

Airlines can enjoy new revenues as passengers bet on the weather, following the launch of Airsavings' MeteoBonus programme.

Already used by Czech low-cost carrier SmartWings, MeteoBonus offers passengers financial protection against both rainy weather and lack of sunshine. If more rain than average falls during their trip, or less sunshine is recorded, passengers automatically receive a pre-determined amount of money. The data is gathered via the SmartWings booking path, with destinations and stay durations completed automatically. Several other European low-cost carriers have signed up for the programme.

Raphael Bejar, CEO of Airsavings, said: "We developed this product because our airline clients were looking to increase their ancillary revenue offerings (and revenues) through innovative products and through the creation of new services, not the addition of more fees. They wanted alternatives to the 'big three' that would engage travelers and add real value.

"During our market research with airline passengers, we discovered that one of the reasons people were reluctant to book tickets was due to the weather at their destination being perceived as a floating parameter; this unknown factor could significantly slow down or halt the decision making process as no level of comfort was available to counter bad weather."

Fully integrated into the booking process, this programme can add to a carrier's bottom line. According to Bejar, it could help airlines "increase their advanced bookings, and their cash flow in turn, as well as being a very attractive promotional tool".

The programme relies on participating weather stations, and MeteoBonus claims it covers the majority of Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, west Asia, Canada, Australia and the US.

