



COMAC ARJ21 TO ENTER SERVICE IN FEBRUARY 2016

News / Manufacturer



The Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC) said China's first regional commercial jet, the ARJ21-700, will enter service in February next year. Entry into service will follow two months of pilot training and bedding-in trials.

The long-delayed delivery of the first operational ARJ21s has seen launch customer to Chengdu Airlines defer delivery of its first two aircraft from the original date of 2006 to November this year—eight years later than scheduled.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) granted a [commercial type certificate approval](#) to the ARJ21 at the end of December 2014, but the program has seen subsequent developmental delays that included final cabin interior design refinements, some aspects of anti-icing operation, and cockpit event awareness and instrumentation updates.

The design has undergone several major revisions since inception—from the local production of the original General Electric CF34 power plants to newly designed wings and landing gear upgrades retrofitted to withstand extreme condition operations.

Although CAAC has not yet granted full production type approval, COMAC expects it will be granted toward the end of the year, enabling the manufacturer to begin supplying aircraft for its near 250-strong order book.

On top of the 30-aircraft order placed by COMAC subsidiary Chengdu Airlines, the majority [of the 200-plus outstanding orders](#) for the aircraft will go to Chinese or Asian carriers, including Xiamen Airlines, Lao Airlines, and at least two China-based leasing companies.

Chengdu Airlines currently operates an all-Airbus A320 fleet of 19 aircraft, but likely plans to use the 90-seat ARJ21s for short regional schedules to tier-two destinations such as such as from Chengdu to Shanghai and Qingdao.

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