



MIDDLE EAST BUSINESS JET MARKET SOARING

News / Business aviation



The **middle east business aviation market** is rapidly developing and the UAE is among the top three countries for fleet size of business aircraft.

This was revealed by Gama Aviation, a global aviation services company, in its new research. It says that there are now 792 business aircraft in the Middle East, and between 2010 and 2014, 176 of these were delivered to the region.

Gama Aviation's analysis reveals that when compared to the rest of the world, the Middle East has a much bigger focus on mid- to larger-sized business aircraft. Some 59 per cent of its fleet is classified as medium to heavy, and 11 per cent as business jet airliners. The corresponding figures for the global fleet are 29.8 per cent and one per cent.

Saudi Arabia has the biggest fleet of business aircraft in the Middle East, with 188 (23.7 per cent of the region's total), followed by Turkey (157 and 18.5 per cent) and the UAE (135 and 17 per cent). These three countries also accounted for 71 per cent of all business aircraft deliveries between 2010-14.

Gama Aviation has been operating in the Middle East since 2006 and it sees strong growth potential for its business in the region. On August 1, it announced that it will be expanding its operations at Sharjah International Airport in the UAE.

With the support of the Sharjah Airport Authority, it has acquired additional aircraft parking space to meet the growing demand it is experiencing for business aviation -- particularly BBJs -- at the airport, and from across the region. As part of the agreement, Gama Aviation's fixed-base

operation and maintenance and repair and operations teams will also be personally supervising the business aircraft left in their care, ensuring clients receive the highest possible levels of service.

Martin Ringrose, Gama Aviation's managing director for the Middle East region, said: "The Middle East business aviation market is rapidly developing and is one of our major focus areas, which is why we are expanding our operations at the Sharjah International Airport. We expect to see the number of business aircraft in the region -- especially the larger ones, which we focus on -- to increase and with our experience, global footprint and economies of scale, we believe we are well-positioned to capitalise on this growth."

To help further strengthen its proposition in the region, Gama Aviation has also conducted a review of the Sharjah FBO handling rates and, as a result, the basic handling prices were reduced by 20 per cent in August. This ensures that the Sharjah FBO, just 30 minutes from Downtown Dubai is extremely competitive when compared to similar offerings in the region notably Dubai South (60-plus minutes away from Downtown Dubai). This reduction in costs is just one part of a global review of Gama Aviation's contracts across all areas of its operations.

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