

RUSSIA'S UAC AWAITS KREMLIN APPROVAL TO BUILD TURBOPROP

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Russia's United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) expects the Russian government will decide later this year on whether to allow the state-backed aerospace group to build a new 50-to-70-seat passenger version of Ilyushin's Il-114. The aerospace company and the government are now discussing options that include restarting production of the Ilyushin Il-114 twin turboprop.

During a press conference at Moscow's MAKS airshow on August 26, UAC president Yuri Slyusar said he favors building the new Il-114-300 model but awaits the Kremlin's endorsement. UAC is majority owned by the Russian government.

Slyusar said that up to 20 incomplete airframes could be taken from the TAPO plant in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which stopped producing the airplanes in 2012. These can be completed in Russia or used as source of airframe parts.

"We have had amassed experience on the transfer of an Ilyushin aircraft from Tashkent to another place, with the Il-76MD-90A manufacture now set up in Ulianovsk," Slyusar said. He added that four plants—Kazan, Voronezh, Ulianovsk and Nizhny Novgorod—are being considered among candidates for the Il-114-300 project to build a 52-seat aircraft.

Restarting the Il-114 would require an 11 billion ruble (\$158 million) investment to digitize the original paper drawings, and 4 billion rubles (\$58 million) to improve the Klimov TV7-117

turboshaft engines, which have also been selected for the Il-112 light tactical airlifter now in development. A further 4 billion rubles (\$58 million) would be needed to renovate the chosen factory.

“In my view, the Il-114 is a good airplane that can enable Russia to meet the needs of the Russian armed forces and other enforcement structures with a suitable turboprop aircraft, and also find some application with commercial operators,” Slyusar said. “These fill a growing need [for a] replacement of the long-serving Antonov aircraft and as a local substitute for the An-140.”

The latter regional turboprop has been in production under Antonov’s license at the Aviacor plant in Samara, which is a Russian privately held company outside of UAC control. The ongoing conflict between Moscow and Kiev over Russian-backed Ukrainian separatists and the worsening economic condition of Ukrainian industry have stopped the supply of components from Antonov’s factories in Kiev and Kharkov.

According to the UAC president, the group’s “most important” current program for civil aviation is the Irkut MC-21 narrowbody airliner. [Irkut has said it plans to roll out the first twinjet at the end of this year, with a first flight anticipated between April and July 2016.](#) “There is a lot of investment having been made into the MC-21, and yet we have to invest more, including [developing] a worldwide service support system,” Slyusar said.

On the opening day of the airshow at Zhukovskiy airfield near Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin watched a real-time video of the first MC-21 fuselage being mated at the IAZ factory in Irkutsk. He confirmed Irkut’s earlier plan to conduct the first flight of the MC-21 next year, followed by type certification of the aircraft and entry into service in 2018.

The Sukhoi Superjet 100 is another important program on which UAC hopes to expand its presence in civil jetliner market. Slyusar said that a special effort has been initiated to decrease the cost of one kit of SSJ100 vendor items by \$3.6 million in the next three years. This will be achieved by wider use of Russian-made components “which in the current economic [situation] can be substantially cheaper” than Western equipment. The sharp decline in the value of the ruble against the euro and U.S. dollar makes Russian vendors “more competitive,” Slyusar said.

The Superjet is powered by twin Powerjet SaM146 turbofans manufactured by France’s Snecma and NPO Saturn. Slyusar said Superjet customers should have a choice of powerplant “like in the case of the MC-21,” which is offered in two versions: one with the Pratt & Whitney PW1400G geared turbofan engine, the other with the Aviadvigatel PD-14. Pratt & Whitney has confirmed shipping the first engines to Russia for use on MC-21 prototypes.

Slyusar confirmed that the first Superjet delivered to the [GTLK leasing group](#) will go to Yamal Airlines of Russia. The aircraft, already painted in airline colors, is on display at the MAKSS static line.

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