Successful first flight of LEAP-powered Airbus A320neo, with Safran engines and systems

AIRBUS S.A.S. 2015 - photo by master films / P.PIGEYRE

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Airbus has carried out a successful first flight of the A320neo, the reengined version of its single-aisle commercial jet, powered by twin LEAP-1A engines. The airplane took off at 1:24 pm from Toulouse, landing 4 hours, 25 minutes later.

The new-generation LEAP engine is designed and built by CFM International, the 50/50 joint company between Snecma (Safran) and GE. It will succeed the CFM56, the best-selling engine in the history of aviation. Selected by Airbus in 2010 as one of the engines to be offered on the A320neo, the LEAP incorporates major technological advances that allow it to set the standard in this market, based on its performance in terms of reduced fuel consumption (15% lower than current engines), low CO2 and NOx emissions (50% under the current CAEP/6 standard) and very quiet operation. The LEAP-1A version is purpose-designed for the A320neo.

Several Safran companies contribute to the LEAP-1A engine alongside Snecma: Sagem provides the full authority digital engine control (FADEC), Techspace Aero the low-pressure compressor and lubrication equipment, and Hispano-Suiza the power transmission.

In addition to the engine, Safran companies provide key systems and equipment on the A320neo: nacelles (Aircelle), wiring (Labinal Power Systems), landing gear, wheels and carbon brakes (Messier-Bugatti-Dowty).

“This first flight is obviously a major milestone in the LEAP-1A testing and...
certification program," said Philippe Petitcolin, Chief Executive Officer of Safran. "The engine is already a tremendous business success even before entering service, with over 2,500 orders and commitments for the Airbus A320neo, accounting for 55% of this market. Today's flight also recognizes the expert contribution of other Safran companies, whose advanced products help drive the success of this program."

At April 30, all versions of the LEAP engine had recorded more than 8,900 orders and commitments worldwide.

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Snecma is part of Safran, an international high-technology group with three core businesses: aerospace, defence and security. Snecma designs, builds and sells propulsion systems for air and space, including a wide range of commercial engines that are powerful, reliable, economical and environmentally-friendly, led by the global best-seller CFM56 and the new-generation LEAP*. The company also makes world-class military aircraft engines, as well as rocket propulsion systems and equipment for satellites and launch vehicles. Snecma is a leading provider of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for civil and military aircraft engines, under the new EngineLife® brand, offering comprehensive support for customers around the world.

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