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## eMRO software deployment in Africa is on **TRAX**

RwandAir is the latest African carrier to opt for eMRO.  
Photo: Airbus

**Keith Mwanalushi** speaks to Sadiel Parra the eMRO Lead Programmer at TRAX about expanding airline customers in the African region and positioning for growth post recovery.

**K**igali-based RwandAir and South African airline Airlink are just some of the carriers that have opted for eMRO developed by TRAX, the global provider of aviation maintenance mobile and cloud solutions. More recently, RwandAir selected the TRAX eMRO system in October of 2020 as part of its efforts to enhance its efficiency, lower its costs, and expand its operations. “The airline saw an opportunity to replace its legacy system with a fully integrated technologically advanced web-based MRO software product – and it is accomplishing this goal amidst a turbulent year for aviation,” Sadiel Parra, eMRO Lead Programmer tells *AviTrader MRO*.

Parra explains that the eMRO product enables efficient, reliable communication and dataflow between the various facets of the operation using leading edge technology. He says the airline anticipates that real time data means reduced turnaround times, and increased time to report and repair issues.

“They see the benefits of users being able to stay connected to their key aircraft maintenance management data from anywhere using the device-agnostic eMRO solution. Users can rapidly find spare parts and tools and electronically sign off tasks at any location, such as from the hangar or when carrying out crucial time sensitive line repairs.”



Sadiel Parra the eMRO Lead Programmer, TRAX

Increasingly, air carriers are demanding connectivity and the ability to work from anywhere with their MRO software systems. “We are completely focused on providing solutions that mobilise maintenance since it is an essential requirement in today’s aviation environment. That mobile essentialness has only become magnified within the past year due to the requirements of working remotely or with social distance during the COVID pandemic.” Parra says unlike TRAX eMRO, non-web-based systems keep employees chained to their desks or computer terminals and minimises productivity that can be gained when accessing or capturing real time data.

The TRAX web-based eMRO system and associated suite of eMobility apps supports digital signatures, paperless operations and manuals, RFID-capability for logistics, biometric security, barcode readers, offline capability for apps, and instant access to real-time information. “This is only the tip

of the iceberg in the efficiencies that can be offered to our clients given today's advances in technology. The combination of mobile solutions, data analytics, predictive maintenance, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) takes the potential gains to the next level."

TRAX have a growing customer base in Africa. South African carrier Airlink, now operating independently as Airlink, implemented eMRO software in January of 2019. The airline has expanded its network and now serves over 50 destinations and in January of this year, Airlink became the third largest carrier within Africa by number of seats offered, and second largest by number of flights scheduled. Its fleet of 51 aircraft includes Embraer, BAe Jetstreams, and Cessnas. Parra states: "Airlink is a company that prides itself on its modernisation strategy and it selected the eMRO cloud software product to support its mobilisation of their maintenance operation." He reports that the operator intends to move into phase two of its modernisation plans this year by adopting the iRAX eMobility web-based and iOS apps.

Parra further emphasises on the growing opportunities considering that Africa is the world's second largest and second-most populous continent after Asia, yet it has the smallest number of passengers annually with approximately 2% of global air traffic, but with its rapid population and income growth, there will be significant opportunities. A March 20, 2021 conference of West African government ministers organised by IPADIS (International Partners for Aviation Development, Innovation and Sustainability) affirmed their expectation of the potential to develop into a leading aviation market post pandemic. "Of course, this will require recognition of the potential, along with investment and modernisation of the aviation infrastructure. In a recent list of potential startup airlines, some 44 out of 312 listed were African, indicating a sense of confidence in the market opportunities. TRAX has attended African MRO industry trade shows and is keeping an eye on this region of the world."

After a challenging year for the aviation industry, Parra reckons 2021 will bring slow but steady recovery with the increasing availability of vaccines that is beginning to reignite airline customer confidence in travel. "Yet a major challenge for recovery will be how widespread the distribution of the vaccines will be worldwide, where the purchase and distribution are currently dominated by wealthier countries."

Although 2020 experienced decline and stagnation, some market resilience was evidenced by new airline launchings and mergers amid the challenges of re-organisation and downsizing. "There were some encouraging signs of strength in the cargo sector, an increase in cabin modifications work, and utilisation of new technology such as remote inspections, that were made necessary due to the pandemic. Additional government stimulus and support packages for airline operators continue to be under discussion as interim losses continue to mount," he says.

From a general outlook, TRAX has seen some of its customers take measures to position themselves in place for the future aviation industry upturn. Parra stipulates that these steps include right sizing their company for current utilisation and preparing to meet future increased demand. "Many are turning crisis into opportunities with plans to invest in technology and managing projects to build a more efficient, digital, and paperless operation. Although

2021 is not without its own challenges, there is reason for cautious optimism for continued market recovery, especially for those companies that are foresighted about digital transformation, creating efficiencies, and evolving non-contact working processes where possible."

At TRAX, they are developing new software solutions that Parra believes will give users of their solutions an edge in the market, for instance, due to the COVID environment and its impact on aviation, aircraft were increasingly being parked or returned from lease. "In response to our customers' practical needs, TRAX developed the eContent Control web application to facilitate easy access to aircraft records. It is a robust tool for aircraft records management, lease returns, airworthiness verification, and aircraft or engine sales."

TRAX sees that MRO software can employ new concepts to take advantage of all the data that is being generated systemwide, as well as technological progress. This is extremely useful in today's environment of temporarily limited travel for remote inspection. An example of this is remote digital visual inspection (RDVI) which allows an inspector to look at objects that are at an outstation or perhaps at an aircraft parking location.



eMobility task card on iPad.  
Photo: TRAX