

SWISS EYES BOOST IN ASIAN CAPACITY

News / Airlines



Switzerland's flag carrier SWISS will spend up to SFR6 billion (\$6.4 billion) over the next two years to increase capacity, with a significant proportion of that in Asia.

Following its [upgraded order for nine Boeing 777-300ERs](#) in May this year, it will replace its aging Airbus A340-300s on several Asian direct routes with the new aircraft.

The first to see the B777 upgrades will be its Zurich-Hong Kong and Zurich-Bangkok schedules. Both routes will see a significant capacity boost using the new aircraft, and the carrier says it is also looking at using B777s on an upgraded Zurich-Singapore schedule.

"The new 777 aircraft will give us an immediate 40% capacity increase on our flights between Switzerland and our Asia destinations," said Aditya Khullar, the SWISS director for SE Asia.

SWISS plans to introduce the new services to Thailand and Hong Kong by July 2016, operating a daily service. The potential Singapore service would likely start in early 2017, according to the airline.

SWISS says it is also ramping up its local recruitment to cater for a wider passenger profile. Khullar said SWISS was currently taking cabin staff from Thailand, China and other Asian countries to cater to a wider spectrum of travelers.

Khullar said the decision to go with the B777 instead of Boeing's newer 787 was deliberate, and

based on capacity. "The B787 wasn't big enough for our plans," he said.

The airline says greater cargo potential of the B777 will also help its introduction on the Asian routes. Khullar noted the growth of specialist and niche cargo traffic—such as high-value and perishables into Singapore's Changi—was something it would be "definitely looking at" with the new aircraft.

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