ETIHAD AIRWAYS ENGINEERING AND DIEHL SIGN DEAL FOR FIRST COMMERCIAL 3D-PRINTED PART RETROFIT PROJECT

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Etihad Airways Engineering has signed an agreement with Diehl Aerosystems to jointly design, manufacture and install the first serial produced 3D-printed cabin plastic part on an aircraft for one of its customers.

Additive manufacturing – commonly referred to as 3D-printing – reduces lead time in design, decreases production cost of and enables speedier manufacturing.

Etihad Airways Engineering and Diehl have collaborated to develop and manufacture an inflight entertainment (IFE) cover plate which will be installed in economy seats on several aircraft of a Middle Eastern airline. The two companies plan to create a range of products based on the experience gained from this pilot project.

Jeff Wilkinson, Etihad Airways Engineering Chief Executive Officer, said: “Etihad Airways Engineering is leveraging its Part 21J Design Organisation approval by EASA – with Diehl contributing as a Part 21G Production Organisation – in this pilot project.

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“Our partnership with Diehl will help us commercialise this technology and make it available to our customers around the world.”

He explained that the 3D-printed part offered a cost saving of around 20 to 30 percent, with the added benefit of not requiring tooling and avoiding any permanent modification to the seat.

Etihad Airways Engineering is the first airline maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) provider with European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) approval to design, certify, manufacture and fly 3D-printed aircraft cabin plastic parts.

Diehl Aerosystems has been working in the field of 3D printing technology for several years, building up knowledge and capabilities to supply EASA-certified 3D-printed aircraft parts to the aviation industry. Diehl can act as design partner and Production Organisation, depending on the customer requirements.

Etihad Airways Engineering is an AS9110 certified organisation and already holds EASA 145 approval, alongside EASA 21J approval for designing and undertaking minor and major changes and repairs. The company is the Middle East’s leading aviation MRO provider.

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