

Press Release

AIRBUS DEFENCE AND SPACE

Airbus and Williams Advanced Engineering team to explore technology collaboration

Companies see shared benefits from Zephyr and Formula 1-inspired innovation

Farnborough, 18 December 2017 – Airbus and Williams Advanced Engineering, the innovative engineering and technology business of Williams Grand Prix Engineering, are to explore potential areas of technological collaboration.

Under the terms of a newly signed MoU, the two companies will examine in particular applications that may combine Williams' innovation culture, lightweight composites and battery expertise with Airbus' Zephyr High Altitude Pseudo-Satellite (HAPS) programme.

Zephyr is a record-breaking, solar-powered, unmanned aerial system (UAS), or drone, with unique communications and surveillance capabilities. It will fly at more than 65,000ft, above commercial air traffic, for months at a time. The first production examples are being manufactured at Farnborough for the UK Ministry of Defence.

As sole battery supplier to the FIA Formula E championship since its inception, Williams Advanced Engineering's battery technology has been tried and tested, and its world-leading expertise in electrification has become core to the business. And with four decades of experience at the pinnacle of motor racing, where lightweight materials and structures are crucial, Williams is now developing these technologies and finding innovative solutions to weight saving.

Airbus Head of Unmanned Aerial Systems, Jana Rosenmann, said: "At Airbus we have enormous respect for Williams Advanced Engineering's technical expertise and achievements, as well as for their impressive record in rapidly bringing new technologies and products to market. Our engineering teams are thrilled to have the opportunity to learn from the Formula 1 world and just as enthusiastic about sharing much of what we have learned in developing solutions to high-altitude, solar-powered flight.

"Both Airbus and Williams are always looking to recruit talented engineers and we hope that this joint activity illustrates the terrific opportunities we offer to work in the kind of technologies that will be critical to future transportation."

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Craig Wilson, Managing Director of Williams Advanced Engineering said: “Airbus is a name synonymous with innovation and technology in the industry. As such, we are delighted to be working with them on this project, and hope to share some of our expertise in electrification, battery systems and advanced lightweight materials, as well as learn from their vast experience in aerospace. We are very much looking forward to working together on this project and hope the learnings from one another may continue in the future.”

The attached image shows how the latest version of Zephyr will look in flight.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2016 it generated revenues of €67 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats and business aviation products. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

About Williams Advanced Engineering Limited

Williams Advanced Engineering Limited operates a technology and engineering services business and is part of the Williams Group.

The Williams Group began with Williams Grand Prix Engineering Limited, which was formed in 1977 by Sir Frank Williams and Sir Patrick Head and is currently celebrating its 40th year of operating a leading Formula One™ racing team in the FIA Formula One World Championship. In that time, the team has secured 16 FIA Formula One World Championship titles.

In 2010, Williams Grand Prix Engineering Limited began diversifying its operations, leading to the establishment of the Williams Advanced Engineering division, which has now become Williams Advanced Engineering Limited. Combining cutting edge technology and the industry's best engineers with precision and speed to market derived from four decades of success in the ultra-competitive environment of Formula One, Williams Advanced Engineering provides world class technical innovation, engineering, testing, manufacturing and operational consultancy services to the automotive, motorsport, defence, health and energy sectors. Working in close collaboration with its customers, Williams Advanced Engineering helps meet the sustainability challenges of the 21st century and improve performance, with its expertise in aerodynamics and thermodynamics, electrification, advanced lightweight materials and vehicle integration.

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