

Drone Forge places inaugural order of Airbus Flexrotor

Paris, France, 18 June 2025 – Australian aerospace start-up Drone Forge and Airbus Helicopters have signed an agreement to purchase six Flexrotor uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) comprising 17 aircraft, making it the single largest order for the Flexrotor to date.

The mission-ready Flexrotor systems will be configured to meet a broad range of operational requirements in the Asia-Pacific region, spanning littoral surveillance and high-altitude inland missions, to infrastructure monitoring and maritime environment assessment.

Each UAS will feature a heavy fuel engine optimised for maritime operations, ensuring greater safety, fuel availability, and interoperability with naval assets. It will also incorporate Starlink connectivity, enabling beyond-line-of-sight operations and real-time situational awareness. Additionally, the Flexrotor will be equipped with PT-6 imaging technology, providing stabilised, high-resolution intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for efficient wide-area maritime monitoring.

“We are fully convinced that the Flexrotor, built on a strong engineering heritage, will allow us to tap into new markets with a proven solution where real-time intelligence, mission flexibility and reliability matters,” said Thomas Symes, Chief Executive Officer of Drone Forge. “We look forward to integrating and commercialising the Flexrotor systems in the region.”

“The landmark order opens a new chapter in our partnership with Drone Forge, reinforcing our shared commitment to delivering cutting-edge crewed-uncrewed teaming capabilities to Asia-Pacific operators,” said Olivier Michalon, Executive Vice President of Global Business at Airbus Helicopters. “With strong confidence in the Flexrotor’s efficiency and reliability, this force multiplier will drive operational excellence in defence and security applications.”

The agreement followed closely from a Letter of Intent (LOI) signed recently between Airbus and Drone Forge, where the two companies collaborate on the deployment and operational integration of the Flexrotor UAS.

The Flexrotor is Airbus’ newest addition to its UAS portfolio. A modern Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft with a maximum launch weight of 25 kg (55 lbs), it has been designed for ISTAR missions for more than 12-14 hours in a typical operational configuration. It can integrate different types of payloads including an electro-optical

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system and advanced sensors to suit customers' unique mission needs. With the ability to autonomously launch and recover from either land or sea requiring only a 3.7 by 3.7 m (12 by 12 ft.) area, the Flexrotor is ideal for expeditionary missions requiring minimal footprint.

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