

Nigeria eyes certification of China's C919 jet for local airlines

Nigeria's civil aviation authority is looking into certifying China's C919 jet for the country's carriers, its director general told *Reuters*, as Nigerian airlines take on more aircraft and as relations warm with Beijing.

By [Reuters reporters](#) 29 Sep 2025



A Comac C919 narrow body airliner flies in the sky at the China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, or Airshow China, in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, China, 12 November 2024. Reuters/Tingshu Wang/File Photo

Chinese planemaker Comac is producing the narrow-body C919 to compete with leading Western planemakers Airbus and Boeing, and has held several talks with Nigeria over the aircraft.

However, state-owned Comac, which hopes to access the wider African market, faces challenges. Its two plane models lack benchmark certifications from Western regulators, and it is falling behind on delivery targets. The US this year temporarily halted exports of the CFM engines it uses on the C919 due to trade conflicts.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with 230 million people, has potential as a growing aviation market.

The civil aviation authority's director general, Capt. Chris Ona Najomo, told *Reuters* the agency is considering the months-long certification process for the jet to operate on domestic routes, noting the absence of validation from Western regulators.

"We're looking at the certification of the airplane. First of all, that is where we have to start," Najomo said on the sidelines of the UN aviation agency's assembly in Montreal.

Comac offering maintenance support to Nigerian carriers

Najomo said Comac officials had offered maintenance and training support for any planes operated by Nigerian carriers, and was exploring so-called dry lease arrangements, which involve leasing aircraft without crew.

"We just told them that if they can make sure they facilitate a good dry lease arrangement, it's better," Najomo said.

Abdullahi Ahmed, CEO of Nigerian airline NG Eagle, expressed interest in expanding his fleet beyond its current three jets and said he would consider Comac planes if certified and accompanied by maintenance and training support.

Nigeria's improved Aviation Working Group rating reflects stronger compliance with the Cape Town Convention, a treaty that simplifies leasing aviation equipment.

Najomo said this development was boosting confidence among lessors, enabling the country's 13 airlines access newer planes on the leasing market.

While air travel remains costly for many Nigerians, average real airfare fell 43.6% between 2011 and 2023 according to data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Currently, the C919 is only operated by Chinese airlines. Comac's smaller C909 regional jet is also flown by three airlines in Southeast Asia.

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