

Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia officially launches AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026

- **Messe Frankfurt Middle East has partnered with the Saudi Aviation Club**
- **AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026 will take place at Thumamah Airport, Riyadh, from 24-28 November 2026**
- **Expressions of interest for exhibitors, partners and sponsors are now open**

Friedrichshafen, GER / Riyadh, KSA – Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia has officially announced the launch of AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026, a landmark aviation platform set to become the largest and most influential general aviation airshow in the Middle East.

The event is being delivered in partnership with the Saudi Aviation Club (SAC), the Kingdom's official general aviation club and independent non-profit organisation founded by H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, which works in affiliation with and under the umbrella of the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), the regulator of Saudi Arabia's civil aviation sector. This partnership provides strong institutional foundations and positions the event at the centre of Saudi Arabia's established and growing general aviation ecosystem.

Marking the regional debut of the globally recognised AERO brand, AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026 will take place at Thumamah Airport, Riyadh, from 24-28 November 2026, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's role within the international general aviation, business aviation and advanced air mobility landscape.

The launch represents a significant strategic expansion for Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia amid sustained global growth across general aviation and next-generation air mobility. The event introduces a new integrated aviation format that combines international business, investment and innovation with live flying

displays, immersive public engagement and aviation lifestyle experiences, delivered as one unified event.

At the core of the platform, AERO Middle East brings the international B2B exhibition and strategic business dimension, led by Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia and focused on advancing general aviation, business aviation and future air mobility across the Middle East and beyond.

The exhibition will bring together leading global general aviation and business aviation OEMs, aircraft manufacturers and completions specialists, alongside avionics providers, flight systems suppliers and MRO companies, creating a comprehensive marketplace spanning the full aviation value chain, including advanced air mobility and eVTOL innovators showcasing the technologies, infrastructure requirements and operating models shaping the future of flight.

Complementing the exhibition floor, the event will host a dedicated business programme designed to deliver tangible commercial outcomes. This will include investor engagement, international B2B matchmaking and hosted-buyer programmes, alongside policy and regulatory discussions addressing certification pathways, infrastructure development and market access for general aviation, business aviation and advanced air mobility operations.

These elements will be seamlessly integrated within the wider Sand & Fun airshow experience, extending the platform across five days with flying displays, aircraft showcases and public aviation programming. The Sand & Fun platform has already demonstrated strong national and institutional backing, with ministerial and government participation at the 2025 edition, reinforcing the credibility, scale and long-term support underpinning the combined AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun platform.

Supporting Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's General Aviation Ambitions

The launch of AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026 directly supports Saudi Vision 2030's aviation and mobility objectives, with a specific focus on the development of general aviation, business aviation, pilot training, aviation skills and next-generation air mobility.

Saudi Arabia has identified general aviation as a strategic enabler for regional connectivity, aerospace capability development, private and corporate aviation growth and future mobility innovation. National initiatives are focused on expanding general aviation infrastructure, activating dedicated GA airports, increasing pilot and aircraft activity and establishing regulatory frameworks to support advanced air mobility operations, including eVTOL deployment.

Azzan Mohamed, Managing Director, Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia, said: "Our ambition with AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun is to establish one of the most important general aviation platforms globally. Thumamah provides a unique setting that allows us to deliver a truly integrated format, combining a world-class business exhibition with dynamic flying displays and meaningful public engagement. We are focused on attracting comprehensive international participation, from OEMs and regulators to investors, innovators, families and future aviation talent. This is more than an event; it is a long-term platform that will support the growth of general and business aviation in Saudi Arabia and position the Kingdom at the heart of the global aviation ecosystem, fully aligned with Vision 2030."

