January 20, 2025

Sojitz Corporation

BETA Technologies Inc.

Yamato Holdings Co., Ltd.

City of Kitakyushu

Sojitz, BETA, Yamato HD, and City of Kitakyushu Sign Agreement for Joint Verification Testing of Air Cargo by Electric Aircraft at Kitakyushu Airport

- Providing Logistics Solutions with Japan's First Electric Aircraft for Dedicated Cargo Transport to Fly Between Two Locations -

Sojitz Corporation ("Sojitz"), BETA Technologies Inc. ("BETA"), Yamato Holdings Co., Ltd. ("Yamato HD"), and City of Kitakyushu have signed an agreement as of January 20 to conduct joint verification of air cargo by electric aircraft based at Kitakyushu Airport. Verification tests will be conducted to assess economic rationality, operational efficiency (loading and unloading), and technological efficiency (charging equipment). Around Summer 2025, the four parties plan to conduct a flight*1 of BETA's ALIA CTOL, which is an electric conventional takeoff and landing (eCTOL*2) aircraft. This project is expected to mark Japan's first*3 flight of an electric aircraft for dedicated cargo transport between two locations. Through these verification tests, the four parties aim to expedite cargo transport for regional revitalization, realize decarbonization in the logistics industry, and strengthen logistics networks serving rural areas and remote islands in order to build a sustainable logistics network.

[BETA's eCTOL, ALIA CTOL]

Japan's logistics industry faces challenges such as the need for decarbonization of the transportation sector, which accounts for 18.5% of Japan's total CO_2 emissions,*4 and the need to maintain logistics networks in rural regions and remote islands with progressing depopulation.

Sojitz has served as the sales agent for Boeing aircraft in Japan for over 65 years and possesses extensive experience in the aircraft industry with networks that include aircraft manufacturers, airlines, and jet operation support companies. Sojitz has been working with BETA since 2022 to develop Japan's electric aircraft market, and Sojitz will provide support including assistance with the aircraft certification process in Japan and with methods to introduce electric aircraft as an effective and convenient means of transport.

Safety is BETA's highest priority as it strives to realize social implementation of electric aircraft. Development is underway for both eCTOL aircraft and electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft for use in fields such as logistics, defense, medical transport, and passenger transport. In the U.S., BETA has demonstrated a track record of successful manned test flights, and has significant partnerships with the U.S. military, medical, and passenger operators. By the end of 2024, BETA had set up 44 in-house developed charging stations in the U.S. BETA will work to obtain type certification for ALIA CTOL aircraft by the end of 2025.

Yamato HD announced its "Sustainability Transformation 2030 ~1st Stage~" under the Yamato Group's medium-term management plan, and Yamato HD strives to realize a sustainable future together with its diverse range of partners by continuing to create "New logistics" and "New value" for society. In July 2023, Yamato HD concluded a logistics partnership agreement with the City of Kitakyushu. Under this strong partnership, Yamato HD is working to build a sustainable logistics network and increase competitiveness of local industries with the introduction of a new form of transport such as cargo aircraft from April 2024 with Kitakyushu Airport as the air cargo transport hub.

City of Kitakyushu seeks to utilize cutting-edge technology to create new business and services based around Kitakyushu Airport. Based on the logistics partnership agreement with Yamato HD, City of Kitakyushu made the decision to join this verification project as part of its efforts to support a new form of transport that is not only environmentally friendly, but also supports economic and social development.

The ALIA CTOL aircraft to be used for the verification tests is an electric conventional takeoff and landing aircraft that does not use jet fuel. The ALIA CTOL has a payload of over 560 kg and a cruising range of over 400 km. Electric aircraft are anticipated to be a more efficient, CO_2 emission-free method of cargo transport compared to former methods such as trucks and ships.

Verification testing will involve financial simulations of replacing traditional forms of cargo transport with electric aircraft transport to assess economic rationality, operational testing such as loading and unloading, and testing of technological efficiency such as charging equipment. Test flights are expected to be conducted with a flight route between Kitakyushu Airport and Miyazaki Airport.

- Sojitz will coordinate the overall verification test process, including required procedures for domestic test flights and use of BETA's aircraft. Sojitz will also work together with BETA to create a system for introducing electric aircraft to the Japanese market.
- BETA will supply the aircraft used for testing, operate the aircraft and charging equipment, provide instruction on efficient cargo transport, and conduct test flight operations.
- Yamato HD will provide operation-related advice on cargo transport.
- City of Kitakyushu will support required preparation such as coordination of infrastructure at Kitakyushu Airport and with related government agencies.

Sojitz, Yamato HD, BETA, and City of Kitakyushu aim to confirm the possibilities and issues related to electric aircraft for air cargo transport in Japan in order to build a sustainable logistics network.

*1: Test flights subject to approval by Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

*2: 75% of the aerostructure for BETA' eCTOL matches the eVTOL.

*3: Sojitz study

*4: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's report on carbon dioxide emissions in the transportation sector

(https://www.mlit.go.jp/sogoseisaku/environment/sosei_environment_tk_000007.html)

[Related Information]

[Company Overview – Sojitz Corporation]

Established	April 1, 2003
Head Office	1-1, Uchisaiwaicho 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Representative Director	Kosuke Uemura, President & COO
Main Business	Sojitz is engaged in a wide range of businesses globally, including manufacturing, selling, importing, and exporting a variety of products, in addition to providing services and investing in diversified businesses.
Website	https://www.sojitz.com/en/

[Company Overview – BETA Technologies Inc.]

Established	April 1, 2017
Head Office	1150 Airport Drive, South Burlington, VT 05403, U.S.
Representative Director	Kyle Clark, CEO
Main Business	Manufacture and sale of eCTOL and eVTOL aircraft; manufacture and sale of charging equipment for electric aircraft and takeoff and landing stations; and provision of training equipment for aircraft crews eCTOL: Electric conventional take-off and landing eVTOL: Electric vertical take-off and landing 75% of the aerostructure for eCTOL matches the eVTOL.
Website	https://www.beta.team/

[Company Overview – Yamato Holdings Co., Ltd.]

Established	November 29, 1919
Head Office	2-16-10 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Representative Director	Yutaka Nagao, President
Main Business	Courier services and other transport business
Website	https://www.yamato-hd.co.jp/english/

[Overview – City of Kitakyushu]

Established	February 10, 1963
Location	1-1 Jonai, Kokura Kita Ward, Kitakyushu City
Representative	Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Mayor of Kitakyushu
Main Business	Promoting Kitakyushu Airport as a transport and logistics base; promoting new technology and decarbonization
Website	https://www.city.kitakyushu.lg.jp/index.html

[For questions, contact:]

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