

Tohoku Air Service Signs LOI for Purchase of eVTOL Agreement Lays Groundwork for eVTOL to Contribute to Safe and Reliable Urban Air Mobility in Tohoku

TOYOTA, Japan, May 12, 2026 - SkyDrive Inc. ("SkyDrive"), a leading eVTOL (*1) aircraft manufacturer based in Japan, has announced the signing of a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Tohoku Air Service (TAS), a helicopter operator owned by Tohoku Electric Power Company, for the purchase of one SkyDrive eVTOL (SKYDRIVE, SkyDrive Model SD-05). Under this agreement, SkyDrive aims to deliver the aircraft in 2028.

Tohoku Air Service hopes to leverage the numerous advantages offered by eVTOL aircraft including quiet operation, lower purchase and maintenance costs. eVTOL also provides a wide range of potential applications including sightseeing flights, easy transportation of people and cargo, and specialist roles in medical service provision and natural disaster response. Tohoku Air Service has decided to enter into this agreement in recognition of these wide-ranging potential contributions to improved quality of life through safety, reliability and comfort.

This LOI marks SkyDrive's first agreement for the purchase of an aircraft by a Japan-based helicopter operator.



Left: Tohoku Air Service President Shigeyuki Ouchi; Right: SkyDrive CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa

Background to the Agreement and Plans for Ongoing Collaboration

SkyDrive is developing eVTOLs with the mission of "leading a once-in-a-century mobility revolution". Our goal is to make simple and convenient air travel a regular part of city life. During 2025, over a period of around six weeks, SkyDrive successfully showcased demonstration flights of the "SKYDRIVE" (SkyDrive Model SD-05) both at the Expo 2025 Osaka and at a second vertiport within the city of Osaka. Having conducted further demonstration flights in Tokyo during February 2026, we are working towards our next major milestone: commercial operations in 2028.

Tohoku Air Service was established as a helicopter operator in 1991 as a member of the Tohoku Electric Power Company group of companies. At its founding, the company was able to leverage the more than 38 years of power line inspection experience gathered by its parent company, and since then, for more than 30 further years, TAS has helped support the maintenance and development of electricity infrastructure, principally through the operation of the helicopters used for airborne power line inspections and the transportation of cargo to mountainous and other locations difficult to reach by road and rail. With a firm emphasis on safety, the work of TAS supports the development of the entire Tohoku region.

Through the agreement with SkyDrive, TAS will now be able to apply the knowledge it has accumulated through long years of experience in helicopter operation to the operation of eVTOL, with the aim of building sustainable transport systems to serve regional cities and contributing to the growth of regional economies through the effective use of this next-generation mobility technology.

TAS will thoroughly examine the functionality, safety, infrastructure requirements, and operational feasibility of eVTOL services with the goal of working together with SkyDrive to establish a multi-use operational model that can respond flexibly to the diverse needs of the market.

Comment from Tohoku Air Service President Shigeyuki Ouchi

Signing of this Letter of Intent with SkyDrive as a step towards the purchase of one "SKYDRIVE" (SkyDrive Model SD-05) lets us advance our concrete investigations into the real world operation of this next-generation technology. We will conduct a detailed confirmation of the functionality, safety, and infrastructure requirements, to assess the operational feasibility of eVTOL services from multiple perspectives. Working together with SkyDrive, the only company in Japan developing an eVTOL, allows us to feed the operational knowledge we have built through our helicopter operations into the development of SkyDrive's aircraft. We also plan to develop a multi-use operating model that can serve the people of the Tohoku Region and Niigata Prefecture in various ways including the provision of tourism services, regional transport routes, medical services and post-disaster relief. These services will contribute to the regional economy and help create a safe, secure and comfortable urban environment.

Comment from SkyDrive CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa

I am truly delighted that Tohoku Air Service has been able to sign this Letter of Intent with SkyDrive as a step toward the future purchase of one of our aircraft. SkyDrive, guided by our mission of leading this once-in-a-century mobility revolution, is focused on the development and entry into service of a viable eVTOL aircraft. Through demonstration flights at the Osaka Expo, Osakako Port and Tokyo Bay, we have steadily validated the technical capabilities and operational possibilities of our aircraft, and we are now moving into an important phase that will lead through to the start of service in 2028. This agreement with Tohoku Air Service, a company with more than three decades of experience in providing air transport services to customers in Tohoku, is a significant step for SkyDrive. The LOI will deliver a major contribution toward establishing and maintaining a sustainable transport ecosystem based on multifunctional eVTOL operation in Tohoku, with these operations covering various fields including sightseeing flights, regional transportation, and post-disaster relief services. Together, we will continue working to deliver new value to regional communities through air mobility, creating new opportunities for people and industry that can help the region further expand its potential.

About Tohoku Air Service

In March 1991, Tohoku Electric Power Co., Inc, a company which had already built a 38-year history of operational know-how through the helicopter inspection of power lines, established Tohoku Air Service in Sendai. The initial goal in establishing the new company was to promote regional prosperity in six Tohoku prefectures as well as Niigata Prefecture. Even today, more than 30 years later, the company's founding motivation remains unchanged. Under the principle of safety first, the company will continue to evolve our business as we develop deeper relationships with local companies and organizations.

<https://www.t-a-s.co.jp/en/>

About SkyDrive Inc.

SkyDrive is a Japanese 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 the eVTOL "SKYDRIVE", the company's first 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 US 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 Notes:

(*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.

(*2) Related press releases

Press release on demonstration flights at the Osaka Expo.

<https://skydrive.co.jp/en/archives/16292>

Press release on demonstration flights at the Osaka Vertiport.

<https://skydrive.co.jp/en/archives/16771>

Press release on demonstration flights in Tokyo.

<https://skydrive.co.jp/en/archives/17567>

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