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Department of Civil Aviation Dubai on target with e-government; unveils a new web initiative for the region

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of the Department of Civil Aviation and Chairman of Emirates Group, today announced a new web initiative for the region - a joint venture B2B portal with airportXchange of Malaysia. This new portal for airport community -- www.ax-max.com -- focuses on the Middle East region. The new joint venture company will be called MAX (Middle East Airport Exchange).

This joint venture effort unveils cutting edge Internet services such as online procurement, infomediary services which allows dissemination of information to the public at large and a loyalty programme known as Majestic Wings.

HH Sheikh Ahmed commented: "The joint venture is very much in keeping with the Dubai Government initiative of e-government and e-commerce. This is a very important step for us as the first of our tenders for the 2nd phase of Dubai International Airport expansion programme is now online. The tender is for the Mega Cargo Terminal project. The 2nd phase of the expansion programme costing US \$ 1.4 bn will involve many big projects which will all be tendered online in the coming months."

Mr Suhaimie Abu Hassan, President of airportXchange commented: "This project is a landmark project for airportXchange as it serves as a gateway for further initiatives. We are confident that with partners such as DCA, we will be able to expand our business in Dubai and the Middle East."

The online procurement services went live today whereby Pre-Qualification and Tendering process takes place on the Exchange. Suppliers will need to go through a series of steps to enable them to participate on the Pre-Qualification process on the Exchange.

Through the online procurement service, procurement professionals are allowed to migrate their business processes via the Internet to minimize administrative costs, improve efficiencies in addition to improving an airport's communication process with participating suppliers.

Through this joint venture effort the Department of Civil Aviation now has the opportunity to explore new revenue streams without extensive investment in capital expenditure. This is in line with Dubai's endeavour to take a leading role in the aviation field as well as its initiations towards e-government implementation and is a sign of DCA's commitment to give the industry its fullest attention.

The strength and expertise of airportXchange's management, extensive technology development and business model, made them an obvious choice as joint-venture partner for DCA to implement a regional e-market place for the airport industry in the Middle East region.

airportXchange, Ltd, is an Internet-based company which is wholly owned by XYBASE a Malaysian company. airportXchange is the developer and operator of a web enabled online marketplace exchange known as airportXchange.com. Its principal activity is to operate a comprehensive e-business platform for the airport community, including airport operators, airport suppliers, airport service providers, airport retailers and travelers. airportXchange's mission is to assist all parties in the global air travel industry in taking advantage of the changes brought in form the new economy.

The Dubai International Airport Expansion (Phase II) is currently being finalized - a development project worth US \$1.4 billion - and this joint effort is an element towards achieving the ambitious plan of making Dubai International Airport one of the world's leading aviation hubs. Through this effort, DCA aims to enable the UAE to materialize its effort to become the region's leader in e-commerce activities.