

Jambojet to launch Uganda, Tanzania flights by February

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28 Nov 2017

Jambojet is set to start flights to Tanzania and Uganda by February next year, kicking off its regional expansion plan designed to see the low-cost carrier fly to 16 new routes.

The Transport Ministry said it had applied for permission for the budget airline, a subsidiary of Kenya Airways, to fly to the countries.



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Jambojet was in May granted regulatory approval to fly to 16 routes including Entebbe, Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza, Kigali, Juba, Bujumbura, Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Goma, Kisangani, and Moroni.

"The government has applied for designations on our behalf to allow us to operate on six regional routes," Willem Hondius, Jambojet's chief executive, told the *Business Daily* in an interview.

"For now, the application covers Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, we intend to begin by flying to Tanzania and Uganda."



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Jambojet also plans to start flying to Wajir by next February, adding to its existing flights between Nairobi and Mombasa, Eldoret, Kisumu, Lamu, Malindi and Ukunda (Diani).

The airline had earlier said it would make its international debut by the end of this year, but delays in receiving two Bombardier Q400 aircraft has seen them push their launch date forward.

These two planes are now expected before Christmas.

The extended electioneering period took a toll on the business, with total bookings for the four months to October dipping by around 16 per cent, Mr Hondius revealed.



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The airline flies between 45,000 and 50,000 passengers per month.

In the weeks around the two general elections, he added, passenger numbers dropped by a quarter, highlighting the huge toll that the process had on Kenya's aviation sector.

Kenya Airways' latest annual report indicates that Jambojet reported a pre-tax loss of Sh25 million for the year to March, reversing a pre-tax profit of Sh126 million recorded the previous year.

"The loss was attributable to last year's peak season when insufficient aircraft messed us up. The elections affected us negatively this year. While business has rebounded, we shall assess the full impact with time," said Hondius.

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