January 2013

AIRBUS FREIGHTER FAMILY

Airbus' global market forecast predicts a demand for more than 2,600 additional freighter aircraft by 2031, of which nearly 900 will be new-build aircraft. Airbus offers a range of freighter aircraft to meet this need, including the new-build A330-200F and the A330 Passenger-to-Freighter (A330P2F) programme. Freight traffic growth is predicted to grow at nearly five percent average per annum, meaning that it will nearly triple over the next 20 years. Meanwhile, the worldwide freighter fleet is expected to more than double in this period.

Airbus' freighter market success can be traced back to the company's origins, when its founders selected the 222-inch fuselage cross-section for the original A300B jetliner, allowing side-by-side configurations on the main deck, and also side-by-side loading of LD-3 on the lower deck. The A300F4-600R was the latest evolution of this initial all-cargo aircraft family, and it will remain one of the industry's most popular medium-haul freighter types, with a total of 104 deliveries. This aircraft has popularised many of the successful features of our family of freighters, in particular a very versatile main-deck cargo loading system which allows simultaneous side by side and/or single row loading on the main deck of the aircraft.

A330-200F – the new-build solution for high-utilisation mid-size freight operations

The A330-200F is aimed at replacing ageing mid-sized freighters and offers an alternative to larger freighters within fleets. Benefiting from the technical superiority and market success of the A330 passenger version, it will offer opportunities to grow frequencies in under-served markets at no additional cost per tonne. Moreover, its size makes it a good route opener since it is low risk.

The A330-200F is the world's most modern mid-size freighter and can carry 70 tonnes of payload, with a range capability of up to 4,000nm. This range and payload capability provides flexibility for both regional and intercontinental operations, versatility to match costs and frequencies with market expectations, thereby allowing operators to grow existing business and expand into new routes.

Flexibility has been further enhanced on the A330-200F with the introduction of the now popular Airbus versatile main-deck cargo loading system, which can accommodate both pallets and containers in either single row or side-by-side configurations providing the adequate cargo configuration in the most extreme cases of denser freights such as capital commodities or volume-driven ones, such as the computer industry without having to re-configure the aircraft. Thanks to an optimised fuselage cross-section, it has the interior flexibility to carry a wide variety of pallet and container sizes for maximum interlining capability, offering 30 percent more volume than any freighter in its class.

A330P2F Passenger-To-Freighter Conversion

Complementing the A330-200F, the A330P2F programme offers a passenger-to-freighter conversion opportunity for A330s which have completed their useful operational service as passenger jetliners.

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Airbus Press Office
1, Rond-point Maurice Bellonte
31707 Blagnac Cedex, France

Phone +33 (0)5 61 93 10 00
Fax +33(0)5 61 93 38 36
E-mail media@airbus.com

Both the A330-200 and A330-300 versions are eligible for the P2F conversion. The longer-fuselage A330-300P2F is particularly suited for integrators and express carriers, resulting from its high volumetric payload capability with lower-density cargo, while the A330-200P2F is optimised for higher-density freight and longer-range performance.

As a modern aircraft with advanced Airbus technology that includes fly-by-wire flight controls, the A330 offers a highly capable platform for conversion into a freighter. More than 1,200 A330s have been ordered, with over 900 delivered to date since the A330's service entry in 1994 – providing a large source of aircraft to support the conversion programme for many years.

The A330-300P2F will carry up to 60 metric tonnes over a distance of around 2,200 nautical miles, or 61 tonnes to a range of 3,600 nautical miles for the higher MTOW (maximum takeoff weight) variants. The A330-200P2F has a payload capacity of up to 59 tonnes on ranges up to 4,000 nautical miles.

Development of the A330P2F will be performed with the resources of ST Aerospace, based in Singapore, EADS EFW, and Airbus. ST Aerospace provides the resources of a proven engineering services company, while EADS EFW has demonstrated its expertise in aircraft conversions, including the A300P2F and A310P2F.

The A330P2F's engineering development will be led by ST Aerospace, working with Airbus and EADS EFW. Programme lead responsibility during the industrial phase will be handled by EADS EFW, which is to undertake most of the conversions at its Dresden, Germany facilities.

A330P2F is complementary to the A330-200F

The A330P2F is complementary to Airbus' new-production A330-200F freighters, as the converted aircraft address a different price-point and end-users, based on separate operational requirements.

The global market has already proven it can support both new-production freighters and converted freighter products using the same aircraft platform as the basis – if the platform is right, as is the case with the A330.

Of the additional freighters required during the next 20 years, about half of the total demand will be in the mid-sized segment of the A330 – including around 900 conversions. As the mid-sized freighter segment has always been the largest in terms of demand, the replacement cycle is continuous.

Meanwhile, Airbus continues to assess opportunities in the freighter segment as they arise, providing a valuable alternative to other manufacturers, and gradually growing its freighter offering. Airbus is willing and able to play the long game in the freight market.

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