

Work starts on new, quieter aircraft engine testing facility at Brussels Airport

13.8.2026 - | Brussels Airport

A new ground run-up enclosure (GRE) is being built at Brussels Airport to test aircraft engines at full power following maintenance. Thanks to the 15-metre high noise barriers, engine test-runs will cause significantly less noise nuisance for the surrounding area. The new facility is set to be completed by the end of March 2027.

Foundation work has started for a new ground run-up enclosure. The facility will be U-shaped, with noise barriers measuring 15 m in height to protect the surrounding area from excess noise. Depending on the type of aircraft and the distance from the site, this will result in a noise reduction of 10 decibels. A reduction of 10 decibels means that the sound volume is perceived as being half as loud. Local residents in Humelgem and Steenokkerzeel are expected to experience the biggest improvement.

"Engine run-up tests after maintenance are essential for aviation safety. With this investment, we are combining that safety requirement with a concrete reduction in noise nuisance for residents in our immediate vicinity. This new engine testing facility is just one initiative in our broader effort to create a more sustainable and quieter airport," according to **Arnaud Feist, Brussels Airport CEO**.

The ground run-up enclosure will be built in an area on the tarmac where several outdated buildings have been demolished. The site will cover a surface area of 8,000 m² — slightly larger than a football pitch — meaning it can also be used for larger aircraft such as the Airbus A350 or Boeing B787. The foundation works have started today. Paving works are set to follow next, with the noise barriers erected as a final step. The total investment amounts to more than €15 million.

Testing aircraft engines at full power following maintenance is an essential safety procedure and a regulatory requirement. Up until now, this was done in open space, but thanks to the new facility, tests can be carried out within an enclosure in future. Between 150 to 200 engine run-up tests are carried out every year. These are only carried out during daytime hours (7 am to 10 pm) to limit any excess noise for the surrounding area at night.

The works will have no impact on operations at the airport. The ground run-up enclosure is due to be completed by the end of March 2027.

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