SPECIALISTS SATISFIED WITH SUKHOI SUPERJET 100 WORK IN ARCTIC EXTREME LOW TEMPERATURES

News / Manufacturer

Russia’s Sukhoi Superjet 100 demonstrated good work in the Arctic 50-degree frosts, Commercial Director of the Yamal aviation company, which was among the first in Russia to begin exploiting SS100, Andrei Dubrov told TASS.

"It was the first winter that we were using SS100," he said. "During severe frosts, which stayed in the Urals and Yamal, the plane worked well."

"At the times that other planes could not work, SS100 saved us, serving one flight after another," he added.

In late December - early January, the temperatures in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District dropped to minus 50 degrees Celsius.

"Bombardier CRJ200 got frozen at airports when temperatures were below minus 35," he said. "In order to catch up with schedule after delays, for example between Yekaterinburg and Salekhard, SS100 planes were saving us."

"Over 20 years, our specialists got command of the entire line of helicopters, planes from Yakovlev Yak-40 to Airbus, and now to SS100," the air company's Director General Vasily Kryuk told TASS. "And you know what - the plane is good, highly technological, affordable in service, and engineers are fond of it."

Pilots give special positive feedback on SS100, he continued.

"Piloting is optimal, the crew's cabin is designed ergonomically, everything you may need is at hand," the director general added.

As of now, the aviation company exploits three SS100, which came in service in May. The planes make flights also to Novy Urengoi and Salekhard - a city on the Arctic Circle.

"As for exploitation in the Arctic conditions - there are no problems, drawbacks are in different: first of all, in the service programs," he continued. "They just give the plane for exploitation, and that's it, the system of maintaining flying conditions - in means of technical services and supplies of spare parts - is lacking behind - this is the problem as of now."

TASS earlier said one of the three planes had defects in stabilizer, which is a constructive disorder.

Development of regional aviation in Arctic

Experts say, between 1991 and 2015, the share of regional aviation lines in the Russian domestic routes dropped by three times, that of local lines - by almost nine times, and the passengers had to be using the country's major national hub - the Moscow aviation hub. Currently, three-quarters of all regions inside Russia are connected with Moscow airports.

"SS100 is a regional aircraft, and by using it we plan to develop the net of routes between regions, from the Volga region to the Urals, to Siberia and the Far East, without crossing Moscow," the air company's head said. "We attracted to this program the ministry of transport and have received subsidies."

"Yamal" receives passenger aircraft under an agreement with the State Transport Leasing Company. In the course of program to substitute gradually the existing planes with Russia-made aircraft, the Yamal Company will receive 25 Sukhoi Superjet 100-95RL aircraft. The agreement was inked during the MAKS international aviation show in Zhukovsky (near Moscow) in summer 2015.

"According to the agreement, in 2015 we were to receive six SS100, in 2016 - twelve, but now we are using only three planes, which we received in May, while the leasing term is only one year, not twelve as we had planned," he continued. "Soon we are receiving three more planes, which will work in Zhukovsky (airport near Moscow)."

The Yamal aviation Company is the first and biggest client for SS100; it is also the first regional company to exploit this kind of the Russia-made aircraft in the northern latitudes.

"We are a regional company, we do not claim for Aeroflot’s routes, we do not have aspirations for the international level," he said. "We are in different market and social niches - to serve flights from Novy Urengoi to Novosibirsk or Krasnoyarsk."

The local governor, Dmitry Kobylkin, said the air company had built up its capacity by three times.

"And this is not the limit," he explained. "I am confident - the air company will become the biggest transport company not only in West Siberia, but across the country."

Air transport subsidies

In 2017, the regional authorities allocated more than one billion rubles ($16.7 thousand) to subsidize six inter-regional and 30 inter-municipal air routes.

"The communication with the mainland includes routes Nadym-Moscow, Nadym-Tyumen, Noyabrsk-Moscow, Noyabrsk-Tyumen, Tyumen-Tolka and Tyumen-Tarko-Sale," press service of the local government said. "The services are provided by 21 regular flights and nine reserve flights: those are used for the periods between seasons to connect settlements, which do not have ground transport connections, or in case of unfavorable weather conditions during navigation of the river transport."

The local officials said the subsidies for air routes had remained unchanged since 2016.

"Within nine months of the past year, the subsidized routes served 148,000 passengers," the press service said. "The total of 844,000 people departed from the region’s airports."

Experts say another problem for the local aviation is the lost airports. Over recent 15 years, the number of working airports decreased by 80% - more than 1,000 airports were closed down. In the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, seven airports serve passengers, mail and cargo transportation. More than ten air companies are working there: Yamal, Sibir, Turukhan, and others.

In early 2017, Tyumen’s airport opened after reconstruction - the terminal’s area was increased by 4.5 times, the capacity grew from 250 to 600 passengers an hour. As of 2016, the airport served 49 regular flights, some of which were subsidized. The next airport on the line for modernization is the one in Novy Urengoi, where reconstruction is due to begin this year already.

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