Introduction

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) was one of the busiest airports in the world. For eight consecutive years since 2010, HKIA was ranked first in air cargo traffic and third in total international passenger traffic. In 2018, the airport handled 5.1 million tonnes of air cargo and 74.7 million international passengers.\(^1\)

HKIA occupied 1,255 hectares on Chek Lap Kok, a smaller island north of Lantau. Opened in 1998, it was the only airport for civil aviation in the territory. Over 73,000 people work at the airport to keep it running 24 hours a day throughout the year. Two terminals served passengers travelling on more than 120 airlines to over 220 destinations. It’s two runways—the north and south runways—enabled the airport to handle up to 68 flights per hour.

In 2011, Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA) released HKIA Master Plan 2030, which suggested two options for future development—(a) enhance the existing two-runway system or (b) upgrade to a three-runway system. Following a three-month public consultation, AA recommended the second option to the Hong Kong government. In March 2012, the government granted its in-principle approval. The proposed three-runway project involved a number of core works, including land reclamation and expansion of existing terminal building and facilities; and was estimated to cost about HK$86.3 billion (in 2011 prices).
Between 2012 and 2014, AA commissioned an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed three-runway project in parallel with the development of its associated designs. In 2014, the government approved the EIA report and officially affirmed the need for a three-runway system. The Hong Kong’s Chief Executive (CE) subsequently authorized the reclamation works required for the three-runway system.

The estimated cost of the project was HK$141.5 billion (in money-of-the-day prices), to be financed with borrowings (49 per cent), operational surplus (33 per cent), and airport construction fees payable by departing passengers (18 per cent). Currently, HKIA charged each departing passenger a fee ranging from HK$70 to HK$180 depending on flight duration, ticket class, and whether they were transiting or starting their flights from HKIA.

The three-runway project triggered tremendous debate and controversy in Hong Kong. Two activists even applied for a judicial review to stop the project. Opponents of the project argued that the EIA failed to properly account for the noise and air quality impact of the project and that it offered no mitigation measures to protect Chinese white dolphins in the surrounding waters. Apart from the environmental impacts, other controversies included the project’s economic costs and benefits, air space issues, and financing options.

Although construction of the third runway had already started, the project would likely be subjected to continued scrutiny by various groups.

**Background**

**Air transport in Hong Kong**

HKIA functioned as a large regional hub in East Asia. Located in the Southern coastal area of China, the airport covers half of the world’s population within a 5-hour flight radius.

Air transport was one of the major industries in Hong Kong. Air transport and service activities incidental to air transport generated a combined revenue of HK$156.5 billion in 2017, up from HK$154.0 billion and HK$144.2 billion in 2014 and 2013 respectively. However, its gross surplus fell by 8.4 per cent to HK$30.5 billion from the year before. Value added also declined to HK$61.4 billion from HK$63.2 billion in 2016. Air transport had the highest share in terms of both revenue and value added, accounting for 30.2 per cent of revenue and 41.4 per cent of value added in 2015.
In 2017, the industry comprised 154 companies and employed 46,100 workers. Among these, 11 were Hong Kong-based airline or helicopter companies, 64 were local representative offices of overseas airline companies, and 39 provided services incidental to air transport. Their combined revenues in 2017 were HK$116.4 billion, HK$1.6 billion, and HK$31.4 billion respectively. For most of these companies, HKIA was critical to their operations.

HKIA was the only airport for civil aviation in Hong Kong, and had been operating continuously since its opening in July 1998. Not only was it one of the busiest passenger airports in the world, but it was also one of the world’s busiest gateways for air cargo. In 2018, the airport processed 74.7 million travellers and 5.1 million tonnes of cargos. More than 120 airlines operated about 1,100 daily flights connecting HKIA to over 220 destinations worldwide, including 50 in Mainland China. Since 2000, HKIA has been recognized as one of the best airports in China, Asia, and globally more than 70 times.

HKIA occupied 1,255 hectares with its two terminals and two runways. The airport was initially opened with a single runway, but the second runway—together with its associated facilities—opened less than a year later in May 1999. According to the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) recommendation, this two-terminal, two-runway setup enabled the airport to handle a peak load of 68 flights per hour.

To cater to the growing air transport industry, a proposal to construct a third runway was put forward in 2011. The additional runway and its associated facilities was estimated to increase HKIA’s annual capacity to 102 million passengers, 8.9 million tonnes of cargos, and 607,000 aircraft movements by 2030. Following a public consultation, AA recommended the construction of the third runway; and in March 2015, the government officially approved the project.

