VOLOCONNECT 4-SEATER AIRCRAFT TOOK FIRST FLIGHT

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer



Volocopter has achieved another milestone to bring UAM to life: its fixed-winged passenger aircraft, the VoloConnect, completed its first flight in May 2022. This accomplishment makes Volocopter the only eVTOL developer worldwide to have an entire fleet of distinct aircraft configurations undergoing flight tests.

Volocopter's third product solution, the VoloConnect, offers further and faster journeys than any other Volocopter aircraft to date, with a range of over 60 mi and flight speeds above 155 mph. The passenger plane's extended range and higher payload will bring business travelers and commuters beyond the city center on routes like Burbank to Huntington Beach in Los Angeles, CA. With the VoloCity and VoloConnect air taxi designs fulfilling demands for metropolitan flights and suburban connections in densely populated regions respectively, Volocopter is ready to serve a broader range of passengers' flight needs. Moreover, the VoloConnect is targeting a 2026 entry into service, while the VoloCity is targeting commercial launch in 2024.

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Florian Reuter, Volocopter CEO, commented: “Having a whole family of electric aircraft in the test flight phase is a pioneering feat.Volocopter’s leadership in the industry stems from announcing plans and then delivering on them visibly with public test flights. Our technology platform is the foundation for our family of aircraft approach and has proven to deliver results at an astounding speed. Volocopter is bringing these innovative designs off the ground, into the air, and then to cities worldwide!”

A dedicated team in Munich, led by Sebastian Mores, Chief Engineer, VoloConnect, is responsible for this success to bring the VoloConnect prototype to life. “This is an extraordinary moment for us – seeing the VoloConnect soar to the sky marks the achievement of one of our key milestones and demonstrates just what we are capable of in a short time and in line with the company’s overall strategy for crewed and uncrewed aircraft. Furthermore, new technologies will be tested that will gradually be implemented during the overall program development,” said Mores.

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Volocopter designed the VoloConnect and its other eVTOL aircraft to meet the highest aviation safety standards according to EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency). The prototype completed its first flight in May 2022 after just 17 months in the making and performed a few maneuvers for 2 minutes and 14 seconds during its first flight. The prototype has all the planned aerodynamics and performance features of the future commercial product.

The VoloConnect is a lift-and-cruise aircraft optimized for missions beyond the urban and suburban space. Keeping moving parts to a minimum, its six rotors facilitate vertical takeoff, while two electric fans in combination with uplift-creating wings ensure high forward speeds. The VoloConnect prototype is currently being put through a demanding series of flight tests to verify that the aircraft and its systems are in line with the performance limits and prepared for the subsequent development steps. This phase encompasses a raft of different tests, including standardized low-speed, transition, high-speed, and engine failure testing for automated and later autonomous flights – all standard-issue tests for an eVTOL passenger aircraft manufacturer. Within the first three test flights of this campaign, the team was able to verify a significant portion of the eVTOL's envelope with forward speeds up to 40 mph and 28 mph sideward flight speeds during tests. The test flight envelope will be gradually opened as part of the test flight campaign over the coming weeks.

VoloConnect is poised to boost Volocopter's total addressable UAM market, alongside its existing aircraft family members, the VoloDrone and VoloCity. The technological differences between the VoloCity and VoloConnect passenger aircraft abound. Most important to note are their unique configuration designs for their specific flight missions, with the multirotor VoloCity air taxi poised to serve intracity routes, while its larger lift-and-cruise sibling will focus on longer urban and suburban missions.

For future services, Volocopter intends to fully integrate all three aircraft into individualized UAM ecosystems for cities and use its VoloIQ digital platform to unite all of the company's flight operations, passenger services, maintenance, and more for a seamless mobility experience.

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