EGNOS Success Stories

JETFLY

Jetfly Aviation S.A. is a business aviation company founded in 1999 and based in Luxembourg. The group consists of several subsidiaries (in Luxembourg, UK, Germany, Finland, Switzerland and Tunisia) covering all scopes of business aviation operations (fractional, management, charter, maintenance, training and operational support). The company operates the largest Pilatus fleet of PC-12 and PC-24 worldwide (50 aircraft) on behalf of 300 co-owners. The company employs a staff of 300 in Europe.

Credits: Jetfly / Mr. Fabien Rousset, Director of Flight Ops & Chief Pilot at Jetfly

Mr Fabien Rousset, Jetfly's Director of Flight Operations & Chief Pilot, shared some insights on Jetfly's operations and their experience with EGNOS and LPV. They have recently received their 8th PC-24, a new generation of business jets able to operate on unpaved runways and equipped with the latest avionics, including EGNOS and LPV capabilities, as standard from the manufacturing line. Jetfly fleet also includes 40 PC-12, one of the most popular single-engine turboprops on the market, capable of flying at high altitudes and land at large international airports, while at the same time servicing smaller airfields, a critical feature for business aviation (BA). The entire Jetfly fleet features EGNOS and LPV capabilities, the majority equipped by default from the manufacturing line, although they also upgraded five aircraft. Mr Rousset explained that "Business aviation needs to go where the client demands, being large airports or small airfields. LPV is a critical asset for BA because reaching the destination no matter the weather conditions is a must and, especially in winter, LPV helps to reach smaller airfields with precision and safety".

When setting fleet specifications, these aircrafts must meet complex criteria, including customer demands to land as close as possible to the intended destination, often at (very) small airports with short runways; the closer to the city centre, the better. A key element for BA is to save time, and this is where the new PC-24 jet perfectly complements their PC-12, "flying faster and further".

Jetfly indicated they reach 3,000 aerodromes in Europe, two times more than with a "conventional jet", even reaching Russia and Africa. Mr Rousset added that "We have noticed an increase in the number of airports and

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runways with LPV procedures, now widespread, as we have a large number of destinations with LPV and LPV CAT-I. The main advantage is being able to provide more availability of IFR approaches at smaller aerodromes, ensuring we can land even in tough visual conditions. LPV is a huge improvement over older non-precision approaches (NDB, VOR…)".

> "When you are about to take-off, with your aircraft right in the centre of the runway, and you look at your SVS (Synthetic Visual System) display in the cockpit, showing precisely that, you marvel at the awesome precision EGNOS offers you and your passengers"

The availability of EGNOS and LPV equipage options in BA is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in all market segments. Mr Rousset stated that "In business aviation, you don't have a choice but to implement EGNOS and LPV capabilities. Clients know a great deal, and they demand the best of the best. When a client asks about the reason for not landing closer to their destination, if it is because you don't have LPV, you have a problem".

But, according to Mr Rousset, there are more benefits. "Aside from availability, reliability is paramount. We have rarely had a failure with LPV approaches, except for some instances, due to jamming or spoofing. When operating with ILS, systems sometimes need maintenance, including an out-of-service period of up to two months to be fully restored. LPV is always out there".

Airworthiness is decisive for implementing EGNOS & LPV in all operators, having been improved and eased significantly a number of years ago. "We did not have many issues with this, and now it is almost as standard as certificates. Flight manuals come from the manufacturer, but pilots' training is important: every 6 months, we train in the simulator, performing several LPV approaches,

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and this is always part of the proficiency checks", said Mr Rousset.

EGNOS also simplifies flight planning by reducing the need to perform pre-flight RAIM checks over the intended route, streamlining the process involved in the typical 4 to 6 legs a day performed by Jetfly's pilots.

When asked about COVID's impact on aviation, Mr Rousset shared that "In April 2020, we had zero activity due to COVID, but this has changed. I think BA is less affected than other operations, although it changes continuously due to the decisions on lockdowns and flight restrictions made by the different states. In February 2021, we are at 50 to 60%, but every week we see changes. We have noticed very few leisure travels. But our business clients find fewer options with the main airlines, and they still need to fly to complete their activities, such as visiting a factory, meeting investors, etc. Business Aviation provides a solution. Our expectation for this summer of 2021 is better, depending on vaccination campaigns. We are working on having the pilots fully ready for the summer. Let's hope for the best".

Jetfly's Chief sees the EGNOS contribution to air navigation as quite important, especially LPV CAT-I, which is the future: "For sure, we sometimes forgot about the people that had been working on EGNOS' project for so long. Getting the service now is normal, but in our experience at Jetfly, we feel grateful for the work done. On the other hand, when airports see the economic benefit of choosing LPV over ILS, they will switch from conventional to GNSS-EGNOS based. Pilots immediately see the benefits, especially in business jets, which are always 10-15 years ahead of airliners in terms of technology. When you are about to take-off, with your aircraft right in the centre of the runway, and you look at your SVS (Synthetic Visual System) display in the cockpit, showing precisely that, you marvel at the awesome precision EGNOS offers you and your passengers. I take the opportunity to thanks the industry, the GSA, and the European Commission for providing EGNOS on a free basis".