AA and the Hong Kong government

AA was an incorporated statutory body established under the Airport Authority Ordinance (Chapter 483) in 1995. Its responsibilities included the provision, operation, development, and maintenance of HKIA. AA was wholly owned by the Hong Kong government, but not officially part of the civil service; and had its governance structured according to the Airport Authority Ordinance. AA’s Board consists of, in addition to the CEO, a Chairperson plus 8 to 15 other members appointed by the Hong Kong’s CE from various sectors. Currently, AA’s Board included the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury as well as the Secretary for Transport and Housing.
AA had a principal-agent relationship with the Hong Kong government. The government (the principal) delegated the power and responsibility for managing HKIA to AA (the agent), who was held accountable to the former. This delegation allowed the AA to function outside of the civil service bureaucracy and therefore act more efficiently to implement relevant aviation policies.11 AA’s board holds the organisation accountable to its organisational mission and to the government.

Within the government, the Transport and Housing Bureau and the Civil Aviation Department were the two main departments in charge of formulating and implementing aviation policy. The Aviation Development and Three-runway System Advisory Committee was chaired by the Secretary for Transport and Housing and included more than 20 other members. It advised the government on broad policy matters related to civil aviation, including HKIA’s three-runway system.12 Major policies were usually discussed and decided within the Executive Council (EC) chaired by the CE. Policies that involved legislation and public expenditure were also subject to deliberation and decision within the Legislative Council (LegCo).

Goals

On air transport policies, one of the Hong Kong government’s stated goals was to “enhance, in partnership with the Airport Authority, the competitiveness of the Hong Kong International Airport and promote Hong Kong as an international and regional aviation centre”.13

Similarly, AA endeavoured to make HKIA both the leading hub for international aviation and the key engine of Hong Kong’s economic growth. Its mission was to operate and develop HKIA (in collaboration with its partners) with high standards of safety, security, efficiency, and care for the environment. AA accorded a high degree of importance to commercial sustainability, exceeding customer expectations, developing human resources, and fostering a culture of innovation.14

As the government’s agent, AA was held accountable to a specific set of performance. These included:

- commercial performance in terms of economic value generated, distributed, and retained;
- operational performance in terms of passenger traffic, cargo throughput, aircraft movements, connectivity, airport safety, business continuity, customer satisfaction, and so on;
- environmental performance;15 and
- workplace performance.
With a shared goal of developing the air transport sector, both the Hong Kong government and AA continually looked for ways to enhance existing infrastructures and facilities to cope with the fast-growing aviation market, particularly for Greater China and Asia. This was due to the importance of the air transport industry and intense competition from neighbouring airports in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Bangkok, and Seoul, the majority of which already had plans to expand and upgrade their facilities.

Overview

The political system

Hong Kong was a Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China. Ever since Hong Kong’s administration was transferred from the United Kingdom in 1997, it had been based on the principle of ‘one country, two systems.’ This principle stipulated that for the first 50 years after 1997, Hong Kong would be able to retain its basic way of life and manage its laissez-faire, capitalistic economy with a high degree of autonomy. The constitutional framework as laid out in the Basic Law consisted of nine chapters with 160 articles.16

Under the Basic Law, the Hong Kong government was led by a CE with the authority to set government policies and issue executive orders (Article 48). To assist the CE in policymaking, a committee called the EC was formed (Article 54); comprised of members appointed by the CE (Article 55). The LegCo, being the legislative branch, could scrutinise the government’s work as well as review and approve the government’s budget (Article 73). The judiciary (i.e. the courts) wielded authority to adjudicate cases in accordance with Hong Kong’s laws (Articles 80 and 84). The Basic Law also granted Hong Kong residents the right to pursue legal action in judicial system against the government (Article 35).

Section 4 of Chapter V of the Basic Law focused on civil aviation. It stipulated that the Hong Kong government was responsible for maintaining the status of Hong Kong as a centre for international and regional aviation (Article 128); and for matters of routine business and technical management of civil aviation, including the management of airports and the provision of air traffic services within Hong Kong’s flight information region (Article 130).

Broadly speaking, the governing strategies of Hong Kong were guided by the “executive-led” principle and the rule of law. Hong Kong also had a vibrant civil society with a relatively high level of political participation by individuals and social/professional groups (especially when compared to the colonial era).17
The stakeholders

There were many stakeholders for HKIA’s future development, as would be the case for any other aviation policy. These included political parties, industry and business associations, environmental groups, resident groups, opinion leaders, and the general public.

