

ITA Airways chooses Airbus for A350 upgrade



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[ITA Airways](#) has announced a significant collaboration with [Airbus](#) Services to upgrade the cabin interiors of its fleet of six A350-900 aircraft.

The centerpiece of this retrofit project is the introduction of a state-of-the-art Premium Economy (PY) Class section. The completion of the upgrade and subsequent delivery of the enhanced planes is scheduled for mid-2024.

“We have selected Airbus Services thanks to its OEM expertise, expert engineering know-how, project management, and supply chain management,” said Alessio Leone, Head of Camo Operations at ITA Airways in a June 7 press release. “This project also underscores the importance to us of the A350 in our widebody fleet strategy and the harmonization of these A350s with the brand new A330neos coming into our fleet. Both aircraft types will offer a four-class configuration: Business, Premium Economy, Comfort Economy and Economy.”

Under the agreement, Airbus will provide ITA Airways with all the necessary Service Bulletins (SBs), including engineering drawings and the required cabin kits. The aviation giant will also extend technical assistance throughout the implementation process, offering on-site expertise and support to ensure the smooth incorporation of the new cabin configuration.

The installation of the PY class will involve replacing a section of the current nine-abreast Economy Class (Y) seats, arranged in a “3-3-3” configuration, with eight-abreast Premium Economy (PY) seats arranged in a more spacious “2-4-2” layout. This upgrade reflects the growing demand for PY Class, which offers greater comfort and improved yield management for airlines, while simultaneously reducing expenses for business travellers.

In addition to seat replacement, the comprehensive retrofit project encompasses the installation of an extra galley, including necessary interfaces, structural railings, floor panels, and other components. Class partitions will be added, overhead stowages will be adapted, and various enhancements will be made to carpets, seat tracks, cabling for in-seat power and inflight entertainment (IFE), as well as the lighting zoning. The passenger service units (PSUs), encompassing elements such as oxygen supply, reading lights, and ventilation, will be reconfigured as well. Airbus will also conduct vital engineering load calculations to accommodate the new layout and update the aircraft’s Weight and Balance manuals accordingly.

Charbel Youzkatli, Head of Europe Commercial Services at Airbus said in the same release, “As our airline customers see the increasing popularity of Premium Economy amongst passengers, Airbus is pleased to be able to help ensure that their Airbus aircraft continue to meet these evolving customer expectations.” He adds, “We are therefore very pleased to be part of this strategic project with ITA Airways and contribute to upholding the passenger experience which ITA Airways is showcasing.”