



## media information

# Qatar Airways to join oneworld alliance

**Monday, 8 October 2012, New York:** Qatar Airways is to join **oneworld**<sup>®</sup>, adding one of the world's fastest growing and most highly rated airlines to the world's leading quality airline alliance.

Qatar Airways, named Airline of the Year for the past two years by the Skytrax independent airline quality rating agency, is the first of the three major airlines based in the Gulf to sign for any of the global airline alliances. It is also the second largest full service airline in the world not, until today, aligned to one of big global airline alliances.

The Doha-based airline's implementation into **oneworld** is expected to take between 12 and 18 months.

The carrier is set to move into a brand new home in 2013 with the opening of the New Doha International Airport, designed to strengthen its position as a premium global hub with an eventual capacity for 50 million passengers a year.

As a member of **oneworld**, Qatar Airways will fly alongside some of the biggest and best brands in the airline business. British Airways will serve as its sponsor in joining **oneworld**, supported by the central **oneworld** alliance team, mentoring the recruit through its alliance implementation programme.

Qatar Airways will be **oneworld**'s second member airline based in the Middle East, alongside Royal Jordanian, which became the first airline from the region to join any of the global alliances when it boarded **oneworld** in 2007.

Qatar Airways' network serves 120 destinations in 70 countries in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, North and South America, Asia and Australasia, including **oneworld** hubs Amman, Berlin Tegel, Buenos Aires Ezeiza, Hong Kong, London Heathrow, Madrid, Melbourne, Moscow Domodedovo, New York JFK, Osaka Kansai, Sydney, Tokyo Narita, and the Kuala Lumpur home of **oneworld** member elect Malaysia Airlines.

Fifteen of its destinations and three countries - Iran, Rwanda and the Seychelles - will be new to the **oneworld** map. More significantly, Qatar Airways will substantially strengthen **oneworld**'s customer offering by providing superior routing alternatives across many hundreds of city pairs. For example, passengers flying between Asia and Southern Europe or between Asia and Africa will now have convenient one-stop connections not previously available within the **oneworld** network.

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Qatar Airways operates one of the world's youngest and most modern fleets, currently standing at 111 Boeing and Airbus aircraft with an average age of just four years old.

Its addition will increase **oneworld's** global coverage to 856 destinations in 159 countries, served by a combined fleet of 2,600 aircraft operating more than 9,300 flights and carrying almost a million passengers every day (342 million a year), generating annual revenues of nearly US\$ 120 billion.

Qatar Airways already code-shares with **oneworld** member designate Malaysia Airlines. It will develop bilateral links with more airlines in the alliance as it moves towards becoming a member of the group.

Two established **oneworld** member airlines currently serve its Doha home – British Airways from its London hub, and Royal Jordanian from its Amman base – along with member elect SriLankan, from its Colombo hub. Opportunities for increasing the alliance's services to Doha will be explored as Qatar Airways prepares to join.

When Qatar Airways becomes part of **oneworld**, its customers will gain access to the alliance's truly global network. The 2.2 million members of its Privilege Club frequent flyer programme will be able to earn and redeem rewards on any of **oneworld's** other carriers, with top tier members able to use any of the group's 550 plus airport lounges, and its network will be covered by **oneworld's** market leading range of alliance fares.

At the same time, the 125 million frequent flyer cardholders of **oneworld's** established airlines will be able to earn and redeem rewards when flying on Qatar Airways and access Qatar Airways' lounges.

Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker said: "Alliances are playing an increasingly important role in the airline industry today – and that will continue long into the future. Qatar Airways has carefully reviewed its strategic options and it is very clear that joining **oneworld** is by far the best way forward for us as we look to strengthen our competitive offering and give passengers what they fully deserve – more choice. Like Qatar Airways, **oneworld** is focused on quality and providing the best connections between the places most important to today's frequent international travellers.

"In Qatar Airways' relatively short history, we have quickly established a reputation for innovation, quality and excellence in everything we do, raising standards which our industry peers have watched with envy. We are pleased to build on that by becoming the only major airline from the Gulf to date to be invited to join any of the global airline alliances – and we are proud to have been invited to join the best of them, in **oneworld**. We look forward to completing all the joining requirements as soon as possible, and to fly alongside some of the best airlines in the world long into the future, bringing heightened benefits offered by **oneworld** to our customers."