Hong Kong’s political parties could be broadly split into pro- and anti-establishment camps. Parties in the pro-establishment camp, such as the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) and the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong (BPA), were often supportive of government policy. Conversely, parties in the anti-establishment camp including pan-democracy and localist groups such as the Democratic Party (DP), the Civic Party (CP), and Civic Passion (CP), were usually more critical of the government.

The relevant industry and business groups mainly came from aviation and tourism sectors. Notable examples included Tourism Board, Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, AsiaWorld-Expo, and airlines such as Cathay Pacific Airways, Cathay Dragon Airlines, Hong Kong Airlines, and Hong Kong Express Airways. These stakeholders were mainly concerned about Hong Kong’s economic competitiveness and the economic impact of the HKIA’s future development.

Major environmental groups included Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Worldwide Fund for Nature, the Conservancy Association, Green Sense, and the Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society. These groups focused on the environmental impact of the airport’s development, particularly as it related to increased pollution, the conservation of Chinese white dolphins, and the overall environmental sustainability of Hong Kong.

Resident groups comprised people living in Ma Wan and Tung Chung, which were close to the main flight paths and to the airport respectively. Residents in both areas were worried about the increased air and noise pollution that would come with higher air traffic at the airport post-expansion.18

Key opinion leaders included the former Director of the Hong Kong Observatory Lam Chiu-ying, former Legislative Council Member Edward Yiu Chung-yim, and Founding Chairman of the Professional Commons and Founding Member of the Civic Party Albert Lai Kwong-tak. These people were also convenors or members of People’s Aviation Watch, a civil society organization concerned about air space issues, construction cost, as well as environmental problems associated with the HKIA’s expansion.
**HKIA’s expansion options**

In 2011, AA published *Master Plan 2030*, detailing the rationale for upgrading HKIA and outlining two options to do so.

The first option was to maintain the existing two-runway system. However, this required expanding terminal and apron facilities such as passenger concourses and internal road infrastructure. The estimated cost was about HK$23.4 billion (in 2010 dollars). This would enable HKIA to handle up to 420,000 flight movements per year, up from the runway design capacity of 360,000 in 2010. However, this option would only be able to meet the estimated demand for air services in the medium term, reaching capacity sometime between 2019 and 2022. This option’s economic net present value (ENPV) over a 50-year life span of the infrastructure would be about HK$432 billion. This option would create an estimated 101,000 additional jobs by 2030.

The second option was to expand HKIA into a three-runway system by building a third runway and its associated terminal, airfield, and apron facilities. The estimated cost was HK$86.2 billion (in 2010 dollars) and would require reclaiming about 650 hectares. This would enable HKIA to handle up to 620,000 flight movements per year; meeting long-term demand for air transport up to and possibly beyond 2030. This option’s ENPV would be about HK$912 billion. The second option would create an estimated 141,000 additional jobs by 2030.

AA evaluated both options against a number of considerations such as air connectivity, economic benefits, engineering feasibility, environmental issues, and funding. One major concern for AA was the negative consequences of HKIA running out of capacity. This would degrade quality of aviation services and affect Hong Kong’s overall competitiveness. It was AA’s assessment that only the second option could sufficiently cater to Hong Kong’s long-term needs.

**Constraints**

AA emphasised that the time for making a decision was limited. Air traffic had been growing continually and HKIA was expected to reach capacity within the next few years. Both development options required long lead times to complete detailed studies and obtain the necessary regulatory approvals. In fact, construction lead time for the three-runway option was about 10 years. A decision would have to be made as quickly as possible to “seize this golden opportunity to create a wealth of new benefits for Hong Kong and retain its position as the premier international aviation hub.”
AA projected that either option would result in a funding gap. AA had to operate HKIA according to sustainable commercial principles, and the capital expenditure required by either option would exceed its prudent borrowing capacity. Further discussion on the best way to bridge this gap was needed between AA and the Hong Kong government.

Furthermore, AA acknowledged environmental concerns for the three-runway option, such as noise and air pollution, and harm to the marine ecology, which was the natural habitat of Chinese white dolphins. Should the three-runway option be chosen, an EIA would be conducted in line with statutory requirements.

**The Policy Dilemma**

AA, together with the Hong Kong government, faced a tough choice. Would building the third runway be the right decision among policy alternatives such as maintaining or expanding the existing two-runway system?

