

Virgin to develop a Hyperloop train in Malaga, Spain

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Spain's state-owned railway infrastructure administrator, ADIF, has signed an agreement with US transportation technology company Virgin Hyperloop One to create a new test center for the experimental travel system in Bobadilla (Málaga). When completed, it will be the company's first such facility in Europe.

The Advanced Technology Development and Testing Center is to be housed inside a high-speed railway warehouse that ADIF has on a 19,000 square meter property in the Andalusian municipality. Valued at around \$500 million (€432 million) and slated for inauguration by 2020, the facility would develop, test, and certify components and subsystems of the hyperloop technology.

The center would create an estimated 250 direct jobs for high-skilled workers

The investment is still pending an injection of €126 million in public aid from Spanish authorities.

"In return for this (\$500 million) investment, Virgin Hyperloop One would obtain €126 million in public aid through loans and grants to help establish the new center, to advance Virgin Hyperloop One's technology development and testing, and to stimulate regional economic growth and job creation," said the company in a statement.

Hyperloop technology, which is currently at the testing stage, is expected to transport people and freight at speeds of

around 1,200 kilometers per hour via electric propulsion through a low-pressure tube. The vehicle floats above the track using magnetic levitation and glides at airline speeds for long distances due to ultra-low aerodynamic drag, the company explains. Last year, a prototype reached a speed of 387 km/h at the company's test site in Nevada.

Under the terms of the agreement with Spanish authorities, components developed and tested in Bobadilla would be submitted for EU certification. Afterwards, the center would remain in Spain to provide support for operations, maintenance and international expansion.

ADIF and the Spanish Public Works Ministry estimate that the center would create 250 direct jobs for high-skilled workers over the next five years, as well as hundreds of indirect jobs.

The new project can also benefit from the high-tech environment, as it will be located inside the Andalusia Technology Park, which is home to around 60 companies specializing in railway technology innovation.

ADIF said that the US company selected Spain because of its experience in infrastructure engineering, abundance of highly skilled workers and leadership in high-speed rail technology.