

Air Serbia will support 100,000 jobs across Serbia and contribute \$1 billion to the national economy in 2016, according to the latest forecasts by the UK-based global consultancy Oxford Economics.

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

Breaking the research down further, this includes 1,650 direct jobs at Air Serbia in 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 study goes on to state 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, the 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 this year, representing 1.7 per cent of the national GDP and equivalent to 33,250 jobs.

Siniša Mali, mayor of Belgrade and president of the supervisory board of Air Serbia, said, "A national airline is the driving force of economic development of each country, and in this sense the success of Air Serbia contributes to the development of the whole of Serbia.

"The government of the Republic of Serbia led by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić has implemented sweeping reforms and the results are already visible, and we fully monitor their efforts along the way.

"The fruits of hard work in the past three years are slowly beginning to show and I believe that, with the opening of new markets in the future, the company of Air Serbia will be even bigger and more successful."

The Oxford Economics report also establishes that Etihad Airways, which holds a 49 per cent share 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.

James Hogan, vice chairman of the supervisory board and president and chief executive officer of the Etihad Aviation Group, said, "Air Serbia's operations and wide economic footprint through Serbia have a strong positive knock-on effect on the national economy and, as the report shows, opened up thousands of jobs in Serbia.

"It is a successful business, making a noticeable difference to the lives of many Serbians, and as a key partner, we remain committed to working together to strengthen its position further."

Dane Kondić, chief executive officer of Air Serbia, said, "The contribution that Air Serbia

makes to the national economy and the job market in Serbia cannot be overstated.

“As this research shows, we support thousands of jobs directly, through our airline operations, and indirectly, through the powerful domino effect that Air Serbia has on stimulating economic activity throughout the country.

“Our flights benefit many jobs in Serbia, such as the local suppliers we use for inflight catering, to the many industries that rely on business from air travellers, including hotels, restaurants and other tourism and hospitality-related sectors.

“The Oxford Economics report clearly shows that Air Serbia’s role in improving air connectivity and growing inbound tourism creates important employment opportunities for Serbian nationals, and our aim in the years ahead is to build on this contribution.”

Source; Aviation pros