

Asia Cargo Network targets freighter conversions with Indonesia MRO deal

The group is also planning its own fleet growth



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Indonesia-based Aero Teknik, a subsidiary of Singapore-based Asia Cargo Network (ACN), has reached an agreement with Bandarudara Internasional Jawa Barat (BIJB), owner of Kertajati International Airport (KJT), to build a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility there to serve as a site for freighter conversions.

ACN Chief Executive Marco Isaak confirmed to *Cargo Facts* that the group will invest \$10 million into the construction of the MRO and intends to use the facility to establish heavy maintenance and freighter conversion activities for its airlines: Asia Cargo Airlines, Raffles Global Angkasa (RGA)-Black Stone Airlines and World Cargo Airlines.

Maintenance for Boeing and Airbus aircraft in Indonesia is provided by GMF AeroTech and a few other smaller MRO operators that can only provide up to 350 slots,. Meanwhile 450 slots are sent out to countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and even Australia, Isaak said. "We have decided that running our own MRO will definitely reduce costs and provide us with a better and more efficient prediction of our maintenance timeline," he added.



Asia Cargo Airlines has five 737-300Fs. (Photo/Asia Cargo Network)

ACN is keen to obtain certification to become an MRO partner for 737 conversions and has tentative plans to convert five 737-800Fs within the next two years, Isaak told *Cargo Facts*. The group has partnered with Hal Gamble, CEO of lessor Plane Invest — which owns three of ACN's 737 Classics — to establish a leasing company in Singapore that will source additional 737-800s for conversion and sublease them to all three of ACN's carriers, Isaak said.

ACN said it is confident in its 737 Classic freighters and will lease them to other operators in the region when additional 737-800Fs join its fleet.

"The Classics may come to an end, just not so soon; probably within the next decade," Isaak said. "Within domestic Indonesia there are still three- to four-hour flight patterns, and the need for internal transfers of cargo is still huge."

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