

# BUSINESS COMPANIES

## Accel aims for bigger share of nation's full flight simulator market

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A Tianjin-based full flight simulator producer aims to grab a bigger market share in China, in an industry that has been dominated by Western companies, a senior company executive said.

Accel (Tianjin) Flight Simulation Co Ltd expects to seize 15 percent of the domestic market share as the first sales target of the company's market breakthrough efforts, Ding Yuan, Accel's general manager and CTO, told China Daily in an interview.

Currently, China has a total of 215 units of FFS, of which 186 were produced by Canadian Aviation Electronics Inc and L3Harris Technologies from the United States. Six others were produced by domestic market players, including three by Accel.

The FFS level D is the highest level of technology in the field of simulation and the level D should gain qualification issued by the CAAC under current regulations in China.

Statistics from aviation magazine Flight Global indicated that of the 1,550 FFSs installed worldwide, 59 percent were manufactured by CAE and 17 percent by L3Harris.

Ding projects that in China, the annual market demand for FFSs stands between 16-20 units annually in the next five years, equivalent to 1 billion yuan (\$157.2 million) in terms of overall market value.

In addition, the country's market demand accounts for one-fifth of the world's total, while its market demand is rising thanks to the country's strong economic growth.

Ding's forecast coincided with the Boeing Commercial Market Outlook 2020-2039, which is upbeat on the Chinese market. Total FFS demand will top 340 units in the period, involving a total investment of 28 billion yuan.

In light of the strong market demand, the Accel general manager noted he is fully aware of the challenges ahead.

"For one, the data pack is owned by Boeing and Airbus. For the other, as a high-tech industry with a long R&D cycle, we are yet still in its fledgling period."

Accel was set up by US-based Collins Aerospace and Beijing Bluesky Aviation Technology Co in 2014, with an initial investment of 390 million yuan. After Bluesky left in 2015, Haite Hi-tech, a privately owned limited company, joined up.

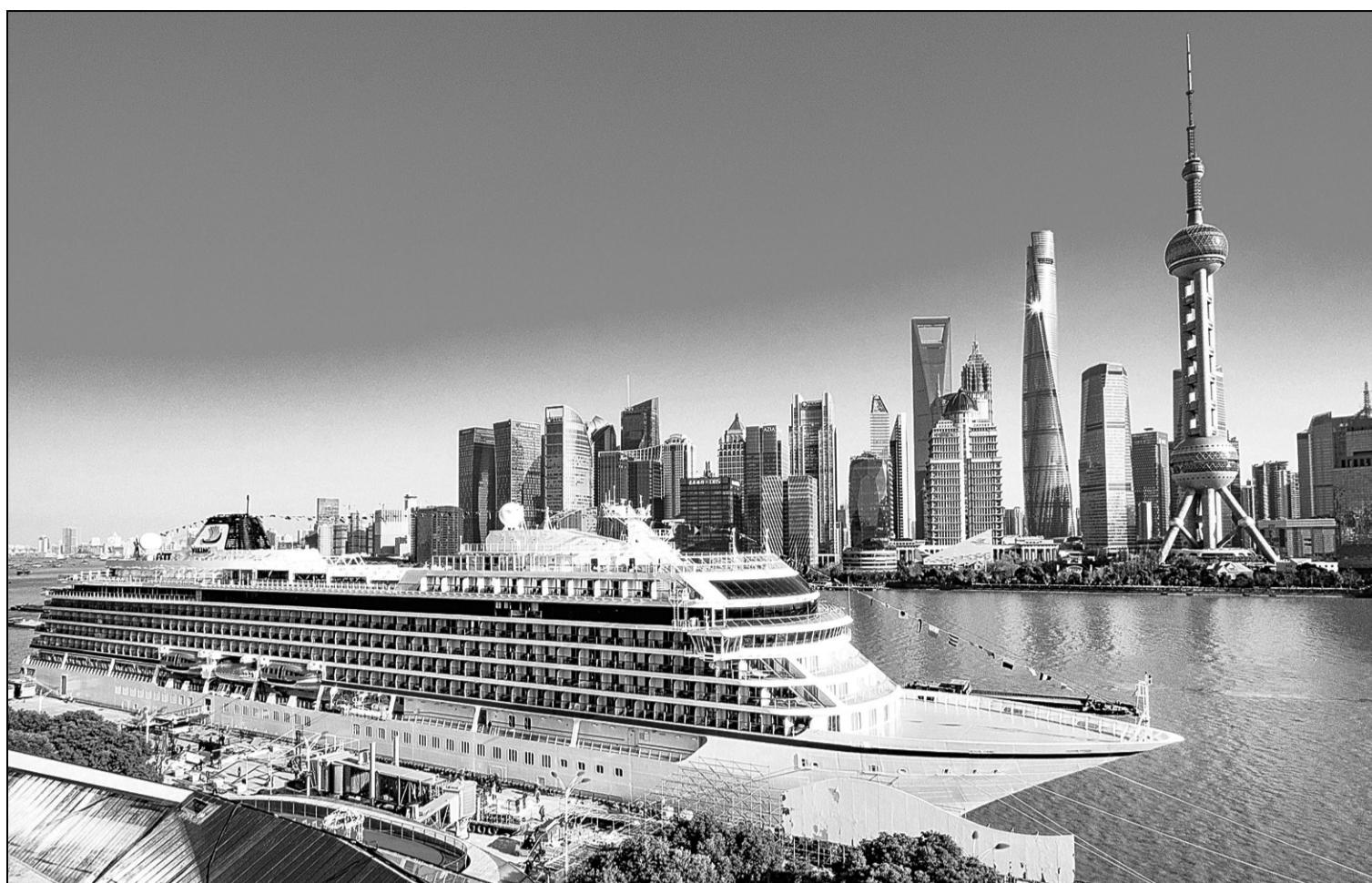
Now Accel is trying to leverage its strong technical capabilities built up from the full flight simulator life cycle development experience to tap into simulation and training solutions for new industry segments.

