A340 TESTBED VISITS DARWIN FOR ICE CRYSTALS DETECTION TRIALS

News / Manufacturer



An Airbus A340 testbed is currently operating out of Darwin Airport in search of icing conditions in tropical thunderstorms as part of a flight test campaign to trial new technologies developed to detect icing conditions.

A340-300 F-WWAI – in fact A340 MSN1, the original A340 flight test development aircraft, which first flew in October 1991 – arrived in Darwin on January 11 and is due to remain there until the 22nd while it flies in support of the Airbus-led High Altitude Ice Crystals (HAIC) project.

“The flight test campaign is to test and validate new ice detection (ice detectors) and awareness (radars) technologies developed the framework of the HAIC (High Altitude Ice Crystals) project,” an Airbus spokesperson said in a statement.

“The project aims to enhance international flight safety and to prepare ways to comply with new regulations regarding mixed phase and glaciated icy conditions.”

Wet season storm activity brought the A340 to Darwin.

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“Darwin has been selected as the operating base as areas of ice crystals/icing conditions are located close to deep convective complexes, like anvils of thunderstorms and tropical storms. These conditions are common in the Top End during the wet season.”

The HAIC consortium comprises 34 partner organisations from 11 European countries plus five international partners, including Australia’s Bureau of Meteorology.

The €22.6 million project, funded by the European Commission, began in August 2012 and is due to be completed by July 2016.



The A340 is fitted with test sensors in support of the HAIC program. (Northern Territory Airports)

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F-WWAI was the first A340 flight test aircraft. (Northern Territory Airports)

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