

Gibraltar seeks to establish aircraft register

The British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar last month issued an unanticipated request for expressions of interest “from individuals and organisations interested in developing and operating a Gibraltar Aircraft Register”.

The official notice stated that the Gibraltar government would “consider proposals for the development of either a private or commercial aircraft register, although the preference would be to initiate the project with a private aircraft register that would transition to a commercial aircraft register once a proven regulatory track record has been established.”

The notice goes on to note that the government is interested in the establishment of a long-term strategic partnership to develop, launch and manage the registry. It also makes clear that any new register would be considered as a sub-part of the UK register and would therefore be subject to scrutiny by the UK CAA. The deadline for expressions of interest is midday on 19 July 2019.

ABACE 2019 - Chinese challenges & regional opportunities

Asia does not begin and end with China but this year’s Asian Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (ABACE) was certainly overshadowed by the economic slowdown in the People’s Republic. Poor domestic growth, a weakened currency, rising oil prices, the trade war with the US, as well as continuing logistical and infrastructure challenges have all contributed to a decline in business confidence.

The Mainland China business aircraft fleet contracted – for the first time – by 2% (or six aircraft) last year, according to the 2018 Fleet Report produced by Asian Sky Group. This followed a 10% increase in 2017 and some observers predict that growth will return in 2019 as OEMs gear up production and deliveries of new models, including the G500, Global 7500, Falcon 8X and Citation Latitude. There was more encouraging news from the wider Asia-Pacific region, where the total fleet grew by 1.4% YOY (109 aircraft), and particularly Southeast Asia, which grew by some 6%.

Held at the Shanghai Hawker Pacific Business Aviation Service Centre (SHPBASC) at Hongqiao airport from 16 to 18 April, this was the eighth edition of ABACE co-hosted by the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA).

Ed Bolen, CEO of the US NBAA, said that 40% of exhibitors at ABACE were from the Asia-Pacific region and all the major OEMs were in evidence despite market challenges – Gulfstream boasted its largest ever presence at the event and Bombardier’s flagship Global 7500 made its show debut. Manufacturers continued to focus on the larger cabin sector of the market; nearly 50% of the more than 1,200 aircraft in the region fall into this category and no significant change to this ratio is expected in the near future.

ADS-B Out - the deadline approaches

Some 71% – 12,671 aircraft – of the US-registered turbine-powered business aircraft fleet has now been upgraded with the ADS-B Out equipment in advance of the FAA deadline of 1 January 2020, according to the latest data produced by FlightAware. This compares with 49% a year ago. Older models, including the Gulfstream III, Gulfstream IV and Citation III have the lowest percentage of compliance.

Guernsey Aircraft Register scores 500

On 7 May, the Guernsey Aircraft Registry (2-REG) announced that it had registered its 500th aircraft – a Boeing 737-800 airliner. The registry was formally launched on 9 December 2013 after the failure of negotiations with the neighbouring Channel Island of Jersey to establish a joint aircraft register. Jersey subsequently launched its own registry, which has failed to mirror Guernsey’s success. Initially established as a private registry, like the Isle of Man, 2-REG now issues Air Operator Certificates and six have been licensed to date. According to latest data, a total of 34 corporate jets are currently registered. However, 2-REG has specialised in the often short-term registration of commercial airliners between leases – of the 199 aircraft current on the 1 April register, some 67 aircraft fall into this category.

The Bahamas to update regulation

The Bahamas government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Aviation Registry Group (ARG) to update its regulatory safety oversight system. ARG is the firm responsible for setting up the Registry of Aruba and San Marino Aircraft Registry in recent years. The selection of ARG and the signing of the MOU follow 14 months of work by the aircraft registry working group in partnership with the government and Bahamas Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA). Last year, the Bahamas’ government committed to ratify the Cape Town Convention and enabling legislation has now been drafted. It is expected that it will be presented to the Cabinet in summer 2019.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB:

Aviation finance

The new and used corporate aircraft market continues to function in the face of economic uncertainty and buyers continue to seek finance for these transactions, with growing demand in some sectors and geographical areas. RANA has built up relationships with a number of banks, finance houses, leasing companies and groups of individual investors that have demonstrated an appetite for investment in the corporate aviation sector.

Lenders will look at a number of different factors and each has its own criteria for acceptance, in addition to loan to value ratios and the length of term of any potential deal. These criteria may include: the maximum age of the aircraft; whether it is new or pre-owned; the book value of the aircraft; the jurisdiction of the aircraft’s registration; the proposed operational plan for the aircraft or the type and nationality of the client. Any such financing is of course viewed on a strictly case-by-case basis with tailored terms and conditions.

Q1 - Manufacturer delivery numbers

Many of the leading manufacturers have now released their Q1 delivery figures and the trend is generally positive.

