



VPORTS BECOMES THE FIRST INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY TO LAUNCH A VERTIPORT CERTIFICATION PROCESS

News / Business aviation



VPorts has initiated the certification process for its vertiports as part of the world’s first AAM integrator centre at the Mohammed bin Rashid Aerospace Hub in Dubai South. Construction of the vertiports will start in 2024. The certification process, developed by the GCAA, aligns with regulation CAR IX-HVD Part III, which outlines the requirements and guidelines for the certification and operation of onshore vertiports within the UAE. The process will start with the design approval phase; VPorts plans to obtain design approval for the world centre within six months – a key step in the construction phase. The certification of the Ras Al Khaimah vertiport will follow shortly.

Dr Fethi Chebil, CEO and Founder of VPorts, commented: “We are extremely proud to embark on the certification process for our vertiports in Dubai. We are making history today as we are the first infrastructure company in the world to initiate a vertiport certification process. With this milestone undertaking, Dubai has confirmed its leadership in the AAM sector. By adhering to regulations of the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority, we are taking a proactive approach to ensure all our vertiports meet and exceed industry standards, providing a secure and efficient environment for the operation of electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft.”

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In his comments, Tariq Bin Ghalaita, General Aviation Director at Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub, said: “We are pleased to see VPorts engaging in the certification process of its vertiports as part of the world integrator centre. This certification process signifies a substantial step in our pursuit to cement Dubai’s status as a global powerhouse of aviation and innovation. MBRAH is more than an aerospace hub. We are a launchpad, propelling the aerospace industry to greater heights both within the UAE and globally. With the AAM project, MBRAH is excited to be working towards a future where transportation is faster, safer, and more efficient than ever before. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and innovation, we are creating a new era of air transportation that will unlock new possibilities and drive progress across industries. From urban air mobility to logistics and beyond, we believe that the sky is the limit when it comes to the transformative potential of AAM. Embracing pioneering advancements like this lies at the core of our mission, ensuring we create a thriving and dynamic ecosystem for the aerospace industry in Dubai. This step is not just a milestone for AAM in the UAE, but a beacon charting the path for the sector globally. It heralds a bright future we are proud to be part of.”

The certification process is a testament to VPorts’ commitment to establishing a robust and sustainable AAM infrastructure network. It demonstrates the company’s readiness to enter the market and operate to the highest standards of safety and compliance. “VPorts’ leadership brings a heightened level of confidence to investors interested in the AAM industry,” declared Dr Chebil. The need for private and public investors to deliver advanced infrastructure, development, and operations is crucial for the success of AAM. Multiple revenue streams and opportunities will be pursued and leveraged at all stages of development, from project conception to design, development, and long-term implementation.

VPorts’ vertiports are designed as cutting-edge transportation hubs that facilitate the seamless integration of eVTOLs into urban environments and existing transportation ecosystems. They incorporate advanced technologies, such as automated landing systems, smart charging infrastructure and robust safety procedures, to ensure optimal functionality and passenger comfort. Moreover, VPorts’ infrastructures will contribute to reducing traffic congestion, improving accessibility, and promoting sustainable transportation solutions in the bustling city of Dubai.

VPorts’ Operation Control Centre (VOCC)

With the support of MBRAH, VPorts is planning to establish its Vertiport Operation Control Centre (VOCC) as part of the AAM integrator world centre in Dubai. The VOCC will have the capacity to manage air traffic integration and set up communication protocols between eVTOLs, vertiports and Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs). It will also leverage artificial intelligence to evaluate data related to resource management, ensuring efficient and timely decision-making processes for all eVTOLs landing, taking off from, or flying to any vertiport in an eventual global network of locations.

VPorts’ VOCC encompasses a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) meticulously crafted to meet GCAA requirements. These SOPs are designed to govern the vertiports’ day-to-day operations. By aligning with the regulatory compliance framework, VPorts ensures that all aspects of its operations, including ground handling, passenger management, maintenance protocols, and

emergency procedures, meet the rigorous standards set by the GCAA.

“We believe that operational excellence is the foundation for providing a superior client experience,” said Dr Chebil. “By aligning our VOCC with the GCAA regulatory compliance requirements, we are not only ensuring the highest levels of safety and security but also delivering a seamless and delightful experience for our clients.”

A visionary project

In December 2022, VPorts signed an exclusive 25-year lease agreement with MBRAH, renewable for a further 25 years, to establish the state-of-the-art AAM centre on a 37,000-square-metre site in Dubai South. The project, which represents an initial investment of \$40 million over three years, is expected to generate direct revenues of US\$7 billion in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, combined, over the next 25 years and create 1,500 direct high-quality jobs.

The project includes a dedicated flight test airspace, assigned blocked airspace and innovative new technologies to support the growth of the AAM industry and accelerate the certification of eVTOLs.

Over the coming months, VPorts will work with an expanded network of partners to engage with key strategic centres of expertise, including eVTOL manufacturing, flight simulation and training, regulators, air navigation service providers, technology service providers, operators, electric charging manufacturers and urban planners.

Regulators from the region and around the world will be able to take advantage of the AAM integrator world centre in Dubai to build a regulatory framework for the benefit of their own jurisdiction, thus increasing global efficiency and adoption. “We look forward to working with the civil aviation authorities around the world to certify vertiports for the benefit of the industry and AAM,” said Dr Chebil.

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