SOUTH KOREA CLEARS BRAZILIAN-MADE JET FOR PASSENGER SERVICE

News / Airlines

South Korea on Wednesday cleared a Brazilian-made regional jet for passenger operations here so it can start commercial flights in the first half of 2016.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport said an aircraft and engine safety validation certificate has been given to Embraer S.A.'s EMB-145EP twin-engine jet.

"The plane with a range of 2,800 kilometers and able to carry 50 people will be operated by Korea Express Air," a ministry official said. "The air passenger service company will use Yangyang International Airport as its hub, with initial flights to connect Yangyang to Gimhae and Gwangju."

He said the EMB-145EP is also the first plane made in the South American country to be approved in South Korea. Almost all planes flown by South Korean carriers are made in the United States or Europe.

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The ministry said the Korea Institute of Aviation Safety Technology reviewed paperwork and data related to the aircraft, as well as checked the aircraft's manufacturer to make certain all measures have been taken to ensure the plane can be flown safely.

Once the regional aviation administration issues separate airworthiness and air operator certificates (AOC), the plane will be able to start passenger service.

Airworthiness checks see if a plane meets performance requirements to operate safely, while the AOC reviews the ability of an airline company.

Initially, Korea Express Air plans to bring in one aircraft, but this could increase if there is more demand.

"The regional jet can enhance the convenience of people using small regional airports," the ministry said.

It said once the new planes go into operations the government will beef up monitoring and oversight to make certain the planes fly safely and meet all flight operating rules.

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