

Airbus announces 'landmark moment' in future eco-wing programme

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Aerospace giant Airbus has begun assembly of a prototype 'eco-wing' that it hopes could help make aviation more sustainable.

In an announcement made from the company's summit in Toulouse, Airbus said it had reached a "landmark moment" in its Wing of Tomorrow research and technology programme, which is exploring new manufacturing and assembly techniques.

Three wing demonstrators will be made as part of the transnational programme, bringing together more than 100 different technologies devised by Airbus teams across its European sites, including Filton in South Gloucestershire and Broughton, North Wales.

One prototype will be used to understand systems integration; a second will be structurally tested to compare against computer modelling, while a third will be assembled to test scaling-up production and compare against industrial modelling.

Sub-assembly of the complex wing cover took place at the Filton site, having been manufactured at the [National Composite Centre](#) in Bristol.

The wing cover and a major component from GKN Aerospace – the Fixed Trailing Edge – were delivered to the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, Wales, facility on Airbus' wing-production plant in Broughton, for assembly to begin.

Head of the Wing of Tomorrow programme, Sue Partridge, who is based at Filton, said: "This is the landmark moment we've been aiming for ever since the demonstrator launch was agreed in 2016.

"Everything we've been doing since then has been focused on assembly. It's a huge moment for the global team and all our partners who have been working to deliver everything into the excellent facility at the AMRC Cymru."

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Sabine Klauke, Airbus chief technical officer, said: “Wing of Tomorrow, a crucial part of Airbus’ R&T portfolio, will help us assess the industrial feasibility of future wing production.

“High-performing wing technology is one of several solutions – alongside sustainable aviation fuels and hydrogen – we can implement to contribute to aviation’s decarbonisation ambition.

“Wing of Tomorrow is also an example of how large-scale industry collaboration will be critical to achieving our sector’s agenda for a more sustainable future.”

The Wing of Tomorrow programme is part-funded by the UK’s Aerospace Technology Institute.

In June, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng visited Airbus in Filton to formally launch a £40m, state-of-the-art research and testing facility.

Mr Kwarteng told *BusinessLive* that he thought the South West region was [“at the forefront”](#) of tackling the climate crisis and staging a ‘green industrial revolution’.

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