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ACE Paper 7/2014

For advice on 15 September 2014

**Report on the 128th
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting**

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee (EIASC) has considered the EIA report on “Expansion of Hong Kong International Airport into a Three-Runway System” (the Project) under Section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO). The EIA report was submitted by the Airport Authority Hong Kong (the Applicant).

2. Members are requested to consider the views of the EIASC in paragraph 12 below and advise on the way forward for handling the EIA report.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. The existing Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has been in operation since 1998. According to the Applicant, HKIA is now reaching its maximum handling capacity within the existing airport footprint. To meet the increasing demand of passenger and cargo traffic, the Applicant proposes to expand HKIA into a Three-Runway System (3RS) to be fully operational in 2023.

4. The Applicant advises that the maximum handling capacity of HKIA was originally designed to meet 376 000 air traffic movements (ATMs) per year. However, the latest air traffic demand at HKIA is forecast to reach some 620 000 ATMs per year by 2032. Without the Project, HKIA will have to be operated under a constrained mode with adverse consequences. The impacts would be far-reaching and would undermine Hong Kong’s status as an international aviation

hub and its overall competitiveness. The Applicant considers that the Project is the best option to avoid these adverse consequences.

5. The EIA report assesses that while the Project will fully comply with the EIAO requirements without adverse residual environmental impacts, there are opportunities for incorporating additional environmental elements into the Project at the design, construction and operation stages. These opportunities will include minimization of night-time operation at South Runway, increased flexibility on preferential use of flight tracks to minimize aircraft noise impact to populated areas, reduced aircraft taxiing and holding time to lower aircraft emissions, beneficial use of fill materials generated by other projects, and incorporation of energy efficiency, water conservation and waste recycling at airport buildings and facilities.

6. Please refer to ACE-EIA paper 3/2014 on the EIA report at **Annex A** for details of the Project.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

7. The Director of Environmental Protection (DEP), in conjunction with the relevant authorities, considers that the EIA report has met the requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum of EIA Process. Comments from the public and ACE will be taken into account by DEP in deciding whether or not to approve the EIA report under the EIAO.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

8. The public inspection period of the EIA report lasted from 20 June to 19 July 2014. During the period, a total of 29 133 sets of public comments on the EIA report had been made to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). A summary of the comments received was issued to Members for reference before the EIASC meetings.

9. The EIASC had five meetings on 11, 13, 18 and 19 August 2014 as well as 2 September 2014 to deliberate the EIA report. Non-EIASC ACE Members were also invited to join the meetings. The EIASC also had a site visit to the SkyPier on 25 August 2014 to better understand the operation of high speed ferry service there.

10. In response to the questions/concerns raised by individual Members before the meeting as well as the comments raised at the EIASC meetings, the Applicant has provided additional information for Members' reference at **Annexes B to J**.

11. A summary of the key issues discussed at the EIASC meetings is at **Annex K**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

12. Having regard to the findings of the EIA report and the supplementary information provided by the Applicant, EIASC agreed to recommend to the full Council to endorse the EIA report with the following conditions and recommendations –

Conditions of endorsement

Marine Ecology

- (a) The project proponent should advance the preparatory work for the designation of the marine park as recommended in the EIA report, including a study on the details of the designation, consultation with stakeholders and incorporation of enhancement measures such as deploying artificial reefs, releasing fish fry, etc., on the understanding that the designation of the marine park should be completed before the operation of the project.
- (b) The project proponent should, in consultation with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), submit the marine park proposal including the proposed size and management plan of the marine park as recommended in the EIA report to the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) for comment before the commencement of marine works.
- (c) The project proponent should establish an independent Marine Ecology Enhancement Fund (The Fund). A detailed Marine Ecology Conservation Plan (The Plan) should be formulated for the conservation of marine life particularly the Chinese White Dolphins (CWD) within the Hong Kong and the Pearl River Estuary (PRE) waters. The Plan should cover the relevant marine parks and other important marine habitats in Hong Kong to enhance their carrying capacity, “dolphin friendly” activities, the recovery of fisheries resources, and scientific research for the overall benefits of marine mammals,

particularly CWD, in the PRE during the construction and the operation of the project. A management committee should also be set up for The Fund with members from different stakeholders including relevant academics, green groups and dolphin experts for effective implementation of The Plan. The project proponent should submit The Plan to ACE for comment before making the submission to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) for approval before implementation.

