

Serbia's national air carrier Air Serbia will contribute \$1 billion (1.1 billion euro) to the country's economy and support 100,000 jobs in 2016, the company said on Friday, quoting a forecast by UK-based consultancy Oxford Economics.

"Air Serbia will provide 13,230 people with employment and add US\$ 210 million to the Serbian economy through its core operations including expenditures on fuel, maintenance costs and local Serbian suppliers," the company said in a statement.

The job number includes 1,650 direct jobs at Air Serbia, 5,450 indirect jobs supported by the airline's procurement of goods and services, and 6,130 additional jobs, supported by staff spending their wages in Serbia, the statement reads.

It also notes that in 2016 the airline is expected to carry almost 550,000 international visitors predominantly from Europe and North America to Serbia, whose tourism-related spending on accommodation, food, and recreation will amount to \$810 million, supporting some 87,000 jobs.

In addition, this year's economic benefits of enhanced air connectivity between Serbia and the rest of the world, as a result of Air Serbia's operations, has been valued by Oxford Economics at \$640 million, representing 1.7% cent of GDP and equivalent to 33,250 jobs.

The Oxford Economics report also estimates that Etihad Airways, which holds a 49% stake in Air Serbia and operates daily flights between Belgrade and Abu Dhabi, will support 3,900 jobs through its operations in Serbia this year, which equates to an economic contribution of \$45 million.

Source; See News