

TESTING ROB COPPINGER / HAMBURG

Sogerma to fit out A380 cabins

EADS subsidiary will design premium cabin furnishings for two test aircraft used for long-range demonstration flights

EADS Sogerma Services has been designated by sister company Airbus as an interior supplier for the A380, and landed a key contract to provide the premium-cabin furnishings for two A380 aircraft that will participate in the flight-test programme. The two furnished aircraft will carry out cabin trials that will include long-range demonstration flights towards the end of the test programme.

Four A380s will be dedicated to the flight-test programme, which is due to begin in the first quarter of next year. The third – manufacturer's serial number (MSN) 002 – and fourth (MSN007) to fly will be furnished as they will participate in cabin trials, route proving and test flights with passengers.

The passenger tests will begin towards the end of the flight-test programme – late 2005 at the earliest – says Airbus. The manufacturer plans to operate "early long-range" test flights of up to 12h or more with its own staff onboard, as it did with the A340-600. A380 customers may also participate in the tests, it adds.

EADS Sogerma Services has been contracted to supply a first-class interior for MSN002 along with

cabin furnishings and business-class lounge areas. It will supply the first and business class interiors for MSN007.

While the cabin of MSN002 is expected to be only partially furnished, MSN007 will incorporate a full economy cabin from another supplier yet to be disclosed, as it is to undertake the A380 route-proving programme. The furnished A380s will also be used for air conditioning tests.

■ Airbus has chosen Florida, USA-based L-3 Aviation Recorders to provide the A380's flight data and cockpit voice recorders (FDR/CVR).

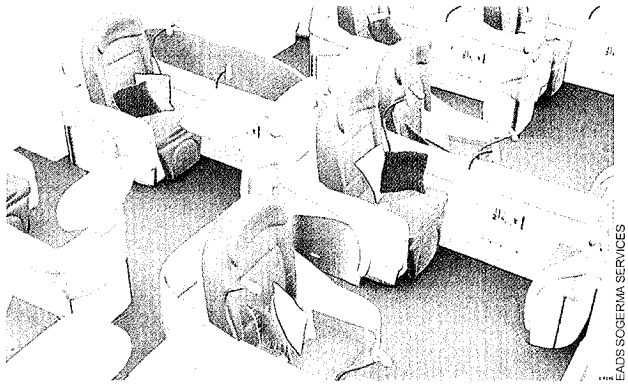
The solid-state FDR can record 25h of high-rate flight and maintenance data in a crash-survivable unit, says L-3. It is, however, designed to be an integral part of the aircraft's maintenance and diagnostic system, and to provide continual updates on its operational status to the central maintenance computer. The CVR provides a 2h readback of flightcrew voice communications and cockpit ambient sound, but will in addition record digital air traffic control messages, instructions and acknowledgements sent using controller/pilot datalink communications.

Inside the giant's cabin

EADS Sogerma Services unveiled details of the A380 cabin plans at last week's Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg. It says the interiors will use an increased level of composites and other, undisclosed, materials to keep the weight down.

A380 manufacturer's serial number 007, which will undertake route proving, will be equipped with a first class cabin on the forward main deck, featuring 12 Class 180 pod type seats that recline to 180°. This deck will also have a central bar area with stools, a galley and stowage areas. The business cabin on the upper deck will have 72 of Sogerma's new Evolys business class seats (which weigh less than 100kg [220lb]), three galleys, a bar unit, and two lounge areas with stowage areas and sofas, either side of the staircase.

As part of the commitment to the A380, Sogerma will establish a presence at Airbus Deutschland's completion centre in Hamburg.



The upper deck will feature 72 Sogerma Evolys business class seats

AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT VLADIMIR KARNOZOV / MOSCOW

Updated An-140-100 set for service

The first example of the improved Antonov An-140-100 is to be delivered this month after the KhAPO aircraft factory in Kharkov received a contract from Ukraine's Ilyich-Avia, corporate air arm of the Mariupol metallurgy plant.

The -100 variant is an improved version of the 52-seater, which has been in service since 2000. It incorporates an increased wingspan, new engine nacelles and larger fuel tanks to boost range by 300km (160nm). KhAPO says the -100 has had parts and systems improved for increased performance, flight safety and faster turnaround times "based on experience amassed with two experi-

mental and eight series An-140s".

The first -100 airframe built by the Aviakor plant in Samara has been undergoing trials ahead of the planned start of passenger operations next month. Aviakor has linked with KhAPO to offer the An-140-100 in a joint bid to Siberian helicopter operator UTAir for its five regional aircraft contract.

Meanwhile, the first two licence-built IrAn-140s, assembled from Kharkov-supplied kits at the HESA plant in Isfahan, Iran, are poised for handover to Iran's Safiran Airlines. Iranian national airlines are expected to eventually take over 100 IrAn-140s. Five aircraft have also been ordered by

Air Libya and talks are being held with a group of airlines in Chad and Sudan for between 20 and 25 aircraft.

■ The Antonov An-148 regional jet is now set to make its maiden flight in July, following another slip from the original schedule that had called for first flight in December 2003. Two flying prototypes, which are due to roll out in June and October, are being completed at the design bureau's experimental aircraft factory in Kiev, Ukraine. The flight test and certification programme should be completed in October 2005, with the first four aircraft due to be in service by the end of next year.

NO-FRILLS

ANA studies low-cost arm

All Nippon Airways (ANA) says it is considering establishing a low-cost carrier that would be separate to the mainline carrier and responsible for operating domestic services in Japan.

The airline says its management has been considering the matter for some time, but no formal committee has been formed so there has been no decision or recommendation to the airline board. ANA declines to confirm reports the low-cost carrier will be formed by year-end. It is understood that some of the 45 Boeing 737-700s ANA has on order may be operated for the new carrier.