



DUBAI AVIATION DISTRICT LOOKS TO ATTRACT AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS

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Dubai plans to attract plane makers to manufacture aircraft parts at its **aviation district** in Dubai South, aiming to draw them closer to their major customers in the region, including the three biggest airlines in the Arabian Gulf.

Tahnoon Saif, the vice president of aviation at Dubai South, said yesterday: “2020 to 2025 this is when our original equipment manufacturer [OEM] initiative is going to start.”

The aviation district is part of Dubai South, a 145 square kilometre purpose-built aerotropolis created around Al Maktoum International Airport, which will be the world’s largest upon completion.

Dubai South will house the exhibition site being built for Expo 2020, a Dh25 billion residential zone known as The Villages, an Emirates Flight Academy, an aviation district, a logistics and cargo district, and a new free zone business park. The area, previously known as Dubai World Central, was rebranded in August this year.

Mr Saif plans to attract major aviation players such as Boeing, Airbus, Rolls-Royce and General Electric to manufacture aircraft equipment in the aviation district.

He said that operating in a tax-free zone in proximity to Jebel Ali Port and Al Maktoum airport would be an additional benefit for these companies.

“You have major players here such as Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways, Saudia, flydubai and Air Arabia. For all of those, having the parts manufactured here creates a value,” he said. “We have a network of cargo movement – Emirates Skycargo is there, Jebel Ali, one of the biggest seaports. We have all of these things on the ground.”

The aviation district has spent Dh1.2 billion over the past two years on infrastructure and ground assets, and an additional Dh500 million is earmarked for next year, according to Mr Saif.

The aviation district will inaugurate its business aviation facility in January that would be “the future hub of private jets in Dubai”, he said.

The district plans to open different types of maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities specialising in engines, landing gear and airframe repairs.

“We signed with Lufthansa Technik for component MRO. We are in talks with other players for landing gear repair and overhaul,” Mr Saif said without naming them.

This week, the STTS Group of France opened its paint hangar at Dubai South, a US\$34 million investment. The facility will accommodate wide-body aircraft at Al Maktoum airport.

11 NOVEMBER 2015

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL

ARTICLE LINK:

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