

CONGO GETS A NEW FLAG-CARRYING AIRLINE

THE REPUBLIC of the Congo has launched new national flag carrier called ECAir (Equatorial Congo Airlines), which entered service recently operating its maiden schedule flight between the country's capital, Brazzaville, and the port city of Pointe-Noire.

Lufthansa Consulting managed the complete start-up process preparation and thus continues its successful cooperation with the Congolese Government.

In previous projects, Lufthansa Consulting has already provided consultancy in supervising the concession project of the country's three main airports and in developing the conception of an "Airport City" at the airport in Brazzaville, named Maya Village.

The airline start-up project now marks another milestone in the long-standing relationship with the Government of the Republic of the Congo.

ECAir's initial operations are a thrice daily, seven days a week service on the Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire route using a Boeing 737-300, which has a capacity of 120 seats, configured in a 12 business class and 108 economy class seat layout.

The Brazzaville-based airline's operations will be accompanied by a leading business aviation company and private jet operator, Swiss PrivatAir.

"Our desire is to serve as a 'locomotive' for the modernisation of the aviation sector in the region and to ensure a quality level that meets international standards in aviation," said ECAir's CEO, Fatima Beyina-Moussa, economist and advisor to the Minister of Finance, Budget and the Public Portfolio.

Lufthansa Consulting developed a comprehensive five year business plan including the future network and fleet structure for the new airline.

ESMA SPREADS ITS WINGS TO AFRICA

Furthermore, the consultants ensured adherence to international high quality and safety standards and also created the carrier's overall design concept.

The opening of further routes to international destinations and the acquisition of additional aircraft are planned.

THE FRANCE-based ESMA Aviation Academy has announced the extension of its network to Africa through a representation agreement linked with Hi-Fly Marketing, a Cape Town, South Africa-based aviation services company.

With strong European roots and a broad international activity, ESMA can already capitalise on serious African references in its areas of competence. For example, it will provide dispatcher training for Air Mali, Air Ivoire and Air Burkina; *ab initio* pilot training for Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan and Cameroonian individuals; provide refresher cabin crew courses for Trans Air Congo; *ab initio* cabin crew courses for Air Guinea International and an European Part 66 Aircraft Maintenance Licence courses for Aviation Handling Services in Senegal.

Considering the booming demand for aviation training in Africa, which has not yet been matched by the availability of classroom facilities, training aids and qualified instructors, ESMA is now looking to further strengthen its presence and partnership with Hi-Fly Marketing.

ESMA and Hi-Fly Marketing will work together with governments, airlines, airports and other operators towards harmonising aviation training in Africa and will propose actions to be taken to standardise and assure quality, safety and compliance with the highest level of

requirements of civil aviation and training technology. Priority focus will be in the areas of maintenance and flight dispatcher trainings.

Jean-Philippe Renaud, CEO of ESMA Aviation Academy commented: "Hi-Fly Marketing will provide us with its sound understanding and experience of the African market and will support our development in Sub-Saharan African countries."

Alexandra Guillot, founder of Hi-Fly Marketing, added: "Witnessing the recent achievements of ESMA in Western Africa, we have no doubt that ESMA's services offering will find a very positive echo at our African customers, increasingly looking for fully certified services providers capable on replying to their specific needs".

The ESMA Aviation Academy has a unique business model in aviation training in four major areas, namely: aircraft and helicopter pilot, air hostess/steward, maintenance technician and airport ground staff.

As strategic partner of Airbus, ATR and EADS, the ESMA is broadening its expertise through carrying out international consultation projects which enabled it to create two subsidiaries in Vietnam and China, in line with European standards. ESMA is recognised by major international aviation authorities and is approved as a Part 145 and Part 147 organisation.

