
Airbus concludes ATTOL with fully autonomous flight tests

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Following an extensive two-year flight test programme, Airbus has successfully concluded its Autonomous Taxi, Take-Off and Landing (ATTOL) project.

In completing this project, Airbus has achieved autonomous taxiing, take-off and landing of a commercial aircraft through fully automatic vision-based flight tests using on-board image recognition technology – a world-first in aviation.

In total, over 500 test flights were conducted. Approximately 450 of those flights were dedicated to gathering raw video data, to support and fine tune algorithms, while a series of six test flights, each one including five take-offs and landings per run, were used to test autonomous flight capabilities.

The ATTOL project was initiated by Airbus to explore how autonomous technologies, including the use of machine learning algorithms and automated tools for data labelling, processing and model generation, could help pilots focus less on aircraft operations and more on strategic decision-making and mission management. Airbus is now able to analyse the potential of these technologies for enhancing future aircraft operations, all the while improving aircraft safety, ensuring today's unprecedented levels are maintained.

Airbus will continue research into the application of autonomous technologies alongside other innovations in areas such as materials, alternative propulsion systems and connectivity. By leveraging these opportunities, Airbus is opening up possibilities for creating new business models that will transform how aircraft are developed, manufactured, flown, powered and serviced.

The rapid development and demonstration of ATTOL's capabilities was made possible due to a cross-divisional, cross-functional, global team comprising of Airbus engineering and technology teams, Airbus Defence and Space, Acubed (Project Wayfinder), Airbus China and ONERA under the leadership of Airbus UpNext.