

Press release
For immediate release

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CONNECT - Middle East, India & Africa launches in Dubai

- *The Airport Agency, founder of [CONNECT](#), the largest independent Route Development Forum in Europe, partners with [Reed Travel Exhibitions](#), the world's largest travel event organiser to launch the first CONNECT in Dubai.*
- *Emirates will be the official airline partner while Emaar Hospitality Group will be the official hotel partner*

The two-day event will be co-located with the [Arabian Travel Market](#) 2019 and will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre on Tuesday 30th April and Wednesday 1st May (day three and four of ATM).

It is expected to bring together airline specialists, aviation authorities, tourism boards, airports and tour operators, as well as other travel-related industry professionals. With up to 400 delegates, the structure of the vertical event will include unlimited one-to-one pre-scheduled appointments, a conference programme, as well as an exhibition area dedicated to airports and suppliers.

Commenting on The Airport Agency's collaboration with Reed Travel Exhibitions, Karin Butot, CEO, The Airport Agency, says: "CONNECT Middle East, India & Africa is set to deliver a unique aviation networking platform to meet and network alongside ATM, the largest international travel event in the region which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

"As more and more airports are working in synergy with their destinations to explore and secure new airline services, the event will deliver exceptional opportunities in an established, highly-productive format.

The event will be the only aviation route development forum in the region for both inbound and outbound travel, connecting senior aviation professionals with airlines and airports all over the world. Emirates will be the official airline partner, with Emirates Networking Planning team attending the show."

"Being the world's largest travel event organiser, with shows on all continents, our collaboration with The Airport Agency will bring the entire tourism supply chain together, providing strategic commercial opportunities for aviation professionals, particularly those specialising in airport route development, network planning and procurement," adds Nick Pilbeam, Divisional Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions.

The choice of Dubai and The Middle East is highly strategic. The Middle East's aviation market is forecast to grow five per cent annually until 2036, according to IATA. It is predicated that the sector will witness an extra 322 million passengers a year on routes to, from and within the region – with the total market size expanding to 517 million passengers over this period.

Dubai is not only a fascinating destination, it is also very easily accessible for all participants. In 2017, Dubai International Airport was the world's 3rd largest international airport* measured by total passengers, serving 88.2 million passengers, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 2016. Traffic this year was forecast to grow 2.4 per cent to 90.3 million.

Growth is expected to accelerate in 2019, propelled by a partnership between Emirates and sister low-cost carrier flydubai, and as the momentum gathers in the build up to Expo 2020, where 25 million visitors are expected.

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About CONNECT

[CONNECT Route Development Forum](#) delivers a total networking experience, bringing together airports, airlines and aviation suppliers in a format that offers formal one-to-one pre-arranged meetings, engaging industry seminars together with social opportunities to cement relationships with existing clients and engage with new ones. Created and organised by The Airport Agency-France, CONNECT is now in its 16th year and set to attract over 650 participants in June 2019 at its flagship event taking place in Cagliari, Sardinia.

The inaugural CONNECT Middle East, India & Africa event will be the first and only networking forum in the Middle East. Ideally located in Dubai to address the booming aviation market of the Middle East, it will bring together the aviation and the tourism industry which are the backbone and catalyst to economic development.

About Reed Exhibitions

[Reed Exhibitions](#) is the world's leading events business, enhancing the power of face to face through data and digital tools at over 500 events a year, in more than 30 countries, attracting more than seven million participants.

About Reed Travel Exhibitions

[Reed Travel Exhibitions](#) is the world's leading travel and tourism event's organiser with a growing portfolio of more than 22 international travel and tourism trade events in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Our events are market leaders in their sectors, whether it is global and regional leisure travel trade events, or specialist events for meetings, incentives, conference, events (MICE) industry, business travel, luxury travel, travel technology as well as golf, spa and ski travel. We have over 35 years' experience in organising world-leading travel exhibitions.

Arabian Travel Market is the leading, international travel and tourism event in the Middle East for inbound and outbound tourism professionals. ATM 2018 attracted almost 40,000 industry professionals,



with representation from 141 countries over the four days. The 25th edition of ATM showcased over 2,500 exhibiting companies across 12 halls at Dubai World Trade Centre. Arabian Travel Market 2019 will take place in Dubai from Sunday, 28th April to Wednesday, 1st May 2019. To find out more, please visit: arabiantravelmarket.wtm.com

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