

Any airline looking at MRO contracting has to make sure they make the right decision on what will be a crucial relationship between them and the MRO contractor

- Dr Ismail Demir

Turkish Delights

With all the attention on the big US and European MRO players moving into Asia, its easy to overlook some of the smaller but equally successful MRO operators. One that is intent on making waves in Asia is Turkish Technic, headed by long-time industry expert Dr Ismail Demir.

"THERE IS NO DOUBT MRO OUTSOURCING

is a trend, and there is no doubt it can bring significant cost reductions," says Dr Ismail Demir, CEO, Turkish Technic. Demir, who has worked in Saudi Arabia, the US, Canada and latterly Turkey, says that the trend makes sense to many airline operators, and can cut labour inventory and operational costs significantly – especially on heavy maintenance requirements.

"But any airline looking at MRO contracting has to make sure they make the right decision on what will be a crucial relationship between them and the MRO contractor," he warns. "The airline has to be certain they have a partnership, not just based on cost, but with transparency, confidence and a set resolution process decided beforehand if issues arise."

Turkish Technic, which handles MRO on the 200-strong fleet of national carrier Turkish Airlines, also offers its services to third parties through, amongst others, the Airbus Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) Network. Described by Didier Lux, EVP Customer Services at Airbus as having "decades of experience in maintaining commercial aircraft", the company owns extensive heavy maintenance facilities at Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen International



Airport. Customers include Iraqi Airways, Pegasus, AirBlue, MNG Airlines, Onur Air, Yakutia, Ariana Afghan, Sky Airlines, SunExpress, AtlasJet and more.

One of the key issues that Demir cites as the reason for his company's success is its emphasis (with some visionary government support) training. "Training is expensive [for MRO] but it is so important - it is one thing on which there must be no compromise," he says. Cost, he notes, should not be as big an issue when it comes to ongoing training and currency. "With the number of contant upgrades coming through, and the availability of e-learning, there is no excuse," he asserts, adding that careful selection of workers and sensible allocation of resources are equally important.

Turkish Technic, says Demir, is aiming at Asia as a conduit for growth.

He says that projected turnover will be US\$1.5 billion in two years, with 25% of that (at least US\$330 million) coming from Far Asia. "We are aware that many local MROs offer a good service, but our experience in some of the Central Asian countries will be invaluable," he notes. "What we offer is a combination of quality, service, and better value. It's not always just about the cost – there has to be an element of trust too."

One thing that Turkish Technic has marked out as an increasingly important issue that is yet to be addressed by the aviation authorities – and one that it maybe sees more often than some other MROs as a result of its market base – is certification. "We need a common [global certification] body," asserts Demir. "The huge variety and difference in application of standards – we are certified to EASA 145, JAA 145, FAA and Turkish DGCA standards – will cause a huge problem for authorities and leasing companies in future, with things as they are," he says.

But no matter what the standards are, there is no doubt Turkish Technic's 3,000 qualified employees and 77 years of experience will ensure customers can count on Demir's most valuable benchmark: trust.