

07/2009: TrackJet® undertakes first African project

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TrackJet® by Weigel Hochdrucktechnik has undertaken its first African project at San Pedro Airport in Cape Verde, the islands off the west coast of Africa.



The airport's operating organisation retained Weigel to assist in the refurbishment of the runway to international airport standards as the airport prepared to welcome its first international flights

After attempting to remove runway markings using less sophisticated technologies, San Pedro Airport's management turned to Weigel (via its partner in the region Trade Target) to provide a runway demarking solution, using Weigel's TrackJet® 24 unit, complete with VacuFlex®. The choice of technology was critical as this was a fairly new runway and, even though it was undergoing extensive work, the technology employed had to be one that would not damage the existing runway surface.

When the TrackJet® team and equipment arrived on the island, runway had already been increased in width and length and now old rubber build up and paintwork had to be removed so that paint teams could move in and repaint the runway with new numbers, centre lines and other indicators.



For the first time ever, all runway markings were removed by the TrackJet® operator under a service contract with Weigel. The job took less than two weeks to complete, during which time the operator cleaned 200m² of runway per hour. The TrackJet® equipment itself had been delivered to Cape Verde from Lisbon harbour by boat. In addition to the TrackJet® 24 and VacuFlex®, Weigel shipped a significant spares package to the African island in order to ensure that work on the runway was not interrupted. When the work was complete, the equipment and spares were returned to the European mainland in the same manner.

Ruben Figueiredo at Trade Target who oversaw the project explains that the runway was never closed during the entire operation. The biggest challenge was not avoiding work during aircraft movements but the coordination of the TrackJet® operations with the topography and painting teams.

By June 27, 2009, the task was complete and all runway markings had been removed and repainted. Keeping to the timetable was crucial to the success of this project to avoid delaying the reopening of the, now, international airport.

