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Engine manufacturers picking up the pace of production

Airbus and Boeing's increased rate of production of medium-haul aircraft is being matched by that of engine manufacturers, which are preparing to launch the production of thousands of new-generation engines. This, too, is attracting the attention of the Supply Chain.

Safran and General Electric, which each own a 50% stake in the joint venture CFM International, and its rival Pratt & Withney are leading the race, and have exponentially increased their production rates to ensure the A320neo and 737 MAX engines are ready in record time.

For now, Airbus is producing 42 medium-haul aircraft from the A320 category per month, and this should rise to a monthly rate of 50 in 2017. The group is contemplating the possibility of further increasing this to a rate of 60 aircraft, from 2018 onwards. The decision is due to be taken between now and the year-end.

According to Jérémie Bach, from the Argon Consulting company: "The challenges are very different", depending on whether you are an aircraft manufacturer or an engine manufacturer. "When aircraft manufacturers engage in incremental innovation (Editor's note: improvement), engine manufacturers are confronted to the need to make various developments of an entirely feasible magnitude but to a much tighter schedule".