

# STAR ALLIANCE WELCOMES THAI SMILE AIRWAYS AS CONNECTING PARTNER



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Bangkok, Thailand – February 25th, 2020 – Star Alliance welcomed THAI Smile Airways as a Star Alliance Connecting Partner at an official ceremony held today in Bangkok.

The auspicious occasion was celebrated with a traditional Thai performance at THAI Airways International headquarters in the presence of member airline representatives.

THAI Smile became the second Connecting Partner of Star Alliance. The Connecting Partner Model was first introduced in May 2017 allowing airlines to connect to the Star Alliance network without becoming a member airline. This collaboration is the first of its kind in Thailand.

THAI Smile offers more than 396 weekly flights to 32 destinations in nine countries and regions. As a Connecting Partner, the airline will extend the Star Alliance network by ten new destinations. From today, passengers travelling on any itinerary, which includes a transfer between certain Star Alliance member airlines and THAI Smile on a single booking, will enjoy comforts such as passenger and baggage through check-in. In addition, customers who hold Star Alliance Silver and Gold status in any Star Alliance member airline's frequent flyer programme will enjoy a tailored set of privileges.

Currently, such privileges are available on eligible connections between THAI Smile Airways and Austrian, Lufthansa, SWISS, and THAI Airways International.

Star Alliance CEO Jeffrey Goh, said: "Our Connecting Partner model was introduced three years ago to offer airlines an attractive way to connect to our global alliance network without requiring full membership, and we are continuing to expand the model to provide customers with more travel options. I am pleased to welcome THAI Smile Airways today as a Star Alliance Connecting Partner, from which customers will benefit through greater connectivity and enhanced services in Asia."

Charita Leelayudth, CEO of THAI Smile Airways, said, "Today marks an important milestone for THAI Smile Airways, and we are delighted to become a Connecting Partner. It brings tremendous value to our customers and the region we serve and is a strategic step that positions THAI Smile Airways as an important regional player."

"We are committed to delivering exceptional travel experiences to new generations of travellers at affordable prices with seamless connections to our parent company Thai Airways International (THAI), a Star Alliance member. Our focus remains on strengthening THAI's route network for the highest cost-efficiency and competitiveness," Mrs. Leelayudth added.

Mr. Sumeth Damrongchaitham, President of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, congratulated THAI Smile Airways and said that becoming a Star Alliance Connecting Partner will elevate THAI Smile Airways' competitiveness and will also enhance the reputation of Thai airlines in the international market. This is in line with the directive of the Thai Ministry of Transport to connect Thailand to the world. With its service excellence and highly efficient personnel, THAI Smile Airways is a subsidiary airline that makes us proud and helps us stay competitive in the international market.

"As for our future plans, THAI Smile Airways will be further developed as a leading regional airline that flies domestically in THAI's stead and as a networking flight operator," said Mr. Damrongchaitham, THAI President. He asserted that THAI Smile Airways, with its 'Thai hospitality' services, is comparable to and has the same standards as THAI.

Star Alliance continues to evaluate potential opportunities for future Connecting Partners. Connecting Partners are carefully assessed for their fit into the existing Star Alliance network. Shanghai based Juneyao Airlines was the first airline to become a Connecting Partner in May 2017.

Photo:

From the left

- Mr. Jeffrey Goh, Chief Executive Officer of Star Alliance Services GmbH
- Mr. Sumeth Damrongchaitham, President of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI)
- Mrs. Charita Leelayudth, Chief Executive Officer of THAI Smile Airways Company Limited (THAI Smile)

Images are available via:

<http://bit.ly/3c56kQS>

#### About Star Alliance

The Star Alliance network was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer worldwide reach, recognition and seamless service to the international traveller. Its acceptance by the market has been recognised by numerous awards, including the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award and Best Airline Alliance by both Business Traveller Magazine and Skytrax. The member airlines are: Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Air Portugal, THAI, Turkish Airlines, and United. Overall, the Star Alliance network currently offers more than 19,000 daily flights to over 1,300 airports in 195 countries. Further connecting flights are offered by Star Alliance Connecting Partner, Juneyao Airlines and THAI Smile Airways.

#### About THAI Smile Airways

THAI Smile Airways, a subsidiary airline of THAI Airways International Public Company Limited

(THAI), is a regional airline for short and medium range flights. The airline aims to become a Regional Favourite Airline with the Heart of Thai.

THAI Smile is a full-service airline being the regional wings of THAI Airways International. The airline provides high quality services to meet the needs of short-haul travellers at an affordable price while ensuring comfort and convenience for a superior travel experience. The airline fleet consists of 20 narrow-body aircraft with the operational base located at Suvarnabhumi International Airport (BKK). Products and services of THAI Smile are suitable for passengers travelling short distances. THAI Smile passengers can also collect mileage to redeem prizes under Royal Orchid Plus, the THAI customer loyalty programme.