

It's time for consolidation in the IFC industry, says Inmarsat chief



Philippe Carette, President, Inmarsat Aviation

After a period of innovation, it's now time for standardization and consolidation in the IFC industry for airlines to operate efficiently and handle the challenges ahead.

That's the message from [Inmarsat Aviation](#) President Philippe Carette, who spoke to *PAX Tech* magazine at the [AIX](#) show in Hamburg.

"We need to provide efficiency to airlines, especially post-COVID," he says.

Today, Inmarsat Aviation has three business lines: providing passenger inflight connectivity to airlines; business jet IFC; and aircraft operations and safety.

In the cabin, Carette says the airline industry is moving "step by step" from connectivity being a "nice

to have” to a “must-have” for passengers. “We are at that transition,” he said.

In a major announcement at the show on Tuesday June 14, [Airbus](#) announced that it is working with Inmarsat on a new Airspace Link HBCplus solution to provide a fully equipped, connected aircraft. The deal covers terminals, antennae, airtime, digital apps for passengers, and safety portal certification.

Carette described this as a “significant transformation” in the aviation industry.

Meanwhile, in a new development, Inmarsat is strengthening its GX IFC solution with six additional satellites which will be launched in three to four years, increasing coverage and providing extra volume capacity, including the polar region.

“Passengers are using Wi-Fi more, so we must follow demand,” said Carette.

To improve coverage, Inmarsat has introduced the ORCHESTRA network, combining its existing GEO networks with terrestrial 5G and a new, targeted LEO satellite deployment to create a full IFC solution that enhances the flight journey.

He also noted how, thanks to satellite installations, airlines can also reduce their carbon footprint and operate more efficiently by optimizing their trajectory, thereby saving fuel.

Post-COVID, Carette says the aviation industry is still in recovery mode and predicts a full recovery to pre-COVID levels in 2024.

Striking an optimistic note on future business, he said: “Since the beginning of 2022, we have had a lot of new requests from airlines from all regions – Europe, US, Middle East and Asia – to upgrade and acquire new aircraft in order to take full advantage of the recovery. There’s a lot of opportunity for Inmarsat and we are committed to service their requests in time for the industry’s full recovery.”

Carette declined to comment on [Viasat](#)’s acquisition of Inmarsat, which was announced in November 2021 and is in the process of closing.