

By: David Kaminski-Morrow

Czech carrier SmartWings is offering an ancillary service allowing passengers to insure their leisure trip against poor weather at the destination.

The airline is providing the package, dubbed 'MeteoBonus', in partnership with the scheme's developer Airsavings, which says that passengers often book flights far in advance and cannot take advantage of reliable forecasts.

Airsavings stresses that the package is not a travel insurance policy, but rather a "financial derivative created to help consumers hedge against...rain and lack of sunshine".

The scheme operates in conjunction with weather stations at all destinations on Prague-based SmartWings' network. Passengers purchasing the weather-protection policy receive a predetermined payout if more rain than average falls, or less sunshine is recorded, during their trip.

Meteorological data is corroborated by the World Meteorological Association. Airsavings says the product is based on similar services which protect the agricultural industry against poor weather.

"The fact that MeteoBonus is not trip insurance should encourage wider use by target consumers," it adds. "Travellers will find no claims to file or adjusters to deal with.

"It is a proven product that can financially benefit both the consumer and the company that offers it."

While launch customer Smart Wings is offering the service in Europe, says Airsavings, the presence of additional co-operating weather stations in North America and Australia means the package could be offered by other short- and long-haul carriers.

