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Saab Showcases its Digital Tower Technology to Scottish Highlands and Islands Airports

Saab Digital Air Traffic Solutions (SDATS) is today attending a consultation event hosted by Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL), which is exhibiting the new air traffic management technology HIAL proposes to introduce across seven of its 11 airports.

The event is open to the public and takes place at the University of the Highlands & Islands campus in Inverness on 25 and 26 April, to improve stakeholder knowledge and understanding of the new and emerging air traffic management technology in use across Europe. The Swedish airports of Örnköldsvik and Sundsvall became the first in the world to be controlled via a digital tower delivered by SDATS in Sundsvall in 2015. London City Airport and Cranfield University, as well as Cork and Shannon airports in Ireland, have all procured Saab's technology.

SDATS's digital tower solution will be on display with experts on hand to explain how it works and how it can benefit airport operations. The SDATS digital tower replaces the conventional control tower with a camera mast to capture the out-the-tower-window view and reproducing it to a Remote Digital Tower Centre in another location.

Digital towers are designed to be resilient and comply with cyber security best practices. Cameras offer air traffic controllers panoramic views of the airfield showing more detail than it is possible to achieve with the human eye. Furthermore, Saab's market-leading technology can enable significantly higher operational efficiency, lower operating costs, and advanced safety and decision support systems. Installing a Digital Tower is only a fraction of the cost of building or refurbishing a conventional air traffic control tower.





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“The provision of air traffic services constitutes a significant proportion of an airport and airline’s costs and is under constant scrutiny. Our digital tower solution will not only help this happen but it will also introduce a never before seen level of flexibility, new business models and allow service levels to be enhanced. This may result in smaller airports remaining open for longer, or even keep some regional airports open which would otherwise have been forced to close, due to high cost levels,” said Per Ahl, Head of Marketing & Sales, Saab Digital Air Traffic Solutions.

HIAL’s long-term Digital Tower approach will mirror an already successful project in Sweden and transform the organisation’s operations at Sumburgh, Dundee, Inverness, Wick John O’Groats, Kirkwall, Stornoway and Benbecula airports.

“Our overriding priority is and will always be, to deliver safe and secure air navigation services that will keep our airports open for local communities for the long term,” said Inglis Lyon, HIAL Managing Director.

“Our Air Traffic Management teams are also visiting airports who already have this type of technology in place in Sweden. It’s really important that our teams fully understand what is being proposed,” he continued.

“Remotely controlled towers are the future of air traffic management and we are embarking on a long-term project to make our airports fit for the future.”

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