

Airseas announces major investment in R&D centre to accelerate development of wind technology for shipping

New land-based testing programmes will complement ongoing work at sea to advance wind propulsion technology that is critical to shipping's decarbonisation.

Nantes (France), 12 September 2023 – Airseas, a pioneer in wind propulsion technology for the maritime sector, has announced a major investment in a new research and development (R&D) centre to accelerate the development of its Seawing kite system towards large-scale production and rollout.

Located in Dakhla (Morocco), the installation will comprise a 2,400m² hangar and an advanced test bench, offering the opportunity to test the Seawing and its individual components systematically, in a variety of configurations. Dakhla, a world-famous location for nautical sports and kitesurfing, was selected because it offers continuous and stable winds, allowing the Airseas team to perform a range of trials on a daily basis.

This new R&D centre will enable Airseas to accelerate its testing programme of the Seawing, a parafoil that flies 300 meters above the sea level to reduce the main engine load for oceangoing vessels, thereby slashing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This facility will enable Airseas to conduct tests more frequently to validate the final phases of the system's development, including fine-tuning the flight dynamics. This land-based testing complements the ongoing sea trials programme for the Seawing, with new trials scheduled to take place on a vessel owned by K Line in the coming months.

Vincent Bernatets, CEO of Airseas, said: "We are excited to enter this new stage of the Seawing development programme, with testing taking place simultaneously on land and at sea to accelerate technological advancement and ultimately make a key decarbonisation solution available to a wider number of shipowners. Today's investment in a state-of-the-art testing centre demonstrates Airseas' long-term commitment to research and development and to continuously improving our wind propulsion solutions for the maritime sector.

"This comes at a pivotal time, as shipping is under growing pressure from regulators, investors, and its customers' customers to reduce its environmental impact, starting this decade. We are convinced that wind propulsion will play a central role in this transition, now and in the longer term. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, there is no time to wait, and this is why we are working tirelessly to progress our Seawing system through the final testing stages and towards larger-scale industrialisation."

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Airseas

French wind propulsion technology leader Airseas combines kite technology with expertise from the aerospace industry to help the maritime sector meet its decarbonisation ambitions by using the widely available and unlimited power of the wind. Based in Nantes (France), the company was founded in 2016 by former engineers of Airbus who had the ambition to bring together their aviation expertise with their passion for sailing and dedication for the environment. Airseas has developed Seawing, a wing designed to harness the power of the wind, aiming to reduce fuel consumption and emissions by 20% on average.

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