

COMAC launches new office in Hong Kong

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Hong Kong: Commercial Aircraft Corp of China Ltd. has opened a new Asia-Pacific office in Hong Kong - its second outside mainland China this week - and has signed a deal to support flight operations there as it tries to break into the global passenger jet market.

COMAC's two commercial passenger planes are, with the exception of one Indonesian airline, all flown within China. The state-owned company wants to expand abroad at a time when Airbus AIR.PA and Boeing BA.N are struggling to make planes fast enough to meet demand.

The deals related to the opening of a new office at Hong Kong International Airport, plus help with logistics and maintenance. The pact with Swire's Haeco business on airframe, engine and components is for future demand to maintain Comac jets, and will assist in building out supply chain support and an after-market network needed to underpin future C919 plane sales.

Agency reported earlier about Comac's plans to set-up an international sales and support base to drive purchases of the C919, its would-be rival to Boeing Co. and Airbus SE single-aisle jets.

Still, Larry Culp, chief executive officer of engine maker GE Aerospace, told Bloomberg News in an interview this week that would take time for Comac to build out the supply chain necessary for it to make more C919s while securing the regional and global network to support future in-service aircraft.

Through a joint-venture with France's Safran SA, GE Aerospace produces CFM International Inc.-branded LEAP engines for the C919.

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