

Experience and lessons learnt from Helicopter Air Taxi operation in South America

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Biography

Marcelo Rajchman is the corporate CEO of Ecocopter (www.ecocopter.com). He joined the company in 2010 as the CFO with the aim of professionalizing a small Chilean helicopter company and bringing it to the international standard.

Today, Ecocopter has 240 collaborators, helicopter operations throughout South America, a training school with simulators (www.ecotraining.cl) and drone operations (www.ecodrones.cl).

In addition to his passion for aeronautics and technology, Marcelo is the Director of the Chilean Helicopter Association, he teaches Strategy at the Adolfo Ibañez University (Chile) and is an angel investor in various ventures for LATAM.

His recent work includes:

- Opening of offices in Ecuador (AOC and CMA)
- Opening of offices in Peru (AOC and CMA)
- M&A activity merging the drone company with a software company (www.automapp.cl)
- Development of B2C marketplace to encourage the use of helicopters and collect data for the VTOL market
 - through Ecodrones, we have promoted the creation of the first Drone regulations of the DGAC Chile
 - in 2022, we started calculating and compensating through the purchase of carbon credits, 100% of the carbon footprint.

Abstract

For some years we've seen the exponential growth of VTOL's projects. There are huge challenges for the entire ecosystem, from aircraft manufacturing, batteries, infrastructure, UTM, to insurances, etc. There are so many technological challenges, that sometimes we even forget the most important thing: are we solving a real problem? Is there demand for these aircrafts? What kind of services will be the most demanded ones? How much is the end consumer willing to pay?

At Ecocopter, we seek to contribute to this conversation. We have been operating helicopters in South America for 19 years, where 50% of our sales are for passenger transportation in various segments: offshore, tourism, air taxi, heli-skiing, mineral exploration, construction, energy, Telcom, firefighting, among others.

For the expansion of UAM, the essential parameter is the lowering the level of fare. That will enable capturing middle class people. This message is very important for the manufacturers and the operators. It is applicable to both the thermic and the electrical solutions. The newcomers with electrical solutions should think about it in the whole spectrum of costs.

On the other hand, one can perceive that the electrical solution could lower the noise emissions (much lower motor noise, only left the rotating propellers ones, that can be embedded), therefore favouring the corresponding use in areas sensitive to external noise.

If these two points are receiving proper responses, a company like ours is ready to invest on the eVTOL to further enlarge our operations (and make more margins). Sure, I will be keeping an eye (and more) on this development.

This will be our contribution to the VTOL-UAM community.