SWISS TEAMS UP WITH METAFUELS TO FURTHER PROMOTE SAF

News / Airlines

In a further confirmation of its commitment to using sustainable aviation fuels, SWISS has concluded a new collaboration with the Swiss-based Metafuels SAF technology company. The partners aim to jointly promote the development and scaling-up of viable SAF solutions. The collaboration should help SWISS secure long-term access to synthetic fuels and make further progress towards lower-emissions aviation, while also investing in Switzerland as an innovation hub.

Swiss International Air Lines has been actively involved in the development of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) for some years now. The airline and the Lufthansa Group are now taking a further step on this path by teaming up with Metafuels, a Swiss-based company that is developing SAF technologies. The new partnership is intended to drive and promote the further development and the bringing to market of viable SAF solutions. SWISS and the Lufthansa Group are also considering committing long-term to SAF procurement contracts, not least in view of the new synthetic fuel additive quotas that are scheduled to be adopted in Switzerland and throughout the European Union from 2030 onwards.

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Metafuels has developed a procedure that efficiently converts green methanol into sustainable aviation fuel. The new technology offers flexibility in the raw materials used – biomethanol or e-methanol – and is basically well scalable, too. The SAF produced can also be used in existing infrastructures and aircraft fleets.

Jens Fehlinger, CEO of SWISS commented: “Future availability of sustainable fuels at sufficient scale will only be possible if investments in technologies and partnerships are made today. That is exactly what we are doing with Metafuels. We do not want to wait on the sidelines, but actively contribute to making synthetic fuels market-ready and scalable. At the same time, this partnership helps secure long-term access to these solutions. The fact that we are taking this step together with a Swiss company sends a strong signal for us. As an airline, we are doing everything within our power to actively drive the transformation of aviation forward. At the same time, it is clear that achieving our goals will now require industrial-scale production. Sustainable fuels must become available much faster, at affordable prices and in significantly larger quantities in the future.”

Sustainable aviation fuels: key to decarbonization

Sustainable aviation fuels are a vital lever for achieving global decarbonization targets in the aviation sector. And synthetic fuels of the kind that Metafuels is developing have particularly strong potential to make air travel a much lower-emission activity. In teaming up with Metafuels, SWISS is both further underlining its commitment to sustainable aviation fuels and actively supporting Switzerland’s role and reputation as a research and innovation hub.

Scalable processes for synthetic aviation fuel

With its ‘aerobrew’ process, Metafuels has developed an innovative fuel manufacturing technology, which efficiently turns sustainable methanol, produced from renewable energy, water and carbon dioxide, into aviation fuel. Such synthetic SAFs are crucial to decarbonizing aviation. Metafuels is presently establishing a demonstration SAF production plant at the Paul Scherrer Institute in Villigen, Switzerland. Parallel to this, the company is also developing its first commercial SAF production plant in Rotterdam.

Saurabh Kapoor, CEO of Metafuels stated: “This agreement with SWISS and the Lufthansa Group

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is both a milestone for us and a clear affirmation of the role that synthetic SAF will play in the future of aviation. It's particularly significant, too, that we have secured SWISS, Switzerland's national airline, as our first partner from the aviation sector. We are united with SWISS in our shared objective of paving a viable and scalable way to providing lower-emission air travel," Kapoor continues. "With both rising demand projected and tighter regulatory provisions ahead, synthetic fuels will only gain in importance. And we're convinced that Switzerland has a key role to play in all these developments."

A step towards securing future SAF supplies

The ramping-up of synthetic aviation fuel production is still in its early phases. But the production capacities presently available and planned are unlikely to be sufficient to fully achieve today's decarbonization goals. An acceleration in the scaling-up of SAF production is also essential to the transformation of the aviation sector. So in forging its new partnership with Metafuels, SWISS is taking a further major step in securing its own early access to synthetic SAF. The move is part of the broader initiative by the Lufthansa Group to actively support the development and bringing to market of sustainable aviation fuels, via research partnerships, pilot projects, industry alliances, customer-oriented SAF offers and more.

SWISS continues to take extensive action to minimize the carbon dioxide emissions from its flight operations. Along with investing in advanced and fuel-efficient aircraft, the use of sustainable aviation fuel is one of the prime levers for reducing such carbon emissions. SWISS has been pursuing various targeted initiatives and collaborations for many years now together with the Lufthansa Group, further partners and its customers to support and promote the development of sustainable fuels and the scaling-up of their production.

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