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En route to sustainable aviation: from climate science to mitigation policies

Abstract

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Contributions of new generation and future medium to long range aircraft to decarbonisation

Airbus is committed to the decarbonisation of aviation, with a strong conviction that this future requires parallel and focused efforts across a range of mitigation options. Airbus is actively exploring key technology building blocks for a next-generation single-aisle aircraft that could enable the entry into service of a next-generation single-aisle aircraft with an expected 20-30% increase in fuel efficiency compared with the current generation.

Technologies include more efficient engines, including disruptive “open fan” designs, long foldable wings allowing for significant aerodynamic gains, next-generation batteries to enable hybrid architectures where electricity is increasingly used to support propulsive and non-propulsive functions aboard the aircraft, as well as lightweight materials and integrated systems for a connected aircraft.

We are working toward an entry into service of the next generation of single-aisle aircraft in the second half of the next decade, with a possible launch of the programme by the end of this decade. The timeline will be defined by the maturity of technologies as we are currently at a stage of exploration and technology maturation.
These efforts are complementary to our hydrogen roadmap which aims to bring to service the first hydrogen-powered aircraft in the longer term.

We have recently announced an intention to create a JV with MTU to jointly developped a fully electric fuel cell propulsion system, thus reinforcing our overall hydrogen roadmap through a strategic step-by-step approach.