Rwanda and China have signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation in aircraft safety certification and civil aviation oversight, giving their aviation regulators a framework for closer technical collaboration.

The memorandum of understanding was signed on Monday, October 12, 2026, by the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA) and China's Civil Aviation Administration (CAAC). It is intended to improve cooperation on airworthiness certification, which determines whether aircraft meet the technical and safety standards required for operation.

The agreement is expected to help the two authorities coordinate their certification procedures, exchange technical expertise and strengthen their capacity to oversee compliance with civil aviation regulations.

Col. Claudien Bizimungu, Minister of State for Infrastructure, attended the signing ceremony and said the government supported closer cooperation with China in aviation.

"We are committed to advancing our collaboration," Bizimungu said, adding that the agreement was about more than signing a document.

"Today, we are not only signing a document, we are strengthening a friendship between our two countries, and investing in safer skies for everyone who flies with us," he said.

Airworthiness certification is an important part of aviation safety. It involves assessing whether an aircraft's design and condition comply with applicable technical requirements before it is approved for operation. Regulators also oversee continued compliance through inspections and other procedures.

The RCAA is responsible for regulating civil aviation in Rwanda, including aircraft certification and safety oversight. The Chinese authority performs comparable regulatory functions in China.

The agreement provides a basis for the two regulators to work more closely on certification matters and the oversight of aircraft-related products and approvals. However, the authorities have not publicly specified when the arrangement will take effect or which categories of products and approvals will be covered.

The signing comes as Rwanda and China mark 55 years of diplomatic relations, established on November 12, 1971. Their cooperation has expanded across trade, infrastructure, education, health and technology.

The relationship was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership in September 2024, when President Paul Kagame met Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summit in Beijing.

The new aviation agreement adds civil aviation regulation to the areas in which the two countries are pursuing closer technical cooperation.