Management response KLM ‘Winter operations evaluation Oliver Wyman’

In the first ten days of January, the Netherlands experienced the most severe winter conditions in the past 15 years. This had a major impact on Schiphol Airport and KLM’s operation, creating challenging circumstances for our passengers and frontline employees.

Following the disruption, KLM conducted an internal evaluation to assess what worked well and where improvements were needed. Where possible, immediate actions were taken, including improved sector coordination and joint passenger communication at the airport. These actions contributed to a more effective operation during the remainder of the winter season. Other improvements, particularly those involving infrastructure, will require more time and close coordination across the sector.

The independent evaluation by Oliver Wyman provides four core recommendations, including increased (utilization of) de-icing capacity, improved winter preparedness, and governance across the sector. This can be achieved, for example, by expanding existing readiness activities to include crisis scenarios involving prolonged disruption and stranded passengers at Schiphol. KLM also supports further steps to improve the de-icing operating model. In the longer term, this may require investment in additional remote de-icing capacity, while in the short term all parties should continue to focus on improving efficiency within the current set-up.

In addition, KLM will further sharpen its operational response to severe winter conditions, including earlier mobilization where needed. KLM also supports further discussion with sector partners on operational decision-making during severe winter disruption, with the aim of creating a more balanced approach to the impact of capacity reductions across the operation.

Winter disruption cannot be prevented entirely, and severe snowfall will continue to affect airport operations and flight schedules from time to time. What matters is how well we prepare, how effectively we work together when disruption occurs, and how we care for and communicate with our passengers during these situations. This evaluation, along with the actions already underway, provides an important basis for further improvements across the operation, with our primary focus on passenger care and communication, and with the aim of reducing the impact on both passengers and employees wherever possible.