

IRAN STUDYING AN INDIGENOUS 70-SEAT JET

News / Airlines



Iran is **studying** the feasibility of producing a regional **jet** using technologies, and even airframe parts, acquired and mastered during the IrAN-140 program using national resources and in-house capabilities. The study began in 2013, shortly after the establishment of the Iranian Aviation Technology and Knowledge-based Industries Development Headquarters (IATDH).

The Tehran-based government body is overseen by the country's vice-president for science and technology, the post currently held by Soren Sattari, who led the Iranian delegation to the MAKS'2015 airshow in Moscow earlier this year. At that time, he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Russian governmental and industry leaders to discuss cooperation between the two countries in the aviation and space fields. IATDH leads and coordinates efforts of various national scientific and industrial organizations with the aim of making the local industry more competitive and potentially capable of finding a position in the global marketplace. Tasks set being handled by the group include "conceptual, preliminary and detailed design of transport airplanes up to 150 seats."

Toward that end, the Iranians have reached varied levels of development in a number of fields, including composite materials, turbojets, flight control and navigation systems, turbofan engines and full-authority digital engine controls (FADEC). Other projects include product life management (PLM) and product data management (PDM) in CATIA software, and design and production of a GPS-Glonass receiver for aviation applications. The Iranian industry has long aspired to launch production of a competitive regional aircraft design that would replace its airlines' aging fleets of Fokker F27s, 50s and 100s. However, the high hopes held for the 48-seat Antonov An-140-100 turboprop did not come to fruition. In fact, Iran's HESA plant managed to produce only a dozen of the Ukrainian-designed airplanes. After brief revenue service with Safiran and other small local carriers, all the IrAN-140s found their ultimate homes with governmental and manufacturing industry structures.

Never easy, industrial cooperation between Iran and Ukraine in the aerospace field became more difficult to pursue and develop after the new regime in Kiev decided to follow a pro-Western course. As a result, Iran has increasingly looked to Russia as its main partner on civil aviation programs. According to an IATDH representative visiting Moscow, Iran has started working on two passenger airplane designs. The first, which it calls a "turbine engine" airplane, would carry 12 to 19 seats, highly set wings and non-retractable tricycle landing gears. The second takes the form of a "completely indigenous" jet. However, designers have based its structure on the Antonov An-140-100, from which the new design takes fuselage sections, wings and empennage. Nominal seating capacity ranges from 68 to 72 passengers, achieved with the insertion of plugs into the An-140's fuselage. The IATDH representative said the concept accounts for only one of the options under study. Iran may choose to give up on the An-140 stretch "in the case Russia or other manufacturing nation offers a better solution," he said. At the same time, Iran wants to develop in-house capabilities rather than build airplanes under license, he noted.

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