**Public Opinion**

AA’s Public Consultation Exercise following the release of *Master Plan 2030* gathered responses from 20,893 respondents. When asked about the importance of different considerations in HKIA’s expansion, most respondents agreed with the following to varying degrees:21

1. Benefit to Hong Kong’s air connectivity (89.7 per cent);
2. Benefit to the quality of airport services and facilities (89.1 per cent);
3. Benefit to Hong Kong’s competitiveness (87.5 per cent);
4. Benefit to Hong Kong’s economic growth (87.1 per cent);
5. Creating more jobs opportunities (85.1 per cent);
6. Making travel more convenient (78.5 per cent);
7. Environmental impact of the project (69.4 per cent); and
8. Construction cost (66.5 per cent);

When asked if HKIA should therefore expand to cope with the future air traffic demand, 83 per cent of respondents were supportive (48.2 per cent strongly agreed and 34.8 per cent agreed). 5 per cent were in disagreement (2.9 per cent disagreed and 2.1 per cent strongly disagreed). 12.0 per cent were neutral.
In terms of the options for expansion, 73.0 per cent of respondents preferred the three-runway system (Option 2); 11.1 per cent preferred upgrading the existing two-runway system (Option 1); and 15.9 per cent were neutral.

Survey respondents were also asked to evaluate the two expansion options against the eight considerations above. When considering the first six criteria in isolation, a majority of respondents preferred Option 2 (ranging from 55.6 per cent to 71.1 per cent) and 10 per cent preferred Option 1. In contrast, when considering the last two criteria in isolation (environmental impact and construction cost), fewer than half of the respondents preferred Option 2 (37.4 per cent when considering environmental impact and 41.6 per cent when considering construction cost) and about one quarter preferred Option 1 (29.5 per cent and 24.8 per cent respectively).

As to whether AA should make a decision immediately on HKIA’s expansion, 45.1 per cent strongly agreed and 34.8 per cent agreed, while 3.8 per cent disagreed and 2.5 per cent strongly disagreed. 13.8 per cent were neutral.

Finally, there were some shared concerns. One was that the government needed to negotiate for more air space with Mainland China in order to enhance the capacity of Hong Kong’s airport, which might not be easy. Another was that construction cost for the third runway was expensive, and careful management would be needed to keep the project within budget. There were a number of comments on the large environmental impact from constructing the third runway, especially with regard to carbon emissions, noise pollution, and damage to the habitat of Chinese white dolphins; all which would need to be minimised. Many respondents suggested that both the social and environmental costs of the construction had to be properly accounted for in the environmental impact assessment.

In contrast, a 2015 survey by People’s Aviation Watch and several major environmental groups with 617 respondents reported that 68 per cent agreed AA should focus on enhancing the existing two-runway system before considering a third runway. 58 per cent agreed that the Government should not approve construction of the third runway until air space issues were resolved with the Mainland China.22

In another 2015 survey by the Democratic Party with 814 respondents, 15.4 per cent strongly disagreed and 37.3 per cent disagreed that the Government should build the third runway at the projected cost of HK$141.5 billion; while 33.5 per cent agreed and 8.6 per cent strongly agreed; and 5.2 per cent were neutral. 28.9 per cent were worried about contamination of the aquatic habitat of Chinese white dolphins from the third runway’s construction; while 56.3 per cent were unworried.23
**Economic impact**

In 2015, ESA Strategy Consultants conducted economic impact study for AA’s *Master Plan 2030*. HKIA’s economic contribution was assessed for its economic impact to three sectors: (1) aviation-related businesses in Hong Kong; (2) non-aviation businesses at HKIA; and (3) aviation-facilitated tourism and trade.24

According to this study, the Quantifiable Economic Impact of HKIA was HK$2,530,376 million in terms of revenue, HK$288,299 million for value added, and 474,036 for total employment in 2012.

