

Bhatia Traders' Africa ambition in motion

By **Claire Malcolm** on November, 7 2017 | Retailers



A work in progress for several years, Bhatia Traders is now readying its expert team to launch Africa operations with a number of projects set to become a physical reality by the end of 2017.

The UAE-headquartered company is working on establishing presence in various channels with management agreements “in process” for diplomatic duty free, downtown stores and traditional airport duty free shops throughout the West Africa region.

“We are in the throes of expanding into the Democratic Republic of Congo where we are aiming to have operations up and running by year-end,” said Rajeev Bhatia, Managing Director, Bhatia Traders.

While he remains coy about the specifics of the company’s Africa ambition, Bhatia is especially excited about opportunities to create one-of-a-kind diplomatic duty free locations, as he explained: “We are talking about downtown diplomatic enclaves reserved exclusively for this unique community. Here they will be able to come and relax with access to restaurant and bar facilities, a business center and, of course, a full range of multi-category duty free products.

“The enclaves will cater to all levels of diplomatic staff including UN employees working in the region and those who don't have any facilities available within their compounds. We are looking at subsequently rolling this model out to the rest of Africa.”

Bhatia confirms that he has a verbal nod to green light the initiative, with final paperwork pending, and he plans to trial at least one location before taking the concept into other African markets.

“In the next six months or so we will be in a position to announce seven or eight exciting new opportunities, which will give us multiple operational exposure in West Africa, and from there we will reveal our plans for further expansion into other African nations,” he remarked.