

Brazil's Azul joins the eVTOL bandwagon with Lilium deal

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Azul Linhas Aéreas Brasileiras (AD, Sao Paulo Viracopos) has signed a tentative order for 220 Lilium electric vertical-take-off-and-landing (eVTOL) aircraft expected to enter into service in Brazil in 2025.

The Brazilian carrier said the order, which remains subject to the finalisation of commercial terms, could be valued at up to USD1 billion. As a part of the agreement, Azul would operate and maintain the fleet of seven-seater aircraft and support the German start-up in certifying the type for operations in Brazil. The carrier said it would use the electric aircraft to expand its domestic network but did not provide any further details.

The deal is the first such airline partnership for Lilium, which thus far focused on working with airports and other infrastructure firms to establish its own electric air taxi network. Earlier this year, the start-up announced a partnership with multinational infrastructure holding Ferrovial to build a network of “vertiports” (airports for VTOL aircraft) across Florida. It also partnered with several German airports to establish a similar network in the country. In June 2021, it entered into a partnership with Luxaviation (LXA, Luxembourg), wherein the Luxembourg-based business charter specialist would assist Lilium in establishing its European operations. While Luxaviation said it would be partially responsible for operating the eVTOL network, it did not explicitly commit to adding any Lilium aircraft to its own fleet.

According to the ch-aviation fleets advanced module, Azul's smallest in-house aircraft are currently the ATR72-600s, of which it operates 33 units. However, the carrier entered the nine-seat regional market in 2020 through the acquisition of TwoFlex Táxi Aéreo Inteligente, since then rebranded as Azul Conecta.