"Eyeing the challenges, we have mapped out strategies to make profits from the future air mobility segment as well as the electric vertical take-off and landing — known as the eVTOL vehicle segment, two professional segmented fields in the market," he said. "The moves are expected to cushion its losses since its initial years."

It has recently inked agreements with leading domestic eVTOL producers Anhui Huamin Avionics System Co and Shanghai Volant, respectively, earlier this month.

"Accel's technological competence is consolidating our confidence to join hands," said Yang Liangyong, general manager of Anhui Huamin Avionics System Co.

Accel's strategy is in line with the government's efforts to boost manufacturing industries in the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25) and CAAC's latest announcement to boost the "smart aviation" industry. Accel also has a clear vision on the strategy to penetrate the urban air mobility market, Yang said.



China Merchants-Yidun, the first Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, docks at a terminal at the Bund in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Domestic ocean, river cruises set to ride wave of popularity

### Amid COVID challenges, coastal sails will target niche consumer groups

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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Big ships in China are increasingly taking to the water for domestic river and ocean cruise trips, as operators are confident of riding on the growth of the resurgent industry, even though global cruise ship trade has been largely mothballed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Viking Cruises China, the China unit of Switzerland-based cruise line operator Viking Cruises, now serves as the only luxury ocean cruise line operating in China. It is operating through a joint venture with China Merchants Group, which holds a controlling stake.

China Merchants -Yidun, the first Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, was launched in June 2021 and provided Chinese consumers with the country's first domestic coastal cruise and in-depth exploration of destinations along China's coastline. Earlier, it operated a now-defunct route between Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and Sanya, Hainan province.

On April 3, the company plans to launch new eight-day itineraries departing from Shenzhen to Shanghai, covering multiple ports and destinations such as Zhoushan

and Dongtou island, Zhejiang province, and Xiamen, Fujian province. The route will operate constantly between Shenzhen and Shanghai with one ship and departing in both cities.

