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Boeing Commercial Airplanes has reached an agreement with Alenia Aeronautica, a Finmeccanica company, regarding structural materials technology development work on the proposed Boeing Sonic Cruiser.

The Sonic Cruiser is a new airplane concept unveiled by Boeing on March 29, 2001. The airplane has a dramatic new configuration and is designed to fly at speeds of up to Mach 0.98, shortening travel times with fuel consumption per passenger comparable to today's best performing widebody twinjets.

"Alenia has proven itself to be a reliable partner to Boeing on projects in the past," said Jeff Luckey, director of Supplier Management for the Sonic Cruiser program. "We are pleased that they will be bringing their expertise in structures to our team."

Sergio Braccini, head of Commercial Aircraft Business of Alenia, said Alenia Aeronautica is excited to work together with Boeing on the challenging new airplane .

"The Sonic Cruiser will be a great opportunity for technological and industrial growth of the Italian aeronautics system," Braccini said.

Boeing pioneered its 'Working-Together' philosophy with the 777, Luckey said.

"We are taking that concept to the next logical step by involving potential suppliers to do technology development even earlier on the Sonic Cruiser," he said. "With all of us working on this airplane, focused on the same goals, we will develop an outstanding product."

Boeing and Alenia Aeronautica have a long history of successful cooperation on many programs. Alenia provides large subassemblies for the 717, 757, 767 and 777. In addition, through Aeronavali, Alenia is a main modification and service center for Boeing commercial and military airplanes.

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