

HISTORIC 'FIRST' FOR SAUDIA

News /



Saudia is to become the first airline in the world to operate the new Airbus A330-300 Regional.

Passenger demand in Saudi Arabia is experiencing high growth, both on domestic and regional routes. The new A330-300 Regional variant, specially designed for regional and domestic operations, is Airbus' solution for markets with large populations and fast-growing, concentrated air traffic flows.

The aircraft is set to boost capacity on several of Saudi Arabian Airlines most in-demand routes. Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Saudia's director general said: "The A330-300 Regional's unique flexibility, high capacity and operational capabilities will enable us to expand our domestic and regional network and better absorb growing passenger traffic."

The shopping spree will not end there. Al-Jasser said the airline is "keen to modernise" its fleet

and indicated that, within five years, it would acquire “more than 100” aircraft of various types. The purchase of the new A330s led to a record finance deal by the Saudi airline. Lessors, International Airfinance Corporation (IAFC) appointed Quantum Investment Bank (Quantum) and Palma Capital (Palma) — both based at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA) – as exclusive arrangers for the largest aircraft leasing deal in Saudi Arabian Airlines’ history. The deal consists of arranging debt and equity financing to acquire 20 A330-300s and 30 A320-200s. The A330-300 Regional is optimised to seat up to 400 passengers, utilising the Airbus 18-inch wide economy seat comfort on missions up to 3,000nm. It offers significant cost savings through a reduced operational weight of around 200tonnes. The reduction in fuel burn per seat and maintenance costs will result in an overall cost reduction by up to 26% compared with the today’s long-range A330-300. Airbus said the A330 Regional benefits from the latest A350 XWB and A380 technologies.

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