ESA projected HKIA’s future economic impact for three scenarios:

- A “status quo” scenario, in which HKIA would only go ahead with investments already committed before 2012 for the 2012 to 2015 period. Passenger throughput would stay at 57 million from 2015 to 2030, with cargo throughput reaching a limit of 4.4 million tonnes. By 2030, this would will generate revenues of HK$2,642,764 million across the 3 sectors studied, with value added HK$271,711 million (or 7.3 per cent of Hong Kong’s GDP) and total employment of 414,138;

- Scenario 1, in which HKIA’s existing two runways were optimised. Passenger throughput would increase from 65 to 77 million by 2030, and cargo throughput from 4.8 to 6.1 million. Revenues and value added here were HK$3,754,379 million and HK$409,329 million (or 10.9 per cent of GDP) respectively, and total employment was 656,007. Net Economic Impact (calculated by accounting for construction and maintenance costs, then subtracting the economic impact of the “status quo” scenario) was HK$1,111,616 million for revenue and HK$137,620 million (or 3.7 per cent of GDP) for value added; and

- Scenario 2, in which a third runway is also constructed. Passenger throughput would increase from 65 million in 2015 to 102 million in 2030, while the cargo throughput at 4.8 million tonnes in 2015 to 8.9 million tonnes in 2030. Revenues and value added here were HK$5,506,966 million and HK$619,632 million (or 16.5 per cent of GDP) respectively, and total employment of 1,023,851. Net Economic Impact here was HK$2,864,202 million for revenue and HK$347,925 million (or 9.3 per cent of GDP) for value added.

However, some critics suggested that the projected economic benefits of the third runway might not be realised. Increasing HKIA’s capacity would not necessarily lead to more flights because the Hong Kong government would also need to secure airspace rights in negotiation with authorities in Mainland China. Such negotiations would be difficult given that more airspace for Hong Kong would impact Shenzhen’s airport operations. Without an airspace agreement, the additional runway would achieve only part of its design capacity.
Environmental impact

The EIA for the construction of the third runway considered 13 environmental impacts. These were air quality, hazard to human life, noise, water quality, sewerage and sewage treatment, waste management, land contamination, terrestrial ecology, marine ecology, fisheries, cultural heritage, and health. Each of these impacts were evaluated for both the construction and the operation phases.25

With proper mitigation measures during the construction phase, there were no expected impacts or adverse residual impacts for the 13 categories studied. There were moderate to substantial landscape and visual impacts, such as to the coastal waters of North Lantau and inshore water landscape and roadside amenity planting. However, these impacts were considered marginally acceptable with mitigation.

Similarly, with proper mitigation measures during the operation phase, there were no expected impacts or adverse residual impacts for the 13 categories. In terms of hazard to human life, the individual risk level was considered low at $1 \times 10^{-5}$ per year. For landscape and visual impacts, the coastal waters of North Lantau and its inshore water landscape would be substantially affected. However, with proper mitigation measures the impacts were expected to be reduced and become marginally acceptable.

Overall, the construction of the third runway was expected to be environmentally acceptable if the recommended mitigation measures were implemented. The planned construction and mitigation measures were also in compliance with relevant environmental law and standards.

In addition, a carbon emissions study was conducted to measure the greenhouse gas emissions from departing and arriving flights as well as ground activities. With the third runway completed and operating in 2023, there would be an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from 2023 to 2031. However, this difference would stabilise towards 2038 because the runway system would reach capacity and aircraft would become more fuel efficient. The total net present value (NPV) of carbon costs for 50 years (i.e. 2012-2061) was US$3.39 billion for the “status quo” option and US$4.34 billion for the third-runway option in 2013 dollars. The 50-year difference in NPV would be just US$0.95 billion or about HK$7 billion in 2013 dollars.26

The EIA findings were not without controversy. Criticisms included that its projections were too optimistic, particularly for air quality impact; that its criteria and methods of measurement were too selective or inappropriate, such as those for evaluating water quality and impact to fisheries; and that some mitigation measures were insufficient to safeguard the habitat of Chinese white
dolphins. In fact, some activists and interest groups challenged the government’s decision to issue the environmental permit to AA for the third runway construction despite the flaws of the EIA reports. These groups argued that uncertainties in the potential environmental impact from building the third runway meant that it was imperative for AA to take a precautionary approach and not start or continue with the third-runway project.

**Conclusion**

The construction of the three-runway system at HKIA was one of the costliest infrastructure projects in Hong Kong. For some stakeholders, the HK$141.5 billion investment was worth it for its long-term economic benefits to Hong Kong’s economy. Others were doubtful the additional runway would be cost-effective or the trade-offs in environmental degradation were worthwhile. At any rate, the government had already greenlit the project and AA had committed to seeing it through. Although construction for the project was currently underway, debates were likely to persist within civil society on whether the three-runway system was the best policy choice after all.
**Exhibit 1: The Three-Runway System of the Hong Kong International Airport**

