

Lilium Hopes To Resume eVTOL Flight Testing in Coming Months

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Flight testing of Lilium's second eVTOL technology demonstrator was interrupted by Covid-19 restrictions. [Photo: Lilium]

Germany-based Lilium is preparing to resume flight testing with a second demonstrator example of its all-electric Lilium Jet eVTOL aircraft once restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic are eased. A small contingent of the company's engineering team is currently able to work on the aircraft at its

headquarters near Munich, and a spokesman told AIN that it hopes changes to social distancing rules will permit flight tests to restart in "a few months."

The second technology demonstrator will be the same size as the first, which finished flight testing in October 2019, and will incorporate some design changes to the five-seat aircraft. The second phase of flight testing, which was interrupted by both Covid-19 and a fire in Lilium's facilities, is expected to see the aircraft flown faster and demonstrate a full transition to wing-borne cruise flight as the company aims to complete the preliminary design review.

In a presentation to the Vertical Flight Society on May 21, Lilium's chief program officer Yves Yemsi explained that the company is using program management processes, including stage gate reviews, that are similar to those at major aerospace groups, such as Airbus and Rolls-Royce. Lilium has a team of around 90 people already working on the production phase of the program, to be ready for planned type certification in 2025.

"We don't want to lose quality at any stage, so we are putting controls in place at all levels," explained Yemsi, who formerly held a senior quality and program role with Airbus. Lilium is also engaging with companies in its supply chain to ensure they are in sync with the level of technology maturity required for the detailed design, production, and service entry phases of the program.

On March 23, Lilium completed another funding round that generated more than \$240 million, raising the amount of capital it has achieved to date to \$340 million. The company now employs more than 450 employees, including more than 35 PhDs and 40 different nationalities.

Lilium plans to operate its aircraft commercially in air taxi services that will offer flights of up to around 186 miles. The company intends to partner with various infrastructure providers to support operations.