News / Manufacturer



Merlin has received an Experimental Certificate of Airworthiness from the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAANZ). The certificate grants Merlin approval to conduct certification flight testing of its autonomy platform in New Zealand, marking a pivotal step in the company's final push towards achieving the world's first certification of takeoff to touchdown autonomy.

Matt George, CEO and founder of Merlin commented: "This certification in New Zealand represents a strong vote of confidence from CAANZ and is a major technical milestone in our certification journey. The testing carried out in the region plays a crucial role in advancing the maturity of our platform and directly supports in-air operability and certification efforts not only with the CAANZ, but also with the FAA. With extensive testing underway in both the United States and

New Zealand, we're accelerating the ability for our autonomy platform to enhance the safety of aviation operations globally.”

In September 2021, Merlin's certification plans received initial approval from CAANZ and the FAA—establishing the world's first certification basis for an autonomous flight system. Today's certificate brings this effort into its final phase, advancing Merlin's supplemental type certificate (STC) program and authorizing experimental flight testing. The CAANZ will participate in a risk management and intelligence capacity, underscoring the agency's increasing confidence in Merlin's ability to safely and reliably operate its autonomy platform within a controlled environment. Additionally, Merlin secured test pilot approvals in New Zealand, allowing for concurrent test flights across multiple aircraft. This advancement reduces the overall timeline to certification and accelerates Merlin's path toward commercial readiness for its autonomy platform.

Merlin announced its Kerikeri-based test facility in May 2023, with certification and testing milestones including achieving its first stage of involvement (SOI 1), receiving a Part 135 Air Operators Certificate to support future operational freight routes in New Zealand, and most recently, being awarded a Part 145 Maintenance Certificate to conduct maintenance on aircraft operated by Part 121 and Part 135 organizations.

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