Three-Runway System Layout

Exhibit 2: Organizational Structure of the Airport Authority Hong Kong

**Exhibit 3: Estimated Cost and Economic Impact of the Three-Runway System**

*Estimated cost*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of Works</th>
<th>Total (in HK$ billion) (money-of-the-day prices)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Formation and Marine Works</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airfield Facilities</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apron Works</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal 2 Modification/Expansion</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Runway Passenger Building</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated People Mover System</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage Handling Systems</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport Support Facilities and Utilities</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>141.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimated economic impact*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012 (Actual)</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic contribution (Direct + Indirect + Induced)</td>
<td>HK$94 billion</td>
<td>HK$133 billion</td>
<td>HK$184 billion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of GDP</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct employment</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>89,000</td>
<td>123,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect + induced employment</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>119,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2012 - 2061</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HK$591 billion</strong></td>
<td><strong>HK$1,046 billion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Economic contribution in 2012 dollars

(Source: [http://www.threerunwaysystem.com/media/1729/10022017_en_3rs_infokit.pdf](http://www.threerunwaysystem.com/media/1729/10022017_en_3rs_infokit.pdf); accessed March 12, 2017)
Exhibit 4: Mitigating Measures for Environmental Impact (Highlights)

(Source: http://www.threerunwaysystem.com/media/1231/hkia3rs-2014issue05.pdf; accessed March 12, 2017)
### Exhibit 5: Timeline: Development of the Third-Runway Project (Airport Authority)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008-2010</th>
<th>Preliminary research and compilation of the HKIA Master Plan 2030.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **2011**  | • In June, the AA published the HKIA Master Plan 2030 which outlined two options for HKIA's future development. A three-month public consultation was carried out to collect views and feedback of the public.  
• In December, the AA announced the findings of the independent report compiled by the University of Hong Kong's Social Sciences Research Centre, based on over 24,000 questionnaires received during the public consultation exercise. According to the report, 73 per cent of respondents supported the proposal to expand HKIA into a three-runway system. |
| **2012**  | • In March, the Government granted the AA its in-principle approval to adopt, for planning purposes, the three-runway system as the future development direction for HKIA.  
• In August, the AA received the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study Brief from the Director of Environmental Protection which sets out the scope of environmental issues to be addressed in the EIA study. Based on the Study Brief, the AA commenced the EIA studies covering 12 environmental areas, assessing the potential environmental impact of the project. |
| **2013**  | • Conducting the EIA study  
• Engaging and communicating with various stakeholders about various aspects of the EIA study. An exhibition and public forums were held in August 2013 to update the public on the progress of the EIA.  
• Developing associated designs for the three-runway system |
| **2014**  | • The AA submitted the EIA report to Environmental Protection Department in April 2014.  
• The EIA report was available for the public to inspect from June to July 2014.  
• Two sessions of public forum were held in June 2014 to gauge the views of the public on the EIA of the 3RS.  
• The Director of Environmental Protection approved the EIA report and issued the Environmental Permit on 7 November 2014. |
| **2015**  | • The Executive Council affirmed the need to have the three-runway system on 17 March.  
• On 8 May 2015, the Lands Department issued a Government Notice for the reclamation works of HKIA's expansion into a 3RS. In addition, the Town Planning Board issued a Government Notice announcing the amendments to the approved Chek Lap Kok Outline Zoning Plan.  
• The Airport Authority announced the financial arrangements for the 3RS on 29 September. |
| **2016**  | • On 26 April, the Chief Executive-in-Council granted the approval for the draft Chek Lap Kok Outline Zoning Plan, as well as the authorization of the reclamation under the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance.  
• Construction of three-runway system kicked off on 1 August. |

Endnotes


4 The cost spread across the scheduled duration of the project and hence settled in prices of different years involved.


11 Ian Scott. The Public Sector in Hong Kong, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 2010.


15 Hong Kong International Airport. “Objectives and targets.” Environmental Performance. Available at: https://www.hongkongairport.com/eng/pdf/media/publication/sustainability/15_16/E_Performance.pdf; Environmental performance is measured in terms of material use, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste and water management; workplace performance is measured in terms of hiring, turnover, employee training, occupational health and safety, and family friendly practice.

17 Ibid; The “executive-led” principle meant that the government was led by the CE and bureaucrats in his administration; with the EC officially having an advisory role only.


19 Hong Kong International Airport. Our Airport Our Future.

20 Ibid.

21 Social Sciences Research Centre. Independent Compilation of Views and Reporting for HKIA Master Plan Public Consultation Exercise: Report Submitted to Airport Authority Hong Kong. The University of Hong Kong. 2011.


