

CASE STUDY

MOBILITY

In-flight Connectivity



# Nok Air Takes Broadband to the Sky

First In-Flight Connectivity Using Ku-Band in Asia Pacific



In a highly competitive industry like the airline sector, companies are increasingly looking for value added services to distinguish themselves from their competition. On the other hand, consumers rightfully expect a lot and in particular to be connected to the digital universe everywhere they go. Whether in the home, office, car, at the beach or even at 30,000 feet, the expectation is that they will be able to visit social media sites, stay in touch with the latest news and contact family members.

With three billion passengers flying worldwide annually, meaning an average of 8.2 million people each and every day and expected to double by 2032, that's a lot of potential surfing of the World Wide Web while a mile high. It is also an important connection for airlines looking to tap the resource of a captive digital audience.

In-flight connectivity is a young yet very buoyant market for both the satellite and airline industries and Thaicom, Thailand's leading satellite operator, has become the first in Asia to introduce a commercial In-Flight Connectivity Service, using Ku-band High Throughput Satellite.

The first deal has already been agreed with Thailand's number one premium low cost airline Nok Air. With 48,000 flights per year, the carrier is providing Thaicom's end-to-end broadband service on many of its aircraft on a complimentary basis.

### Challenge

- Provide consistent and fast broadband for one of Thailand's biggest domestic airlines
- Provide a solid user experience for the modern digital consumer
- Provide a free Wi-Fi service to all passengers

### Solution

- The Thaicom Ku-band satellite service is capable of delivering 3G-like speed for a superior in-flight broadband experience.

### Benefits

- **Reach:** Thaicom's satellite broadband services cover the whole of Thailand and the satellite footprint reaches into other parts of Asia Pacific, too
- **Competitive Edge:** Reliable broadband will provide a distinguishable advantage over competitors
- **Cost Effective:** A return on investment could be expected within a relatively short time frame

**“The in-flight WiFi connection quality will meet users' expectations and the service will be initially available on domestic flights, which constitute the bulk of Nok Air's operations. We are always looking at ways to improve customer experience and are glad to be partnering with Thaicom to achieve this.”**

Patee Sarasin, Chief Executive Officer of Nok Airlines PLC.



**The Challenge**

With nearly six million passengers choosing to fly with Nok Air, Thailand’s domestic carrier, in 2013, it wanted to find a way to improve its customer experience, meet growing consumer demands, show innovation, as well as increase its passenger numbers for the coming years. One way of doing this is providing a free WiFi connection on board its flights.

**The Solution**

The Thaicom In-Flight Connectivity (IFC) broadband service works in partnership with Global Eagle Entertainment, which is delivering the hardware on the aeroplanes. Thaicom’s satellite service is the first in Asia to deliver broadband via Ku-band satellite capacity and will offer Nok Air’s passengers download speeds of 8Mbps and upload speeds of 1Mbps.

