

China shows off newly approved passenger jet at major airshow

November 8 2022



A security guard stands by as the first model of the C919 prepares to take off on its first test flight at Shanghai Pudong International Airport on May 5, 2017.

Credit: AP

China on Tuesday showed off its first domestically produced large passenger jet after the aircraft was approved by regulators, unveiling the

C919 at a major airshow.

The sleek, narrow-body [aircraft](#) took to the runway at the China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, circling through cloudy skies over the southern city of Zhuhai before touching down in front of hundreds of onlookers.

Chinese authorities hope the C919—built by the state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC)—will challenge foreign models like the Boeing 737 MAX and the Airbus A320.

Beijing also hopes its first homegrown jetliner with mass commercial potential will cut the country's reliance on foreign technology as ties with Western countries deteriorate—though most of the plane's parts are sourced from overseas.

Chinese regulators approved the C919 in September, with President Xi Jinping hailing the project's "gratifying achievements" and calling it "an effort freighted with the will of the country".

State carriers have enthusiastically backed the jet despite it still not having received licences from US and European regulators or the [green light](#) to enter [mass production](#).

China Eastern Airlines, the country's second-biggest carrier by passenger numbers, said in May it planned to incorporate four C919s into its fleet, with domestic media reporting that the aircraft would go into operation during the first quarter of 2023.

COMAC has said over 800 orders for the C919 have been placed by dozens of customers.

China formally announced longstanding deals for Airbus jets worth \$17

billion during a visit last week by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

The Boeing 737 MAX has been grounded in China since 2019 after two [fatal crashes](#), though Boeing said in July that it may be approved for delivery by Chinese regulators this year.

However, lingering US-China trade tensions and China's worst commercial air disaster earlier this year involving a Boeing 737-800 have slowed progress.

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