

Dubai Flower Centre to accommodate retail sector



New market: Dubai Flower Centre is developing a number of different concepts for its future growth, allowing it to better serve the Middle East region

Dubai Flower Centre (DFC) is to launch a flower market for retailers that will complement its current perishable logistics facilities.

The proposed market will be situated on the second floor of the facility, which belongs to Dubai International Airport and is in proximity to Dubai Cargo Village. DFC is currently exploring market concepts and potential tenants.

The flower market was a proposed feature since DFC's conception a year ago however, initial plans suggested the market would function in a separate facility. DFC's decision to initiate development now indicates its need to diversify logistics activities to maintain pace in the Middle East industry.

The move also suggests DFC is trying to capitalise on recent trade activity between the Middle East and Africa. Recent interest from Middle East carriers in West Africa, namely the flower export hotspot of Nairobi, has led to an increased demand for perishable products in the region.

"From the beginning we had a number of different concepts for Dubai Flower Centre and are now working further into developing them. Besides consolidating cargo for exports and imports, we are looking to further serve the local market as well as the further GCC area," said Josefina Vallarino, product development executive, DFC.

"The concept has just started and we are looking to attract the right kind of people to the project before we set a deadline," she added.

The market will convert DFC into a one-stop shop for the flower industry in the Middle East. Tenants are expected to provide flowers and plants alongside a range of related products including accessories and flower handling.

DFC has set its short-term scope on becoming the centre of flower trade and logistics for the UAE and further GCC region. It has identified entering the international markets as a long-term target, aiming to provide for capacity problem areas and complement

existing flower trade centre's around the world. "The purchasing culture here is completely different from Europe. We are not trying to cater to that market, instead we are trying to offer a new option to the Middle East market," said Vallarino.



DFC: The Facts

INFO BOX

Opened: July 2006

Cost: US\$70 million

Status: Operates in a free zone environment

Handling Capacity: 180,000 tonnes

Cold chain solutions: Include refrigerated dollies, automated handling equipment, Electronic Transfer Vehicles (ETVs) and temperature-controlled airlocks

Serves: International market of over two billion customers and a local GCC market with a GDP of \$540 million. Facility allows access to more than 113 airlines through Dubai International Airport



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