

LCI leases three AW139s to China

 **Alex Baldwin** By Alex Baldwin
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Lease Corporation International has placed its first helicopters in China, leasing three new Leonardo AW139s to Shanghai Kingwing Aviation.

To help tap into increasing demand from Chinese customers, LCI has also opened a new company based in China's Tianjin Free Trade Zone DFTP to help grow its business in the expanding Chinese helicopter market.

The three new aircraft will be delivered throughout the second half of 2018 and will be operated on Kingwing's growing EMS network throughout China.

Michael Platt, CEO of LCI, said: "China is a market with enormous growth potential in civil helicopter operations, and we are honoured to partner Kingwing in the development of their innovative and entrepreneurial approach to the provision of EMS services in China."

EMS operations are seeing an upswing due to the easing of China's notoriously strict airspace regulations. Kingwing is poised to take full advantage of this, being the country's largest EMS provider and its third-largest helicopter operator overall – with 32 helicopters flying EMS missions as of January 2018.

Zou Jianming, president of Kingwing, said: "We are delighted to be working with LCI to introduce new AW139 helicopters with life-saving capabilities to our rapidly growing network. LCI is already proving its ability to deliver quick execution and high efficiency using their extensive operational knowledge and structuring capabilities to support us in meeting our long-term objectives. This partnership will help both parties to reach a higher level in the Chinese market."

According to data from Asian Sky Group, China's overall helicopter fleet has more than doubled since 2013, increasing from 272 helicopters in 2013 to 582 in Q4 2017.

Outside of EMS, China is also looking to be a major region for the developing off-shore wind market. LCI is keen to tap into this market, with managing director Crispin Maunder highlighting China and Taiwan as core countries in which wind companies are looking to start up operations.

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