



BOEING SAID TO STUDY FIRST CHINA PLANT FOR WORK ON 737 JETLINER

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Boeing Co. is exploring whether to open a factory in China to complete work on its top-selling 737-model jetliners, the first facility of its kind outside the U.S., according to a person familiar with the plans.

The facility would perform tasks such as painting aircraft built at Boeing's single-aisle plant outside Seattle, said the person, who wasn't authorized to comment publicly.

Moving some tasks to China would free up production capacity for the 737, the world's most widely flown airliner, as Chicago-based Boeing plots an increase to as many 60 planes a month from the current 42. The 737 competes with the A320 jet family from Europe's Airbus Group SE, which is poised to inaugurate its first plant in the U.S. on Monday in Mobile, Alabama.

Boeing's plans for China are under the spotlight because Chinese President Xi Jinping is planning a stop in Seattle later this month on his initial trip as a head of state to the U.S. Such official visits frequently yield a haul of aircraft order announcements from China's carriers.

"To succeed in today's competitive environment, Boeing is always looking for opportunities to support our growth plans and productivity improvements,"

Boeing said in response to queries about the new 737 facility. While Boeing said its overseas partners include China, "we do not comment on options we may be exploring."

Boeing has responded to growing demand for single-aisle jets with the accelerating tempo at the factory in Renton, Washington, that now builds all its 737s. Airbus's Alabama plant will be its fourth making the A320.

Boeing's talks for a 737 completion and delivery center were first reported by Flightglobal in May.

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