American Airlines' Chairman and Chief Executive Tom Horton, Chairman of the **oneworld** Governing Board, said: "Quality has always been the hallmark of **oneworld**, so we are pleased to welcome to our alliance another of the world's highest quality airlines. **oneworld** aims to be the first choice alliance for frequent international travelers the world over. Adding Qatar Airways will significantly improve our connectivity between many of the destinations that are most important to those customers, so today's agreement with Qatar Airways will enable us to offer even more value."

Willie Walsh, Chief Executive of IAG, parent of British Airways and Iberia, said: "In Qatar Airways, **oneworld** is pleased to welcome another great airline that will enhance **oneworld's** network and product offerings in one of the world's fastest growing regions for air travel demand. Its fine reputation for customer service mirrors **oneworld's** own focus. British Airways is delighted to be serving as the sponsor of Qatar Airways in joining **oneworld**."

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**oneworld** CEO Bruce Ashby added: “The big three Gulf carriers have been embraced by millions of consumers the world over – just as consumers have embraced global airline alliances. Our own analysis clearly demonstrated that Qatar Airways is the best fit for **oneworld’s** network, requirements, philosophy and strategy. **oneworld** is delighted to be the first of the global alliances to welcome a member airline from this region, enabling us to be the first to offer consumers the services and benefits offered by both a global alliance and a Gulf carrier. We look forward to welcoming another great airline to **oneworld**.”

“**oneworld’s** flexible approach to bilateral cooperation with carriers outside our alliance means that links already established between our member airlines with other carriers from this region may continue in tandem with Qatar Airways’ addition to **oneworld**, further strengthening the choice and convenience we collectively offer our customers.”

### **About Qatar Airways**

Qatar Airways was launched in 1997 and quickly established itself as one of the world’s fastest growing and highest quality airlines.

Besides being named Skytrax’s Airline of the Year for the past two years, it is also the organisation’s Best Middle East Airline for the seventh year running and has retained Skytrax’s Five Star ranking since 2004. Other recent awards won include Business Traveler USA’s Best Airline for International Travel and Aviation Business’ Airline of the Year 2011.

It boarded 15 million passengers in 2011, generating group revenues of US\$ 6.4 billion.

Qatar Airways, which uses the two-letter code QR, has one of the world’s youngest fleets. It currently operates 111 aircraft, including 26 Boeing 777s, four Airbus A340-600s, 29 Airbus A330s and 44 Airbus A320 family types. It has orders and options for more than 250 more aircraft, worth more than US\$ 50 billion, for delivery over the next few years. These include 13 Airbus A380-800s, 80 Airbus A350s, 60 Boeing 787s and 80 Airbus A320neos.

Qatar Airways is 50 per cent owned by the State of Qatar and 50 per cent by private shareholders.

### **About oneworld**

**oneworld** aims to be the first choice airline alliance for the world’s frequent international travellers. It brings together some of the best and biggest names in the airline business – airberlin, American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, LAN, Qantas, Royal Jordanian and S7 Airlines, and around 20 affiliates including Austria’s NIKI, American Eagle, Dragonair, LAN Argentina, LAN Ecuador and LAN Peru. Malaysia Airlines is on track to join at around the turn of the year, with SriLankan to follow in 2013. India’s Kingfisher Airlines is also a member elect. Mexicana is an inactive member of the alliance.

**oneworld** enables its members to offer their customers more services and benefits than any airline can provide on its own. These include a broader route network, opportunities to earn and redeem frequent flyer miles and points across the combined **oneworld** network and more airport lounges. **oneworld** also offers more alliance fares than any of its competitors.

**oneworld** is current holder of three leading international awards for airline alliances - named the Best Airline Alliance by *Global Traveler* in its GT Tested Reader Survey 2011 Awards for the second year running, the World’s Leading Airline Alliance in the 2011 World Travel Awards, for the ninth consecutive year, and the Best Airline Alliance 2011 in Australian Business Traveller’s debut awards.