His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Fahad Alfahaid, General Supervisor of the Saudi Aviation Club commented: "The launch of AERO Middle East x Sand & Fun 2026 marks a transformative milestone for the Kingdom's aviation sector, reinforcing our commitment to becoming a global hub for general aviation and advanced air mobility. Through our partnership with Messe Frankfurt Middle East, we are not only showcasing world-class innovation but also creating a vital platform for international investment and strategic collaboration. This event is a direct catalyst for Saudi Vision 2030, driving our journey toward becoming a top-10 global general aviation market and inspiring the next generation of Saudi aviators."

Tobias Bretzel, Show Director of AERO, added: "We are very proud to see the launch of AERO Middle East happening in this promising market with our strong partner the Saudi Aviation Club and our colleagues from Messe Frankfurt Saudi Arabia. This further expansion of our global AERO show portfolio also reflects the strong growth and momentum we see at our leading European show AERO Friedrichshafen in Germany."

Companies interested in participating as exhibitors, partners or sponsors can now register their interest via the official event website, with booking enquiries and early engagement opportunities now open.

The event will take place at Thumamah Airport, near Riyadh, from 24-28 November 2026.

Further information on to register interest, please visit: <https://sandnfun.com/en/>

Follow on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aeroshow>

Follow on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aerofriedrichshafen>

Follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AERO.FN>

Press Contact:

Frank Gauß, Press Spokesman

Phone: +49 7541 708-310

E-Mail: frank.gauss@messe-fn.de

Volker K. Thomalla, Head of Communication Aerospace Portfolio

Phone: +49 170 4178876

E-Mail: volker.thomalla@fairnamic.com

About AERO Middle East:

AERO Middle East is the regional edition of AERO International Leading Trade Show for General Aviation, one of the world's most established and respected platforms dedicated to general aviation. The Middle East edition has been developed to reflect regional market priorities while maintaining the international standards, global reach and industry pedigree of the AERO brand.

About the Saudi Aviation Club (SAC):

The Saudi Aviation Club (SAC) was established by Resolution No. 217 of the Council of Ministers on 8/9/1421H (4 December 2000). SAC was created as an independent non-profit organisation to promote aeronautical sciences and develop general aviation and air sports in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Club was founded by H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and operates under the umbrella of the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA). SAC is headquartered at Thumamah Airport, approximately 60 kilometres north of Riyadh.

About Messe Frankfurt

The Messe Frankfurt Group is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With a workforce of some 2,300 people at its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main and in 28 subsidiaries, it organises events around the world. Group sales in financial year 2023 were more than € 609 million. We serve our customers' business interests efficiently within the framework of our Fairs & Events, Locations and Services business fields. One of Messe Frankfurt's key strengths is its

powerful and closely knit global sales network, which covers around 180 countries in all regions of the world. Our comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. We are using our digital expertise to develop new business models. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services. Sustainability is a central pillar of our corporate strategy. Here, we strike a healthy balance between ecological and economic interests, social responsibility and diversity. For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com/sustainability With its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent). For more information: www.messefrankfurt.com

About AERO:

The AERO is the leading international trade show for general aviation, business aviation and air sports and takes place on the exhibition grounds of Messe Friedrichshafen. It presents aircraft from civilian drones to gliders, ultralights and gyrocopters, helicopters, business and training aircraft with piston engines or turboprops right through to business jets. New propulsion systems, electric flight, state-of-the-art avionics, services and supplies for pilots are other key areas. These topics are also reflected in the AERO Conferences, making Europe's largest general aviation event an important platform for knowledge sharing and training.

About Fairnamic GmbH:

The fairnamic GmbH joint venture founded in 2021 by the two exhibition companies Frankfurt and Friedrichshafen is a highly specialized organizer for innovative and future mobility. With the AERO – International Leading Trade Show for General Aviation and the Eurobike as the world's leading trade show for bicycles, e-bikes and e-mobility, fairnamic GmbH is the market leader in the world of avionics and urban mobility. Through bundled competencies, market expertise, global networks, brand strength and agility, fairnamic GmbH is gradually expanding the market position of its two leading trade shows and international satellites globally.