"Since the pandemic, we ceased outbound cruise operations and only commenced operations of our new China coastal cruise. We spent most of the year preparing to launch this product. Since the launch, our domestic ocean cruises have enjoyed the highest guest ratings we have ever seen from our cruises worldwide," said Brendan Tansey, managing director of Viking Cruises China.

"Although resuming cruise operations in the COVID-19 era has not been without its challenges, our health protection program and pandemic prevention and management protocols have enabled us to operate incident-free so far," he said.

In the pandemic-ravaged era, dealing with "starts and stops" will become a new normal in the travel industry. The trend has driven Viking to ensure its operations and processes are set up to be nimble and able to deal with last-minute COVID-19-related changes.

Hu Keyi, head of the science and technology committee at Jiangnan

Shipyard Group in Shanghai, said on the premise of good pandemic prevention and control, the country should encourage more Chinese consumers to participate in cruise tourism.

Viking Cruises China said it aims to create differentiated cruise experiences in the China market. Unlike mega-ships with casinos, entertainment facilities onboard and less exploration time onshore, the company's small and medium-sized luxury ocean ships are equipped with Scandinavian designs and carry a serene ambiance. Entertainment programs focus on Nordic, European and Chinese cultures. It also provides ample time for onshore excursions.

"Unlike most other cruises that focus on the consumer group mainly composed of families with kids, our target guests are mature, affluent, well-traveled Chinese intellectuals with discerning tastes," Tansey said.

"Since entering the China market with our European river cruise products, we have attracted a good following of guests from first-tier cities including Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, Guangdong province, as well as travelers from some second-tier cities," Tansey added.

Among Chinese travelers, retirees aged 55 and above serve as a big source of the company's business, and many used to be govern-

ment officials, doctors, university professors and artists. Professionals and entrepreneurs aged in their 40s constitute another main consumer group. With the launch of domestic ocean cruises, younger guests aged in their 30s are also emerging, it said.

Viking Cruises China said its future growth in China would mainly come from several fields. They include ocean and river cruise trips in China. Viking Cruises China is working with China Merchants to build low-to-no-emission ships and to develop products for Chinese travelers, exploring ports and destinations that have seen little cruise traffic in the past.

The company is also bullish on the growth prospects of European ocean and river cruises. When outbound travel restrictions are lifted, it expects a strong rebound in European river cruises dedicated to Chinese travelers and aims to add ocean cruises to its offerings.

Meanwhile, a number of domestic cruise operators in China started to sail again on the Yangtze River since the latter half of 2020, and their businesses have fared well. River cruise tours in China have been innovating their operations with higher-end equipment, better entertainment and enhanced services onboard to cater to increasingly sophisticated demand from domestic travelers.



A pilot experiences a Boeing 737 MAX full flight simulator produced by Accel (Tianjin) Flight Simulation Co Ltd in Tianjin in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Last year, the company announced its completion of the Airbus A320 neo and the Boeing 737 MAX FFS, making it the first and the only company in China to acquire an extensive full life cycle experience on the research, development and engineering of the major narrow-body level D FFS — both for the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 MAX, said CAAC News, a newspaper under the China Aviation Administration.

A company under Shanghai Juneyao Group Co Ltd said it had also completed its first 737 MAX FFS, but the simulator is only manufactured for Juneyao Airlines.

"Since Accel developed and manufactured China's first FFS in 2017, Accel has completed the R&D, manufacturing, and delivery of mainstream narrow-body simulator models for Airbus and Boeing in only a few years. We have full confidence in the stronger market presence after our 'made in China' 737 NG passed level D certification in 2017, Airbus A320 neo passed level D certification in 2020, and the 737 MAX FFS passed level D certification in 2021," he said.

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# BREAST DISEASE AWARENESS

EARLY DETECTION AND INTERVENTION CAN SAVE LIVES

# VITAL FOR WOMEN

Surveys show that a high percentage of Chinese women suffer from breast disease, and the life-threatening condition is now being found in younger women.

Many breast cancer patients did not recognize the early symptoms of the disease, and thus often receive diagnosis and treatment late. Medical experts suggest women aged above 30 should conduct breast self-examinations monthly and contact their doctor if they notice anything unusual.