

UAVs, eVTOLs Take Spotlight at Rotorcraft Asia

by [Chen Chuanren](#)
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The Volocopter 2X headlining the show, the company hopes to launch its first test flights in Singapore from the second half of 2019. (Photo: Chen Chuanren)

The second edition of Rotorcraft Asia 2019 and Unmanned Systems Asia 2019 opened Monday against the backdrop of an expected slowdown in growth of the helicopter fleet in Asia, but growing interest in the unmanned solutions. Seeing an increased focus on urban air mobility (UAM) in the region, the organizers also presented the Urban Mobility Showcase, presenting solutions for eVTOLs and mixed operations between helicopters and unmanned technologies.

Germany Volocopter, for example, brought its Volocopter 2X for the first time to the show. The company is in talks with the Singaporean authorities to trial the electric-powered platform in the island state, after Dubai. The company also hopes that it can perform its first flight in Singapore by the second half this year and enter commercial service in two to three years.

Markus Scherer, head of consulting, Hong Kong Ipsos Business Consulting, said the commercial drone solution in Asia-Pacific will witness the fastest growth in the world, at a rate of around 34 percent CAGR, into a \$3.1 billion market by 2021. China will dominate the market, accounting for about 47 percent of the share.

He added that the way forward from 2021 is for the market and authorities to develop regulations and solutions for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), and also overcoming the current "human loop" where one drone is tagged to a single drone. Scherer said if a pilot is tagged to multiple drones, it would overcome the scalability issue of the drone economy.

After a compound growth of 4.2 percent in helicopter fleet in Asia from 2014 to 2018, the market is hitting the brakes from economic uncertainties in China, its largest growth provider. Asian Sky Group forecasts the helicopter market there will grow at 3.2 percent. Asian Sky Group chairman Max Buirski said the slump in oil prices has affected Asian countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, where fleet growth has remained stagnant. However, he foresees a resurgence of the helicopter fleet as the oil and gas industry recovers.

"The industry has seen some headwinds, but as the industry recovers, the delegates here at opportunities," said Leck Chet Lam, managing director of Experia Event. The organizer is expected to attract more than 3,000 visitors and 80 companies two years ago.



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