LATAM EXTENDS AEROSHARK USE ACROSS ITS ENTIRE BOEING 777 FLEET

News / Airlines, Maintenance / Trainings



LATAM Airlines Group, the first airline outside of the Lufthansa Group using AeroSHARK to save fuel and reduce emissions, has now opted to equip even more of its aircraft with the nature-inspired drag-reduction solution jointly developed by Lufthansa Technik and BASF Coatings. The recently extended contract between the airline and MRO provider now encompasses the delivery of another five AeroSHARK shipsets to subsequently retrofit the remainder of LATAM's ten-aircraft-strong Boeing 777-300ER fleet. By the end of 2025, half of LATAM's 777-300ER fleet had already entered operation with AeroSHARK, with the final aircraft modification expected in 2027.

The South American airline has been a pioneer in utilizing the beneficial properties of AeroSHARK's innovative riblet films. Its first aircraft was almost secretly modified in December 2023 to thoroughly put AeroSHARK to the test even before publicly announcing the application. When this first aircraft successfully validated the promised one percent fuel and emissions reduction in day-to-day airline operations over almost one year, LATAM ordered four additional shipsets in 2024. The five shipsets from the recent top-up will finally bring the airline's AeroSHARK order tally to ten. Once all the aircraft have been modified in 2027, LATAM will become the second airline in the world to operate an entire subfleet with sharkskin-equipped aircraft.

Nicolas Seitz, Head of Fleet and Projects at LATAM Airlines Group commented: "Expanding the use of AeroSHARK across our entire Boeing 777-300ER fleet is a clear example of how LATAM

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combines innovation, operational efficiency and sustainability in very concrete actions. The proven results achieved with the first aircraft give us the confidence to scale this solution, reducing fuel consumption and emissions while maintaining the highest operational standards. This initiative is fully aligned with our long-term strategy to operate a more efficient and sustainable fleet."

Petra Lahme, Head of Product Sales and Customer Support Special Engineering Services at Lufthansa Technik stated: "I don't know to what extent sharks are native to Latin American waters, but it feels like they are becoming more and more native to Latin American skies. And that's because of LATAM's pioneering spirit and our innovative, cost-saving technology. Therefore, I would like to thank our valued customer for the renewed trust in AeroSHARK and eagerly look forward to completing the modification of LATAM's 777 fleet in the next two years."



AeroSHARK is a functional surface film that replicates the flow-optimized structure of sharkskin. It features small longitudinal protrusions measuring about 50 micrometers, so-called riblets, which are precisely oriented along the airflow. In the current expansion stage, these riblets cover almost the entire fuselage and engine nacelles of the Boeing 777, around 950 square meters on its -300ER variant. Once LATAM's entire Boeing 777 fleet is modified this way, the proven one percent drag reduction will enable the airline to leverage annual savings of up to 4,000 metric tons of jet fuel and 12,000 metric tons of CO? emissions. This is equivalent to around 56 scheduled flights from São Paulo to Miami on a Boeing 777.

As the goal is to support as many airlines as possible in achieving their sustainability goals, Lufthansa Technik and BASF Coatings are consistently developing AeroSHARK further. One current area of development focuses on obtaining supplemental type certification for more and more aircraft types beyond the current lineup of Boeing 777-200ER, 777-300ER, 777F and 747-400. For 2026, Lufthansa Technik has already announced plans to introduce the first AeroSHARK modification for an Airbus type, namely the A330ceo. Another aim is to modify even larger areas on the aircraft to leverage even greater savings. For a maximum expansion stage of the AeroSHARK technology, initial calculations even hint at a realistic savings potential of between two and three percent.

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