

AGL upgrades airport

SOMERSET East Airport, having undergone an eagerly-awaited upgrade, enlisted the help of seasoned technology provider Tellumat in a turnkey supply, installation, support and maintenance deal of airport ground lighting (AGL) equipment.

Chris Wilkens, Operational Manager at Somerset East Airport, says the upgrade follows the conversion of the erstwhile Somerset East aerodrome to a fully-fledged airport in 2017, much to the delight of local businesses and the flying community. Part of the ongoing makeover is a new runway, taxiway and apron to replace the old grass runway.

Patrick Duffy, technical and projects manager at Tellumat Air Traffic Management (ATM), says as part of the undertaking the airport identified a need for AGL – crucial for safety during landing and take-off of aircraft at night and during bad weather.

The choice fell on LED-based (light-emitting diode) technology rather than traditional halogen lamps. “This is because of LED’s low-cost operations and maintenance, its small environmental footprint, long service and robustness in all weather conditions and airfield vibration,” Duffy explains.

Wilkens says the overall project scope



was defined by Delta Building Environmental Consultants and funded by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Tellumat ATM responded to a tender document and was appointed a specialist electrical subcontractor for purposes of the AGL installation, with Ruwaccon getting the nod as the main civil contractor. Tellumat ATM’s managing executive, Bennie Langenhoven, says this business unit of the Tellumat Group offers 40+ years’ experience in the aviation industry – a period during which it built up a full service and solution portfolio and significant skills in systems design, supply, installation, maintenance and support.

“The project was

strategic for us as it was primarily an LED installation, allowing us to showcase our expertise in this cutting-edge technology area. Also, we were able to prove that we could deliver a fully-fledged airfield ground lighting system from scratch – starting from a greenfield site and delivering a complete solution with all components of an AGL system where there had been none before.” Duffy says Tellumat installed and commissioned an AGL system from a leading global OEM, monitored and controlled with a locally designed and-manufactured control system. “Our OEM partner, provided a fully-compliant solution as per the specification.”

“All software development and interfac-

ing was done by us. The lights can also be switched on remotely via a VHF (very high frequency) radio control system. This will enable pilots to have control of the AGL after hours.”

In addition, constant current regulator equipment was installed in an air-conditioned shelter designed by Tellumat ATM and a standby generator was supplied to power the complete AGL system if the mains power supply fails.

Duffy says the Tellumat ATM team delivered the solution as per the design approved by South African Civil Aviation Authority.

The new equipment will support operations for at least the next 10 years.