



AIR FRANCE STICKS WITH STRUGGLING VENDOR FOR LIE-FLAT SEATS UPGRADE

News / Airlines



Air France will invest 140 million euros (\$159 million) extending a cabin refurbishment to its Airbus Group SE A330 fleet that will include lie-flat business-class seats from Zodiac Aerospace, the embattled supplier that has struggled to fulfill orders.

The upgrade will begin late next year and finish in 2018, the airline said in a statement. Each of the twin-aisle planes will be equipped with 30 business-class seats costing 50,000 euros apiece that extend into full beds, part of a broader effort to offer the setup in all the carrier's long-haul airliners. The project also includes installing 21 premium economy and 175 economy seats.

Zodiac has been renovating cabins of Air France's Boeing Co. 777 airliners, and has finished 31 of 44 planes. While the cocoon-like business-class seats for Air France have won praise, contributing to the carrier's "most improved airline" ranking in 2015 by quality-ratings company Skytrax, Zodiac has had difficulty over the last two years completing work on time.

Airbus dispatched engineers to the French supplier's factory in mid-2015 to reduce delays, and American Airlines Group Inc. dropped an order.

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