

Zenith Bank commits to aircraft financing with Ibom Air and Airbus partnership

Zenith Bank, one of the leading financial services provider in West Africa, joined forces with Ibom Air and Airbus to mark the successful completion of the commercial financing for Ibom Air's inaugural A220, delivered in November 2023. The collaboration represents the bank's commitment to aircraft financing.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The agreement between Ibom Air and Zenith Bank, which was initiated by Airbus, is part of a broader shift which could provide much-needed financial momentum and signal a new era of financial support for the continent's promising aviation sector.

"At Zenith Bank, we know how important the role financial institutions play in acting as economic enablers," says Dr Ebenezer Onyeagwu, the Bank's Group Managing Director. "We also understand how important the aviation sector is to facilitating economic growth in Nigeria and across the broader African continent. This landmark agreement solidifies our commitment to supporting regional carriers and advancing the landscape of African aviation financing."

Securing adequate funding poses a significant hurdle for African carriers. Financing conditions for African Airlines are generally less favourable compared to other regions. Consequently, African airlines encounter challenges in acquiring and executing renewal and expansion initiatives.

Fostering sustainable aviation

Ibom Air chief operating officer, George Uriesi comments: "Aircraft financing is a collaborative effort and the support of regional banks is pivotal. This synergy fosters a sustainable aviation ecosystem, allowing us to soar higher and drive positive socio-economic impact in Nigeria and the broader continent. Nigeria is widely recognised as the African market with the highest growth potential and we aim to be at the forefront of that growth."

According to the 2023 Airbus Global Market Forecast (GMF), airlines serving Nigeria will require nearly 160 passenger and freight aircraft in the next two decades. This includes 131 single-aisle aircraft such as the A220, A320 families, and 28 widebody aircraft such as the A330 and A350 families.

"Over the past five years, more than 60 Airbus aircraft were delivered to the African continent via lessors and various financing structures. We are thrilled to now have Zenith Bank in the arena of new Airbus aircraft financiers," says Boris Sakrauski, head of customer finance, at Airbus. "We hope that its involvement in the sector sends a powerful signal to other banks and financial institutions in Nigeria and across the continent about the exciting potential of the African aviation sector."

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