

Qatar Launches into New Fuel Economy

By pioneering the use of gas to liquid (GTL) fuel, Qatar has placed its airline into a fundamentally different fuel economy to its competitors, according to Ian Moncrieff of consultancy firm Kline and Company.

“The primary benefit for GTL fuels is their costing independence from the volatility of oil prices,” he said.

On October 12 Qatar airways claimed the honour of operating the first commercial flight burning hybridised GTL fuel.

“Qatar’s position as the GTL capital of the world has been further enhanced with [this] achievement,” said Abdulla bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Minister of Energy and Industry Qatar.

“GTL technology enables us to produce liquid fuels and other products from natural gas.

“Commercial aviation is one of the exciting new markets that this opens up, helping us maximise the value from our natural resources.”

First trialed in a demonstration flight by Airbus in February 2008, the fuel was developed by a consortium including Airbus, Qatar Airways, Qatar Petroleum, Qatar Science & Technology Park, Rolls-Royce, Shell, and Qatar Fuel (WOQOD).

Dubbed GTL Jet Fuel, the fuel is a 50:50 mixture of natural gas based, and traditional oil derived liquid kerosene.

Qatar Airways has emphasised the environmental benefits of such a fuel.

“Qatar Airways has shown its commitment to the environment and we expect this alternative fuel to provide benefits, particularly the improvement of air quality,” said Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways.

However, Moncrieff indicated that the environmental benefit of GTL is not necessarily straightforward.

The fuel eliminates the major pollutants, nitrogen and sulfur, significantly improving air



quality in high traffic zones.

However, “there is no significant difference in carbon emissions from burning the fuel; it is essentially the same substance as your traditional oil based product,” according to Moncrieff.

“If you look at the overall production process, GTL manufacture operates at 50 to 60 percent efficiency, compared to traditional oil,” Moncrieff continued.

“That figure means 50 percent more carbon emissions being released into the atmosphere.” The benefits to Qatar and semi-nationalised Qatar Airways are thus likely to be in terms of future commercial competitiveness.

With the third largest natural gas reserves in the world, and an isolated location that renders traditional gas markets difficult to access, Qatar is an ideal candidate for GTL development.



The high cost of producing GTL products, compared to selling unaltered natural gas means that, in the current market, subsidy is required for commercial viability. Similarly, the inherent inefficiency of their production favours massive economies of scale for marketability.

Developing fast and early gives the consortium an edge over future competitors, and allows Qatar to improve the economy of exploiting their natural resources.



Reed Launches New Travel and Meetings Exhibition

A major new incentives travel business exhibition has been announced by Reed Travel Exhibitions.

After a postponement caused by the financial downturn, the inaugural Americas Incentive Business Travel and Meetings (AIBTM) exhibition, is scheduled to take place in Baltimore Maryland on June 21-23, 2011.

Similar to Reed’s existing suite of IBTM exhibitions, such as the Gulf Incentives Business Travel and Meetings (GIBTM) exhibition in Abu Dhabi, the event caters specifically to the global meetings industry.

According to Reed, AIBTM will be the first truly large-scale international hosted buyer program in the Americas, enhanced by a substantial domestic hosted buyer and trade visitor population.