

Finmeccanica: orders from Air Thaiti and Binter Canarias for ATR 72-500 aircraft

ATR, the equal partnership between Alenia Aeronautica (Finmeccanica group) and EADS, announced orders from Binter Canarias and Air Thaiti for one ATR 72-500 aircraft each.

The new ATR will allow Air Thaiti, the main domestic airline of French Polynesia, to cope with the additional traffic generated by the new upmarket resorts being developed on Bora-Bora. The aircraft is scheduled to be delivered in June 2008. Air Tahiti, a long standing ATR operator (since 1986) already ordered five ATR-500 series aircraft last year and currently operates 10 new-generation ATRs (4 ATR 42-500s and 6 ATR 72-500s) on its inter-island network.

With this additional aircraft order, the Spanish carrier Binter Canarias will replace one of its ATR 72-210 model with a new-generation aircraft. The order is a continuation of the airline's fleet renewal process that was started last year. On the medium term, there is further potential for the company to acquire up to 5 more ATR 72-500s as the opportunities for growth are developing. The aircraft is scheduled to be delivered mid-2006.

ATR aircraft are a key element for the development of Air Tahiti and Binter's network, since they are well adapted to "island hopping". ATR 42-500 and ATR 72-500 models are the only aircraft in their class certified for 120-minute extended range twin-engine operations (ETOPs). This certification is extremely important for operators such as Air Tahiti and Binter and recognises the significant in-service experience gathered by the ATR fleet and the excellent reliability of ATR aircraft and their systems.

Filippo Bagnato, Chief Executive Officer of ATR, stated: " From the beginning of the year 2005, ATR has logged over 60 new aircraft sales. This commercial success is evidence of the strong resurgence of the turboprop aircraft in the regional aviation market."

Since the beginning of the programme, ATR has sold 750 aircraft (391 ATR 42s and 359 ATR 72s) and 62 from January 1st onwards.

The ATR 72-500 is the latest development of the ATR 72 with a proven average dispatch reliability of more than 99.6%. This version shares the same power-plant, six-bladed propellers, the same interior design and soundproofing techniques of the ATR 42-500, thus offering the same excellent comfort and passenger appeal. Its standard capacity is of 68 seats. The ATR 72-500 has the lowest seat mile costs, recognised as a benchmark for the regional market. The increased power and aerodynamic refinements provide excellent take-off and landing performance.

All ATR models are compliant with noise regulations and have a large margin with regard to future Chapter IV (ICAO) noise regulations, effective 1st January 2006. The advanced six-blade propeller provides remarkably low outside noise levels. Low fuel burn and gaseous emissions contribute to make the ATR environment friendly.