



دبي لخدمات الملاحة الجوية
DUBAI AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

OUR PEOPLE'S SUCCESS STORIES

dans' people have made it one of the world's most dynamic air navigation providers, helping to shape aviation across the region.

From air traffic controllers to engineers, dans' standout professionals live the dans vision and values, keeping Dubai's skies safe, efficient, and ready for the future. Their stories prove that dans can attract, grow and keep the best.

From the control room to the boardroom

With approximately 30 years of experience in the aviation sector, H.E. CEO Ibrahim Ahli has played a pivotal role in positioning Dubai as a global air traffic hub. After graduating from Dubai Aviation College in 1996, he began his career as an Air Traffic Controller, later becoming an ATC Instructor and subsequently holding several key leadership roles, including Director of Air Navigation Services (ANS), SVP, COO, Deputy CEO, and, in 2023, CEO of dans. He also oversaw the transformation of dans into an independent Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) in 2014.

During his tenure, dans introduced advanced air traffic management systems, increased runway capacity from 29 to 40 movements per hour, and implemented a range of operational innovations. The organization now manages more than 1,500 daily movements and delivers over one million air navigation services annually across Dubai's airspace. dans has also expanded its commercial portfolio, providing air navigation services to the Emirates Flying Training Academy, technical support to Sharjah Airport, and a range of training and consultancy services to regional and international clients.

His strategic leadership has established dans as a recognized regional and global benchmark in air navigation service provision. In reflecting on the organization's culture, he notes:



Our greatest strength has always been our people. Technology evolves and airspace changes, but the professionalism, discipline, and resilience of our teams are what keep Dubai's skies safe and moving. If you bring curiosity, commitment, and a willingness to learn, dans will take you further than you imagine.

HE Ibrahim Ahli

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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From briefing services to air traffic services

Thani Al Thani's career in aviation from the outset was not just a job, it was a calling: he knew he belonged in the skies. Drawn to the intensity and precision of air traffic control, he began at ground level, with flight planning. He earned his air traffic controller (ATCO) license in 2003 and rose from ATC Assistant to Duty Manager, then to Head of Tower Operations.

His most pivotal move was unconventional: lateral rather than upward. He left the operational post to take on a junior management role. That decision set the stage for his transition to leadership and paved the way for his appointment as Vice President of Air Traffic Services, his current function. Additionally, Thani served as Deputy Chairman of the Flying Control Committee (FCC) for the Dubai Airshow 2025. Every role has deepened his dedication to safety and operational excellence.

His message to aspiring leaders is clear:

Love your craft. Think fast, act safe, and convert tough problems to opportunities. This field isn't for everyone, but if you've got the spark, we'll help you soar.

Thani Al Thani

VICE PRESIDENT AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES





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From London Gatwick Tower to Dubai Tower

Julian Rowley's path to becoming a Watch Manager at Dubai Tower began with a passion for aviation. Inspired by his pilot father, Julian's aviation journey started early, earning his Private Pilot License at 18. He then served as an instructor, later receiving a Royal Air Force flying scholarship. At ATC training school in 2000-2001 he discovered his true calling: he was posted to London Gatwick Tower in 2002, where he honed the precision and skills the role demands.

In 2006, drawn by Dubai's fast-paced airspace and global ambitions, Julian moved to the Gulf Region. Nearly two decades later, he has served across tower and radar operations, managed complex transitions. He has seen air traffic grow from 600 to more than 1,200 daily movements.

Now a Watch Manager, Julian leads a team of ten ATCOs in one of the world's busiest airspaces.. His advice to future ATCOs?



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You must be motivated,
enjoy the challenge,
and stay calm under
uncertainty. It's never a
quiet day in the tower.
“

Julian Rowley

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER -
WATCH MANAGER



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From aeronautical engineer and data scientist to Air Traffic Management Systems Engineer

Hamad Alawadhi's route to dans started with his fascination as a child with radio-controlled planes, later hosting stargazing events at college, before earning a BSc in aeronautical engineering.

He joined dans in 2018, having worked at Emirates Engineering and Dubai Airport, and been part of the National Development Program. dans introduced Hamad to key players within dans so he could develop working relationships, navigate his way through the organization and advance his understanding of its operations. As a young employee, he was entrusted with taking part in dans' new Air Traffic Management Systems upgrade. Hamad is also one of dans' innovation ambassadors and has been awarded for the highest number of ideas submitted on dans innovation platform Fekr@ in 2024-2025

By 2024, using his knowledge in software and hardware application development, Hamad had produced an array of mobile apps as a hobby. This meant he could take part in CreateApps Championship, an event under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamdan Ibn Muhammad Al-Maktoum. Out of 4,700 applicants, Hamad finished second in the innovation category and was among 12 finalists chosen to pitch in front of His Highness at The Museum of The Future, Dubai. He regards his journey within dans as crucial in enabling him to reach that stage.



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Sometimes you must step outside your comfort zone, face challenges, speak to others, and ask those difficult questions and without compromising safety, don't wait, just innovate and let the results speak for you

Hamad Alawadhi

AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
SENIOR ENGINEER



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From chemical engineering graduate to Air Traffic Controller

Noora Almheiri's journey to becoming an Air Traffic Controller at dans began in 2019. With a chemical engineering degree from the American University of Sharjah, she joined dans' National Development Programme, drawn to the challenge of ATC. The early days were daunting – new systems, high stakes, and a steep learning curve – but she soon found her footing.

Always ready to share knowledge, the team at dans helped her build confidence and embrace the precision the role demands. She is now proud to contribute to dans' mission of enabling excellence in air navigation. Through intense training and live operations, she's learned to stay alert under pressure and collaborate effectively. Joining the Youth Council has also allowed her to contribute to industry conversations and grow as a leader. Her advice to future controllers is:



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Never back down, keep learning, and thrive under pressure.
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NOORA ALMHEIRI
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER