

SIA Engineering and Safran Aircraft Engines Forge Joint Venture for LEAP Engine MRO Hub in Singapore

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Facts and Figures

This story reports a measured change such as 50%. Figures like this show direction and scale, so it helps to keep them separate from the surrounding commentary.

- **Change / rate:** 50% Key Facility and Partnership Facts The venture pairs SIAEC, a leading Asia-Pacific MRO provider, with Safran Aircraft Engines, which holds a 50% stake in CFM International alongside GE Aerospace.

For years, CFM LEAP engine maintenance for Asia-Pacific operators depended largely on overseas facilities, adding time and logistics costs to overhauls. That landscape is set to shift with a new partnership between SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC) and Safran Aircraft Engines, who have agreed to build a dedicated maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) centre in Singapore tailored to the high-volume narrowbody powerplant.

A Strategic Step in Engine Support

The joint venture directly addresses rising shop-visit demand as the global LEAP fleet — powering Airbus A320neo, Boeing 737 MAX, and COMAC C919 families — matures well past initial on-wing cycles. By co-locating deep engine expertise with SIAEC's established airframe and component network, the partners aim to reduce turnaround times and offer an integrated service model. The facility is expected to perform full disassembly, repair, and reassembly, supported by Safran's proprietary repair engineering and SIAEC's supply-chain infrastructure.

Singapore's position as a regional aviation hub played a decisive role. Its free-trade agreements, customs efficiency, and connectivity shorten parts logistics legs, while the Republic's skilled workforce and strong intellectual property protection align with Safran's technology-transfer requirements. The move also complements Safran's existing MRO footprint in Europe and the Americas, giving it a stronger Asia-Pacific base to compete with independent shops and OEM-aligned networks.

Industry watchers note the timing aligns with a projected doubling of the LEAP aftermarket over the next decade, as deferred maintenance unwinds and older CFM56 slots convert to LEAP during fleet renewals. A Singapore-based facility could capture work not only from Asian carriers but also from lessors doing redelivery checks, thanks to the city-state's status as a major leasing hub.

Key Facility and Partnership Facts

- The venture pairs SIAEC, a leading Asia-Pacific MRO provider, with Safran Aircraft Engines, which holds a 50% stake in CFM International alongside GE Aerospace.
- The dedicated site will service CFM LEAP-1A, LEAP-1B, and LEAP-1C variants across all thrust ratings.
- Safran brings OEM-level repair processes and tooling, while SIAEC contributes its Changi-based infrastructure and workforce trained on advanced materials like ceramic matrix composites.
- Initial capability will focus on quick-turn hospital visits and module-level interventions, with full performance restoration planned as test-cell capacity expands.
- Singapore Economic Development Board has supported the project as part of its Aerospace Industry Transformation Map, reinforcing the country's target of growing aerospace manufacturing output.

The partners have not disclosed equity splits or total investment, though the agreement describes a “significant” capital outlay covering tooling, test-cell adaptations, and human capital. Safran's deep involvement suggests a technology-licensing model where the OEM shares repair data and approved parts sourcing, a move that could differentiate the venture from non-OEM MROs that must reverse-engineer maintenance procedures.

Supply Chain and Workforce Implications

The venture's procurement appetite spans specialized machinery, including 5-axis CNC machines for blisk and blade repairs, laser cladding systems, and plasma spray booths. Local precision engineering firms in Singapore may see new qualification opportunities, particularly those holding AS9100 and Nadcap certifications. The facility will also require skilled inspectors and mechanics trained in LEAP-specific borescope blending and coating applications, potentially spurring joint training programs with local polytechnics and the Singapore Institute of Technology.

From a compliance standpoint, the workshop must meet both EASA and CAAS Part 145 regulations, as well as airworthiness directives from the FAA and Chinese authorities given the LEAP's global customer base. Auditors will closely monitor tool calibration and material traceability, especially for life-limited rotating parts that require strict cycle counting.

The venture's ramp-up timeline is subject to final regulatory approvals and facility fit-out, but industry sources anticipate an operational start within two to three years. Early construction tenders are expected to be issued in the coming months, followed by recruitment drives for senior engineering roles.

Why This Matters

The partnership places an OEM-aligned LEAP engine shop in the heart of Asia-Pacific, where thousands of the engines are operated by low-cost and full-service carriers. Reduced turnaround times and local technical support can improve airline dispatch reliability while strengthening Singapore's position as a one-stop MRO and leasing hub. For Safran, direct in-region presence closes a geographic gap that previously left the aftermarket to independents.

FAQ

Who is forming this joint venture?

SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC), a major Asian MRO provider, and Safran Aircraft Engines, a French aerospace manufacturer and 50% partner in CFM International alongside GE Aerospace, are the two parties. Their combined expertise spans airframe and component services plus OEM engine design and repair engineering.

What is the purpose of the new facility?

The facility will perform maintenance, repair, and overhaul exclusively on CFM LEAP turbofan engines, which power the Airbus A320neo, Boeing 737 MAX, and COMAC C919 aircraft series. It aims to shorten turnaround times for Asian operators and capture growing aftermarket demand as the fleet matures.

Why was Singapore chosen as the location?

Singapore offers a strong aviation ecosystem, efficient logistics, a skilled workforce, and robust intellectual property protection. Its status as a global air hub and leasing centre makes it ideal for quick engine exchanges and redelivery checks, while government support through the Aerospace Industry Transformation Map further incentivises the investment.

When will the MRO centre start operations?

No official opening date has been announced, but based on typical aerospace facility timelines—including regulatory approvals, construction, and test-cell certification—the centre is expected to become operational within two to three years, with initial recruitment and tender activity likely in the near term.

Sources

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