Textron Aviation delivered 22% more Citation jets in Q1 – 44 in 2019, compared to 36 in 2018. It also recorded an increase of 51% in turboprop deliveries – 44, against 29.

Gulfstream Aerospace handed over 34 jets in Q1 – a 31% increase over the 26 in the same period in 2018. The total of 27 large cabin aircraft included seven G500s. The G600 is expected to receive certification in June with deliveries commencing shortly thereafter.

Bombardier reported a slowing in deliveries, down to 24 in Q1 – eight Globals, 14 Challengers and two Learjets – from 31 in the same period last year. This decline comes as the manufacturer ramps up production of its new flagship Global 7500, for which it expects to deliver between 15 and 20 units by year-end.

Brazil's Embraer delivered 11 corporate jets in Q1 – exactly the same tally as in Q1 2018. The breakdown of this figure – eight Phenoms and three Legacies/Lineages – exactly mirrors last year's tally.

FAA grounds Cirrus SF50 Vision jet

On 19 April, the US FAA grounded the worldwide active fleet of Cirrus SF50 Vision very light jets through the issue of an emergency airworthiness directive (EAD). The grounding came in response to three incidents since November 2018 in which the Vision Jet's anti-stall protection system and electronic stability system engaged "when not appropriate". No accidents have occurred as a result of the three incidents. The EAD orders the immediate replacement of the plane's angle of attack (AOA) sensors before it can fly again. The Cirrus Vision Jet is a revolutionary single-engine, carbon composite private jet that entered production in late 2016. A total of 121 aircraft have been delivered – all but three to customers in the US.

Corporate aircraft news

Polish manufacturer Metal-Master reported that the Flaris LAR01, which is billed as the world's smallest business jet, made its first flight on 5 April from Zielona Góra Airport in western Poland. The five-seat very very light jet is powered by a single Williams FJ33-5A turbofan and has an MTOW of just 1,500kg, requiring just 100m of runway. The project was first announced at the Paris Air Show in 2013 and Metal-Master expects EASA certification in 2020.

French manufacturer Daher's ninth development of its turboprop single family, the TBM 940, made its first public appearance at the Aero Friedrichshafen event in Germany. It is anticipated that the aircraft, which offers an increased level of automation, will receive EASA certification shortly with FAA approval due next month.

Textron Aviation announced, on 15 April, that it has produced the 200th Cessna Citation Latitude. The aircraft will be handed over to launch customer NetJets later this year. The landmark was celebrated at a special ceremony for employees at the company's plant at Wichita, Kansas. The Latitude received FAA certification on 15 June 2015.

Embraer received approval from Brazilian regulator ANAC for the Praeter 600, a variant of the Legacy 500 twin, on 20 April. The new model features additional fuel capacity, new winglets and a more powerful powerplant (Honeywell HTF7500E).

Piaggio, which entered insolvency in late 2018, was given permission to facilitate a return to production of the Avanti Evo and P.1HH Hammerhead at a meeting with Italy's Ministry of Economic Development on 24 April.

The Airbus ACJ319neo completed its first flight, of 115 minutes duration, from the manufacturer's facility at Finkenwerder near Hamburg on 24 April. The ACJ319neo boasts new engines – either the CFM Leap-1A or Pratt & Whitney PW1100G – along with sharklets. The first aircraft will be handed over shortly to Fokker Techniek for cabin outfitting prior to redelivery to K5 Aviation in Germany next year. Two days later, the aircraft made the longest flight by an A320 family model – a test flight from Toulouse lasting some 16 hours and 10 minutes.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \ \

Cessna 414



CATEGORY

Piston

MANUFACTURER

Cessna, USA

ENGINE

2 x Continental TSIO-520-NB pistons

LENGTH

11.09 m

WINGSPAN

13.45 m

RANGE

2,459 km

MAX. SPEED

435 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

8

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

3,062 kg

DESCRIPTION

A total of 1,070 Cessna 414 were produced between 1968 and 1985. The prototype first flew on 1 November 1968 and the initial production examples offered several avionics options along with various cabin layouts. The pressurised 414 was developed to appeal to owners of un-pressurised twin-engine aircraft and the design was based upon the fuselage of the Cessna 421 coupled with the wing design of the Cessna 401. A turboprop version of the 414, powered by Allison 250-B17B engines, was also produced from 1974.

In 1978 the manufacturer introduced an improved version of the 414, known as the 414A Chancellor, although the latter name was used for marketing purposes from 1976. The 414A featured a re-designed and larger wing along with integral fuel tanks and greater baggage capacity through an extended nose. Over the years, both the 414 and 414A were the subject of various supplemental type certificates allowing the addition of aerodynamic modifications and winglets.