

Ethiopian Airlines snaps up 31 Boeings in 'landmark' deal

November 14 2023, by Sahar Al Attar



An Airbus A350-1000 aircraft flies above a mosque during the ongoing Dubai Airshow.

Ethiopian Airlines ordered 31 Boeing jets with an option for 36 more in a "landmark" deal on Tuesday as it joined the list of companies betting

big on the growth of aviation.

The order, announced at the Dubai Airshow, was the biggest ever made by an African airline for Boeing [aircraft](#), the US manufacturer said.

The 11 787 Dreamliner and 20 737 MAX planes with a list price of more than \$5.6 billion are part of the airline's expansion plans, said group CEO Mesfin Tsew.

"The addition of the brand new, latest technology with both wide body and narrow body will enable us to expand our network and enhance our growth, our operations and profitability," he said.

With a fleet of 140 aircraft covering 100 destinations, Ethiopian Airlines is already Africa's biggest carrier, Tsew added.

Brad McMullen, Boeing's senior vice-president of commercial sales and marketing, called it a "landmark commitment" from the flag-carrier.

Ethiopian Airlines is not the only carrier eyeing expansion. Dubai's Emirates airline ordered 95 Boeing planes on Monday, while budget carrier flydubai bought 30 wide-bodied aircraft from the US firm as it seeks to open up new routes.

Turkish Airlines has confirmed talks with Airbus, Boeing's European rival, for up to 355 jets. In June, India's low-cost airline Indigo ordered 500 Airbus A320-family planes, the biggest ever order for civil aircraft.

Engine stalls purchase

While Boeing has enjoyed the lion's share of the deals in Dubai this week, Airbus announced an order for 10 A350-900 planes by EgyptAir on Tuesday.

Airbus commercial director Christian Scherer told a news conference the deal marked "an important milestone" in the "long and successful partnership" with the state-owned carrier.

Without discounts, which are routinely applied in the industry, the transaction is worth \$3.2 billion, according to the manufacturer's latest published list price.

However, Emirates chief executive Tim Clark said on Tuesday that he will not buy Airbus's A350 until he has concluded negotiations with engine manufacturer Rolls Royce, which he blames for a lack of durability and longevity.

"Forty percent of the 350-1000s have been sold into this region," Clark said, adding: "This is the region that is buying these airplanes and will buy the big numbers if the engine issue's resolved."

Airbus has emphasized that technology used in the A350s means the aircraft consumes 25 percent less fuel than its competitor's previous models.

But the Emirates chief said reliability was paramount in the selection of aircraft.

"They (Boeing) might not be as advanced in their technology, in their build materials. But in the end, what we want is reliance," Clark said.

Also on Tuesday, Emirates announced contracts worth \$1.2 billion with the French aircraft equipment manufacturer Safran.

That includes an agreement for Safran to equip the Emirates fleet of Airbus A350s, Boeing 777X-9s and Boeing 777-300s with new seats costing \$1 billion at list price, Emirates said in a press release.

Air Arabia, based in Sharjah—an emirate neighboring Dubai—ordered 240 LEAP-1A engines in a deal with a book value of about \$3.36 billion to power its existing order of 120 Airbus A320neo family aircraft, the company said.

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