

British Airways working in partnership with Heathrow had trialled our Mototok Spacer 8600 remote control operated electric push back tug in 2016. Since the successful trials, British Airways has purchased 28 zero emission, remote controlled aircraft pushback tugs for the entire short haul operation in Terminal 5A at Heathrow. In doing so BA has become the first operator Worldwide to use multiple electric remote-control pushback tugs on commercial flights. The use of the device and associated infrastructure is also a first for any major International Airport.

One remote control tug is positioned on each short haul stand in Terminal 5 and several existing Diesel Towbarless tugs have been stood down. This will remove the need for normal tugs to operate in Terminal 5 A, except for maintenance tows.

New Ramp Supervisor grade (Integrated Ramp Supervisor - IRS) has been created with support from staff side. IRS will manage Aircraft loading activity and aircraft push back by using this Electric Remote control push back tug. Mototok tug has allowed for this massive step change to be achieved by allowing the aircraft loading team to also push back aircraft, without the need for a specialist push back team.

With the introduction of 28 Mototok units, BA is now operating on all Terminal 5 A stands at Heathrow, without the need to move tugs between stands. Mototok tug has allowed for the push back process to be simplified and allowed for this process to be incorporated within the loading team, without waiting for a big diesel tug to come from somewhere else. Mototok is parked on stand, thus making it simple to push back aircraft.

This remote control push back tug challenges the norm. It is different, unlike a normal push back tug. Year 1995 saw the introduction of towbarless tractors and after 22 years, we at Mototok have introduced something that is so innovative, different but simple to use with so many benefits, without compromising safety. Simple to operate, low maintenance costs, 100% green, no driving licence required as it is pedestrian operated with a remote control. More importantly it offers an additional layer of safety as the operator is walking outside and not confined to a cab, this immensely improves visibility as the operator can move around to enhance push back are view.

Advances in battery and charging technology, ensures the remote-control tug can operate pushbacks over several days between charge. British Airways worked in partnership with Heathrow and they agreed an ambitious infrastructure plan that allowed for parking positions on each stand as close as possible to the front of the aircraft and have chargers installed at each parking position ensuring optimised operational efficiency.

We at Mototok worked closely with British Airways and IAG have worked closely to evolve and improve the design to allow it to be brought into commercial use. Closely working with Heathrow, NATS and CAA has also helped to ensure place to the operating procedures, training and user operating permits comply with regulatory and airport operational procedures. Where required this has included defining operational safety instructions, that are unique to the way the device operates.

This remote-control tug is simple to use, and compact size makes it extremely manoeuvrable to use.

We understand that since the introduction of 28 Mototok remote control electric tugs, BA has achieved 100,000 NBA pushback. This is a massive achievement, especially by use of single person operation, using a voice activated wireless headset and without compromising safety.

Note – The above views are Mototok understanding and not verified by British Airways. However most of the information is published in the public domain.

