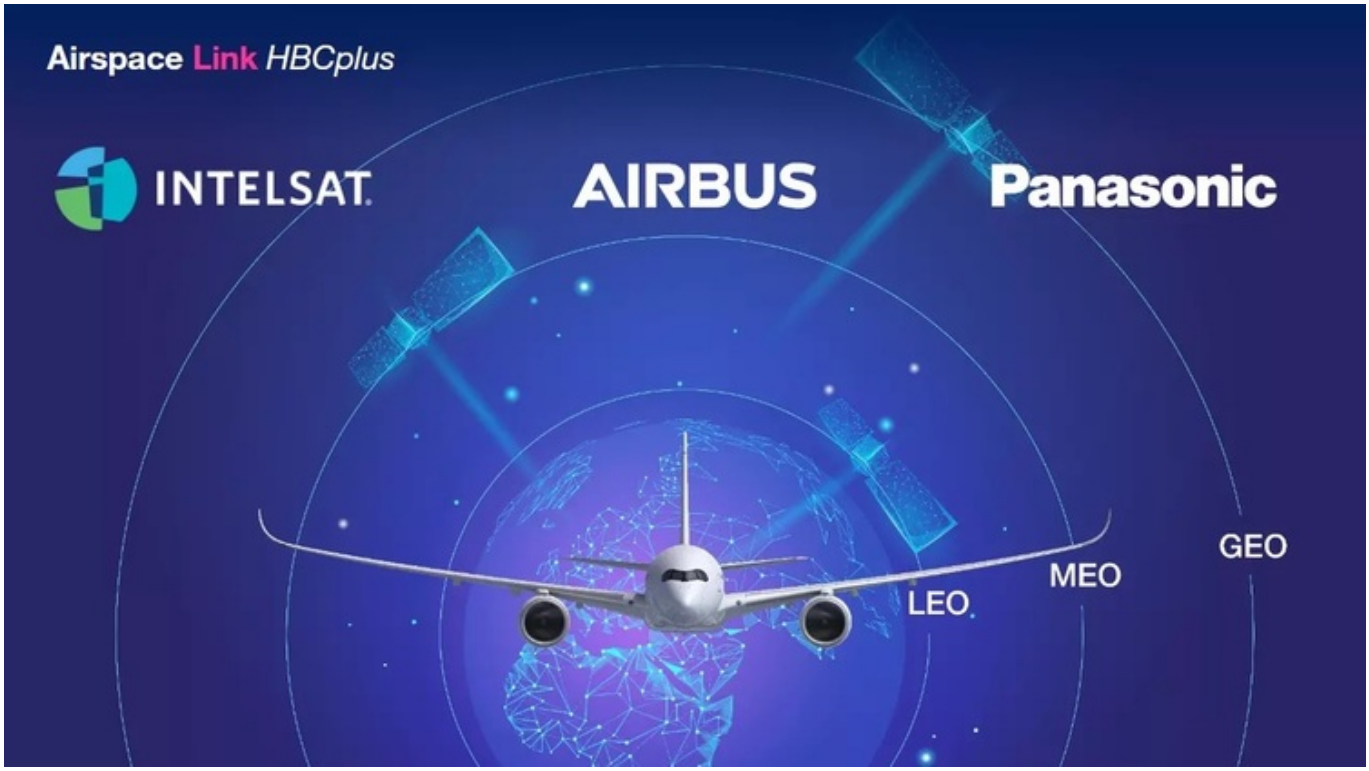
Airbus expands HBCplus connectivity solution to Ku



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Airbus has announced its latest managed service providers (MSPs) for its Airspace Link Ku-band multi-orbit LEO/GEO HBCplus solution.

Intelsat and Panasonic are joining the program which uses Safran Passenger Innovations (SPI) as its Ku-band satcom hardware supplier, integrating Get-SAT's Electronically Steerable Antenna (ESA). Airbus will manage the HBCplus system installation in line and retrofit, as well as the related in-service support.

The Get SAT Aero LESA is a low-profile ESA that allows simultaneous connection with both Intelsat's and Panasonic's respective Geostationary Orbit (GEO) and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellations, to enable simultaneous multi-beam multi-orbit operation.

HBCplus Ku-band services will be offered as Supplier Furnished Equipment (SFE) line-fit and retrofit catalogue option with ability from 2024 and entry into service expected in 2026.

"SPI has recognized our expertise in navigating complex SATCOM challenges, highlighting our contribution to evolving airborne communication solutions. Together with SPI and Airbus, we're gearing up to amplify the RAVE AeroConnect IFC offering using our innovative communication terminals, which are specifically designed to cater to airline demands. It's a matter of pride for us to be a part of such transformative steps in commercial aviation," commented Get SAT CEO, Kfir Benjamin in a September 19 press release.

"Safran Passenger Innovations is delighted to select Get SAT as the Ku-band ESA provider for our various airline and OEM programs. We are excited to disrupt the industry by providing agnostic and

open terminals supporting the Airbus vision, giving airlines the freedom of choice for their future connectivity services. Get SAT has demonstrated their ability to meet the needs of demanding government customers and we are excited to bring this technology to the commercial airline market," added Matt Smith, CEO of SPI.

On joining, Intelsat will be the largest service provider in the manufacturer's flexible IFC service catalogue.

"Understanding that no airline is like any other, Intelsat has long offered flexibility and choice to its customers, including fit-for-purpose equipment options, and a variety of business models and passenger service offerings," said Dave Bijur, Intelsat's Senior Vice President of Commercial Aviation. "With Airbus, we are offering a new level of sophistication and flexibility that leverages the high throughput of GEO satellites with the low latency delivered by LEO satellites."

"The new blended multi-orbit IFC service is testament to the successful cooperation between the Airbus and Intelsat teams to develop joint solutions in response to customer demands," said Maximilian Ruecker, Airbus VP Cabin Procurement Seats, IFE and Electronics. "Intelsat's innovative use of GEO and LEO satellites to seamlessly offer a blended multi-orbit solution fits the disruptive nature of the Airspace Link open ecosystem."

In 2022, Panasonic Avionics announced an agreement with OneWeb that enables Panasonic Avionics to market, sell and support its high-speed, low-latency LEO inflight broadband services to commercial airlines worldwide. Panasonic Avionics is the first to enter into an agreement with OneWeb to make its connectivity available through HBCplus.

John Wade, Vice President of Panasonic Avionics' In-flight Connectivity Business Unit, said: "HBCplus aligns perfectly with our multi-orbit strategy and will seamlessly integrate with our LEO and GEO connectivity solutions. We understand the needs of airlines and OEMs alike. By offering HBCplus we are providing airlines with a greater choice of connectivity services, and ultimately enhancing the passenger experience."

At this year's Aircraft Interiors Expo in June, Emirates and Ethiopian Airlines were announced as the launch airlines for Airspace Link HBCplus on their respective A350 aircraft.