

SkyDrive Wins Prestigious Ministry Award at Japan Startup Awards 2026
Recognized for development of compact, cost-effective eVTOL aircraft and
contributions to future transportation solutions

TOYOTA CITY, Japan — Sept. 25, 2026 — SkyDrive Inc. ("SkyDrive"), a leading compact eVTOL aircraft (*1) developer based in Japan, today announced that it has received the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Award (MLIT Award) at the Japan Startup Awards 2026. Hosted by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the government-sponsored awards program honors startups that have created high-impact businesses to serve as role models for the next generation.

SkyDrive was recognized for its technological achievements in developing compact, highly economical eVTOL aircraft designed for daily transportation. Amid intensifying global competition in Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), SkyDrive has steadily advanced its aircraft development, including conducting Japan's first public crewed flight test in 2020 and completing demonstration flights at Expo 2025 Osaka. The selection committee commended SkyDrive for driving the once-in-a-century mobility revolution forward to address urban traffic congestion and regional mobility challenges.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, founder and CEO of SkyDrive, attended the commendation ceremony held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence. At the commendation ceremony held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi experienced operating the SKYDRIVE eVTOL aircraft over Tokyo via a flight simulator. When inquiring about the company's business progress following Expo 2025 Osaka, the Prime Minister was shown video footage of high-speed flights and briefed on global pre-order figures. Offering her encouragement, she remarked, "It is truly remarkable how far you have come."



Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi visiting the SkyDrive booth



MLIT Parliamentary Vice-Minister Kenta Aoshima visiting the SkyDrive booth



Tomohiro Fukuzawa, founder and CEO of SkyDrive (left),
and MLIT Parliamentary Vice-Minister Kenta Aoshima (right)

"We are deeply honored to receive the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Award," said Fukuzawa. "Since our founding, we have been dedicated to making daily air mobility a reality through safe, compact and cost-effective eVTOL aircraft. This recognition reflects the collective efforts of our team, partners and supporters. We will continue working closely with civil aviation authorities and industry partners to prepare for our commercial launch in 2028."

About the Japan Startup Awards

The Japan Startup Awards recognize entrepreneurs and startups that have created innovative businesses with significant societal impact. The program aims to foster an entrepreneurial mindset across society and highlight the importance of tackling new challenges.

About the SKYDRIVE (SD-05 model)

Designed for commercial service launch in 2028, the SKYDRIVE (SD-05 model) is a lightweight, compact and quiet eVTOL aircraft compared to conventional helicopters. Its electric powertrain features a simplified structure, reducing manufacturing and maintenance costs. Operating with a small footprint, the aircraft can take off and land in limited spaces, such as building rooftops in urban centers.

In March 2024, SkyDrive initiated serial production at a plant owned by Suzuki Motor Corporation, SkyDrive's official production partner, capable of producing up to 100 aircraft annually. In flight testing, SkyDrive verified stable flight performance at speeds of 100 km/h in June 2026 and has achieved more than 300 accident-free flight tests to date.





Announcement from METI:

<https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2026/09/20260925002.html>

Announcement from MLIT:

https://www.mlit.go.jp/report/press/sogo17_hh_000215.html

About SkyDrive Inc.

SkyDrive is a Japanese compact eVTOL company aiming "to take the lead in the once-in-a-century mobility revolution." The company began testing eVTOL prototypes in 2014 prior to official incorporation in 2018. Under its future vision for urban transportation, flying in eVTOLs will become a regular part of city life. In 2019, SkyDrive became the first company to fly a crewed eVTOL in Japan. In 2025, the company successfully showcased SKYDRIVE, the company's first commercial eVTOL product, with demonstration flights at the Osaka Expo witnessed by thousands of visitors over a one-month period. SkyDrive began production of SKYDRIVE in March 2024 at a plant owned by Suzuki Motor Corporation, SkyDrive's official production partner. SkyDrive has been working with civil aviation authorities in Japan and the U.S. to obtain certification for SKYDRIVE, with the aim of launching the aircraft into service in 2028. SkyDrive is headquartered in Toyota, Aichi Prefecture and led by CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa, an engineer and entrepreneur.

For more information, please visit: <https://skydrive.co.jp/en/>

Editor's Note:

(*1) eVTOL is an abbreviation for electric vertical takeoff and landing. As the name suggests, eVTOL aircraft can take off and land without a runway. eVTOLs are powered by electricity and incorporate advanced, automatic, flight control technology.

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