Boeing 777-300ER Completes Extended Operations Flight Testing

The Boeing [NYSE:BA] 777-300ER passenger airplane has completed its Extended Operations (ETOPS) certification tests, demonstrating the superior reliability of the airplane and its two General Electric engines.

Two 777-300ER (extended range) airplanes made 38 flights totaling 267 flight hours during testing. The flights included various system checks and simulated malfunctions to ensure the airplane's systems work in the long-range environment.

"The ETOPS flight-test program exceeded our expectations," said Don Ruhmann, senior engineering manager for the 777 ETOPS program. "The comprehensive testing again showed how safe and reliable today's jet engines are, and how airplanes can fly safely for long periods of time, if necessary, on one engine."

ETOPS is a conservative, evolutionary program that allows airlines to fly twin-engine jetliners on routes that at some point take those planes more than 60 minutes flying time from the nearest airport.

During eight separate tests one of the 777-300ER's two GE90-115B engines was turned off so the airplane flew on just one engine. The longest such test lasted six hours, 29 minutes -- the longest engine-out demonstration flight ever in support of ETOPS certification.

The ETOPS testing also demonstrated the 777-300ER's tremendous range capability. The longest flight, between Sydney, Australia and Recife, Brazil, lasted 18 hours and 25 minutes. Other stops included Longyearbyen, Norway; Yakutsk, Novosibirsk, and Petropavlosk, Russia; Easter Island, Chile; and Keflavik, Iceland.

U.S. and European regulatory certification of the 777-300ER is scheduled for March. The first 777-300ER will be delivered in April to International Finance Lease Corp.'s customer, Air France.

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