RwandAir has become the first African airline to be awarded the top Diamond status rating for COVID-19 prevention measures – the highest attainable level.

The award comes from APEX Health Safety, powered by SimpliFlying, for the airline's sustained work to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness and sanitisation for its customers and crew.

The Diamond rating positions RwandAir as the safest airline in Africa and comes after RwandAir was recently announced as the first African airline to vaccinate all staff.

APEX Health Safety, powered by SimpliFlying, sets the industry benchmark for customer-centric COVID-19 certification. It provides a scientifically-based validation system to encourage airlines to reach the highest possible standards for health and hygiene, and help restore customer confidence to fly, following the devastating impact of travel restrictions on aviation.

Each participating airline has to complete a 58-point checklist, which covers submission, verification, validation, and a quarterly review certification process.

Yvonne Manzi Makolo, CEO of RwandAir, said: "The health and safety of our customers and staff is the top priority for RwandAir, so we are delighted to be awarded Diamond status from APEX Health Safety, powered by SimpliFlying, for our COVID-19 prevention measures.

"Reaching the highest attainable level for hygiene standards is a powerful clean bill of health for the airline, and validation for all the hard work we have put in to ensure the safest possible traveller experience for our customers and staff.

"We know that restoring customer confidence to fly is critical to resume safe international travel, which is why we have undertaken a 360-degree approach to ensuring that every aspect of our operations meet the highest standards.

"From the deep cleaning and disinfection of aircraft, to automatic hand sanitiser dispensers available throughout Kigali International Airport, our hub, we have looked at every aspect of the customer journey to ensure we keep COVID-19 at bay and protect those who fly with us.

"Passengers are required to wear face masks throughout the flight, while our aircraft are equipped with HEPA filters to remove 99.9% of germs.

“With all of these protective measures in place, we are confident that customers will begin to fly once again, and travel safely both within Africa and internationally with RwandAir. As Rwanda’s doors are now open for tourism, we look forward to welcoming passengers from around the world to experience the country’s natural wonders, while staying safe and healthy.

Joe Leader, APEX CEO, said: “RwandAir has demonstrated the highest possible level of care for its customers becoming the first African airline to reach the hospital-grade Diamond level of APEX Health Safety powered by SimpliFlying’s comprehensive review.

“RwandAir proves that reaching this level of health safety does not depend upon the size of the airline, but rather the incredibly proactive steps taken for customer and staff wellbeing. We are deeply proud of RwandAir as a rising star for our entire airline industry in Africa.”

“RwandAir has made a great breakthrough in implementing their health safety strategy along the whole customer journey since the beginning of the pandemic. Successful vaccination of all staff, implementation of the robots throughout the terminal in Kigali airport that are able to tell passengers temperature and confirm whether they are wearing a mask — these measures bring RwandAir to the forefront of the aviation industry in terms of safety” said SimpliFlying CEO Shashank Nigam. “Taking such measures in ensuring health safety will help bolster trust among travellers,” he added.

The award from APEX Health Safety, powered by SimpliFlying, gives airlines a proactive role in helping resume international travel, creates a common standard for airlines for the health and safety of passengers and highlights successful aviation industry practices.