

**W**ESTSTAR Aviation Services Sdn Bhd, a member of the Weststar Group of Companies, announced its first international operation during a contract signing with Tullow Mauritania Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tullow Oil PLC in London recently.

# Going international

## Offshore aviation provider signs RM500mil contract with London firm

The deal between Weststar Aviation Services and the London Stock Exchange-listed oil and gas company is worth RM500mil and will see Weststar Aviation Services providing offshore aviation services utilising two AgustaWestland AW 139 helicopters operating out of Mauritania in Africa, marking Weststar Aviation Services' first engagement overseas.

The operation in Mauritania is expected to start in August 2013. This initial contract will be for a period up to four years including the option for extension.

Weststar will be operating a new facility in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, and recruiting 23 local staff as part of its operational activities.

Tullow Oil is a leading independent oil and gas, exploration and production group and is quoted on the London, Ghana and Irish Stock Exchanges.

The Group has interests in more than 140 production and exploration licences in 25 countries which are managed as three regional business units – West and North Africa, South and East Africa and Europe, South America and Asia. Tullow Oil

committed over RM3bil in North and West Africa during 2012 and it currently holds 43 licences in 10 West and North African countries they are operating from. Tullow Oil has a sales revenue of nearly RM6bil from this area of its operations.

Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK, Datuk Seri Zakaria Sulong, was guest of honour during the signing ceremony at Hilton Park Lane, which saw Weststar Group managing director Tan Sri Syed Azman Syed Ibrahim and Weststar Aviation Services CEO Tan Sri Muhammad Ismail, signing the contract with Tullow Oil's group supply chain manager David Mooney and North African business unit Leader Alan Dowokpor.

"In line with our aggressive global expansion plan, Weststar Aviation Services is excited to have taken this vital first step in increasing our global reputation and presence.

"We are confident of meeting and surpassing operational expectations and will look to further expand our African operations in the near future," said Muhammad during the event.

Since commencing offshore oil and gas operations in 2008,

Weststar Aviation Services has grown into the largest oil and gas aviation operator in South-East Asia.

Operating from its bases in Kerteh, Kota Baru and Kota Kinabalu, Weststar Aviation Services currently services contracts totalling more than RM6bil with one of the largest and most modern offshore helicopter fleets in the world.

By the end of 2013, Weststar Aviation Services expects to have at least 20 helicopters in its offshore operating fleet.

In line with its burgeoning presence in the oil and gas industry, Weststar Aviation Services projects future revenue streams upwards of RM2bil from the provision of helicopter services in other African nations, with the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal and Mozambique earmarked as strong potential markets.

Weststar Aviation Services foresee that there is at least another US\$1bil worth of contracts for helicopter services in West Africa in the next 24 months.

With the contract with Tullow Oil, Weststar Aviation Services intends to participate in all these tenders to strengthen its position in West Africa.



**It's a deal:** Muhammad (left) exchanging contract documents with Mooney.