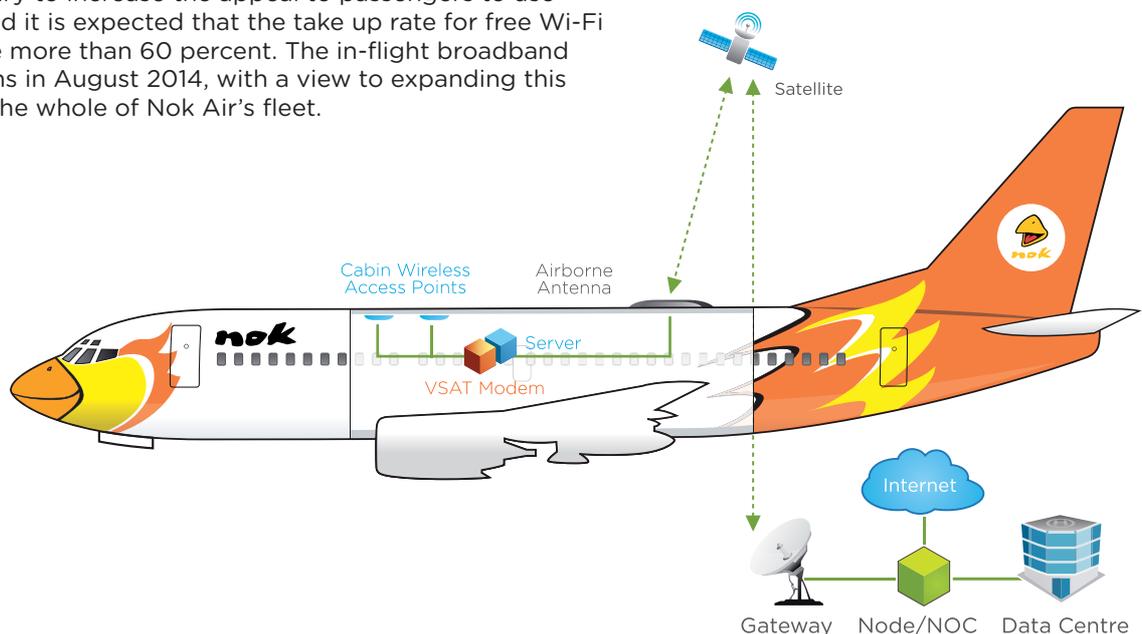
The high-capacity Ku-band service enables users to send and receive data from the aircraft. Data is transmitted to and from the aircraft via the satellite to the ground station and back. Passengers connect to Wi-Fi via several wireless access points installed on the plane which provides passengers with the strongest possible signal. Seamless hand overs between coverage areas are performed automatically as the aircraft moves through the air and Thaicom’s Network Operation Center (NOC) in Thailand monitors each plane’s usage to ensure a reliable broadband service experience. Scalability allows airlines to custom tailor services to their needs.

**The Outcome**

Nok Air will initially provide passengers with access to broadband on six of its aircraft. The service will be offered complimentary to increase the appeal to passengers to use the airline and it is expected that the take up rate for free Wi-Fi usage will be more than 60 percent. The in-flight broadband service begins in August 2014, with a view to expanding this offering for the whole of Nok Air’s fleet.

“We are very pleased to be working with Nok Air on this in-flight connectivity service. It is a milestone and the first of many announcements for our exciting New Frontiers campaign aimed at serving the industry and our customers better. We are delighted to launch the IFC first with Nok Air which should be beneficial for domestic as well as international passengers on board Nok Air’s flights.”

Suphajee Suthumpun,  
Chairman of the Executive  
Committee and CEO,  
Thaicom PLC.



## About Thaicom

Thaicom Public Company Limited, a leading Asian satellite operator, was established in 1991. The Company was the first to launch a broadband satellite in the world, and is a leader in developing integrated solutions for satellite broadband and broadcast services. The Company's engineering teams provide leading-edge innovative solutions for satellite-based telecommunications services. Since its establishment the Company has launched seven satellites, with four satellites in operation: THAICOM 4 (IPSTAR) provides a variety of broadband and data services, including cellular backhaul, mobility, government USO support, content delivery, business continuity and emergency services in thirteen countries in Asia Pacific. THAICOM 6 is to expand the Company's broadcast carrying capacity in SE Asia and Africa (by the name "AFRICOM 1") and is collocated with THAICOM 5 at 78.5 degrees East—the satellites board a combined 700 TV channels both in SD and HD formats. THAICOM 7 was launched in September 2014 to provide media & data services for Asia's and Australasia's entertainment and telecom industries at 120 degrees East. THAICOM 8 will be launched in 2016 to expand Thaicom's servicing capacity and footprint in the region. Thaicom is traded on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) under the trade symbol "THCOM". For more information, visit [www.thaicom.net](http://www.thaicom.net) and [www.ipstar.com](http://www.ipstar.com).



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