Airbus selects Inmarsat for cockpit safety communications

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Inmarsat's SwiftBroadband-Safety (SB-S) service has been selected by Airbus as a cockpit communications solution for its A320 and A330 aircraft families.

As part of a landmark agreement, the IP-based communications platform will be available with equipment from Cobham SATCOM's AVIATOR S series, as selected by Airbus, terminals to deliver next generation services for the global aviation industry.

SB-S marks a paradigm shift in aviation safety and efficiency, delivering much faster data and voice communications due to its unprecedented speed and capacity, both of which are several orders of magnitude greater than cockpit communication systems on the market today.

Transforming quality

Inmarsat's satellite technology also ensures consistent, high-speed global coverage that will transform the quality and security of cockpit communication and information shared between pilots, air traffic controllers and airlines.

In addition, airlines worldwide will benefit from a myriad of new digital applications never before available, including continual positional awareness for flight tracking, flight data streaming (also known as 'Black Box in the Cloud'), and electronic flight bag applications for pilots, such as graphical weather for improved situational awareness.

The inclusion of the A320 family will also position SB-S as an advanced Light Cockpit Satcom solution on single-aisle Airbus aircraft, marking an exciting new era for the aviation industry.

Leading provider

The selection was possible as SB-S is delivered via advanced airborne equipment that addresses factors which have traditionally impacted demand in the single-aisle market, such as size, weight and cost. Around eight out of ten commercial aircraft in the world are single-aisle.

The selection will also reinforce Inmarsat's status as the world's leading provider of satellite safety services, serving around 95% of the world's long-haul aircraft.

Captain Mary McMillan, Inmarsat Aviation's Vice President, Safety and Operational Services, said: "We are delighted that Airbus has selected SwiftBroadband-Safety for its A320 and A330 aircraft families. This is testament to SwiftBroadband-Safety's ability to deliver an always-on, always-secure cockpit solution for the digital age, with expanded connectivity and reliability."

Data security

"Inmarsat has been delivering critical safety information to the world's airlines, private jet operators and government agencies for over two-and-a-half decades.

"In the past, these services were almost exclusively utilised by airlines travelling in areas not served by traditional radar, such as routes over the ocean or remote locations. However, with growing aircraft congestion and the need for increased data security, Inmarsat is shaping new satellite communication services to provide a wider range of benefits.

"SwiftBroadband-Safety will build on our success by introducing unprecedented new capabilities, allowing airlines to significantly improve their flight safety operations and provide a more efficient service to passengers. Airlines also benefit from continuous monitoring of aircraft performance and fuel usage.

Seamless connection

Inmarsat partner Cobham SATCOM has been selected by Airbus to provide the equipment that delivers the SB-S service onboard the aircraft.

Cobham AVIATOR 200S and 700S will provide a seamless connection between the aircraft cockpit and Inmarsat's extensive global satellite network. Under Cobham's contract with Airbus, the equipment will be fitted onto the aircraft from 2018.

Kim Gram, Vice President of Aero Satcom at Cobham, said: "Inmarsat has made an immense contribution in the forward progression of our industry, from the development of the original idea of smaller and lighter satcom hardware, continuing its influential work in industry standardization groups, to the ultimate deployment of services on its satellite network."

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