ACSA receives intl certification for environmental management

All nine of Airports Company South Africa's airports have been certified as compliant with the most-recognised international standard for environmental management systems.

Source: Maxim Blinkov © 123RF

The certification is a further milestone in the implementation of the sustainability strategy of Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) that has seen it also receive Level 1 carbon accreditation for four airports and build solar energy plants at three of its airports.

The latest certification was performed in terms of the International Standards Organisation's ISO14001: 2015 standard which sets out the criteria for an environmental management system. The standard maps out a framework that an organisation can follow to set up an effective environmental management system.

ACSA's sustainability strategy focuses on the environmental impact of its airports including water and energy conservation, waste management, alien vegetation removal, wildlife conservation, reduction in carbon emissions, management of airport noise levels and minimising the broader impact of airline operations on the environment.

Fundi Sithebe, chief operating officer at Airports Company South Africa, says, "The ISO certification is used worldwide for companies to map out a framework that they can follow in setting up an effective environmental management system."

"Our certification involved significant aspects for the environmental performance improvement of our nine airports such as fuel handling, waste disposal from both terminals, aeroplanes and engineering. We are very proud of this ISO certification as it affirms Airports Company South Africa's commitment to operating our airports in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner."

Excellence in environmental performance

The ISO certification was performed by DNV GL, an international accredited registrar and classification society with operations in more than 100 countries.

Nicola Privato, regional manager of DNV GL – Business Assurance for the Southern Europe and Africa Region, says, "We are pleased to award this certification to Airports Company of South Africa. This is an important example of excellence in environmental performance for all the airports around the world. It is very encouraging to see that such high impact facilities as the airports are taking the lead in environmental sustainability and setting an example for other companies."

She continues and says it is an excellent way to promote sustainability and leadership to all passengers arriving on the continent and to showcase the African position.

Airport Carbon Accreditationv

To date, four of ACSA's airports have been awarded Level 1 Airport Carbon Accreditation as per the Airports Council International (ACI) Carbon Accreditation. O.R. Tambo International Airport, King Shaka International Airport, Cape Town International Airport and Port Elizabeth International Airport have met the international requirements to achieve carbon accreditation.

The Airport Carbon Accreditation is the only institutionally endorsed, global carbon management certification programme for airports which independently assesses and recognises the efforts of airports to manage and reduce their carbon emissions through four levels of certification and provides airports with a common framework for active carbon management through measurable goals.

In addition to reducing the negative impact of carbon emissions of its operations, Airports Company South Africa has taken major steps towards increasing environmental sustainability with the construction of solar plants at three of its regional airports.

"In February 2016, we launched a 1.2-hectare solar power plant at George Airport in the Western Cape, which supplies 750Kw of power to the airport. We then followed with Kimberley Airport in May 2016, with 500Kw. Then in July 2016, we unveiled a third solar power plant at Upington Airport in the Northern Cape, which provides is a 500Kw plant meant to meet the operational needs of the airport," added Sithebe.