- (d) The project proponent should devise a Marine Traffic Routes and Management Plan (The Plan) for high speed ferries (HSF) of the SkyPier. The Plan should include the imposition of a speed limit within Hong Kong waters which are hotspots of the CWD during the construction phase so as to minimize chances of collision and disturbance to the CWD, and to cap the number of SkyPier HSF at the current level of operation (i.e. an annual daily average of 99) prior to designation of the proposed marine park. The Plan for HSF should be submitted to ACE for comment prior to submitting to DEP for approval before commencement of the construction works.
- (e) The project proponent should develop a Coral Translocation Plan which should include information of coral colonies to be translocated, the recipient area, translocation methodology and monitoring of transplanted coral colonies.
- (f) The project proponent should not use underwater percussive piling for the project.

Fisheries

- (g) The project proponent should establish an independent Fisheries Enhancement Fund (The Fund) and submit a detailed Fisheries Management Plan (The Plan) in collaboration with fishermen for supporting the fishing industry and enhancing fisheries resources in the western Hong Kong waters especially the Lantau waters. A management committee should also be set up for The Fund with members from fishermen and relevant stakeholders for effective implementation of The Plan. The project proponent should submit The Plan to ACE for comment before making the submission to DEP for approval before implementation.

Terrestrial Ecology

- (h) The project proponent should develop an Egrettry Survey Plan which should include pre-construction survey(s) during the breeding season to update the

latest boundary of the egrettry with a view to confirming the daylighting location. The daylighting point should be kept to the minimum in size and be situated as far away from the latest egrettry boundary as practicable.

Water Quality

- (i) The project proponent should devise a Silt Curtain Deployment Plan which should include the construction programme and details on the design, operation and maintenance of silt curtains to be deployed during construction.
- (j) The project proponent should employ construction methods for marine works that would not create adverse water quality impacts at water sensitive receivers.
- (k) The project proponent should draw up detailed technical guidelines to avoid adverse water quality impacts for compliance of contractors over the operation of barges and construction vessels to be deployed in the project area.

Landscape and Visual

- (l) The project proponent should, in consultation with the Planning Department, formulate a Landscape and Visual Plan for submission to DEP to specify quality criteria on the overall landscape and visual environment of the project with broad-brush targets to be achieved for greening or planting as benchmarked against international standards and/or best practices.

Waste Management

- (m) The project proponent should adopt a waste minimization strategy and develop a detailed Waste Management Plan (The Plan) setting out measures to minimize waste generation through avoidance, minimization, recovery, recycling and reuse of different categories of waste, for construction and operation phases of the project.

As part of The Plan, the project proponent should maximize the use of construction and demolition (C&D) materials for the land formation work during the construction phase of the project. The project proponent should critically review the scheduling of the surcharge operations to avoid, or otherwise, minimize generation of residual C&D materials requiring disposal during and at the end of the land formation work.

As part of The Plan, the project proponent should incorporate the

infrastructural design of the project, suitable facilities to effect separation, storage, recovery, recycling and reuse of different categories of waste generated during operation phase of the project.

Environmental Monitoring and Audit

- (n) The project proponent should develop clear and enforceable action and limit levels and the associated event action plans with clear rationale for CWD, air, noise, water quality and waste monitoring for approval by DEP prior to the commencement of construction works. These plans should include provisions for stopping the relevant parts of works if the respective limit levels are exceeded.
- (o) The project proponent should, as a part of the Environmental Monitoring and Audit (EM&A) programme, devise a Marine Mammal Watching Plan (The Plan) for approval by DEP prior to the commencement of marine works. The Plan should include regular inspection of silt curtains, visual inspection of the waters around silt curtains and the works areas, and a response plan to cope with any unpredicted incidents such as any marine mammal including but not limited to CWD found within the waters surrounded by silt curtains or the works areas.
- (p) The project proponent should draw up a Spill Response Plan (The Plan) with details on the actions to be taken in the event of accidental spillage of oil or other hazardous chemicals during construction and operation of the project. The Plan should include vessels operating for the project, with specific provisions for protecting the water quality and marine ecology as well as for the neighbouring residents.
- (q) For the purpose of confirming that the actual aircraft noise performance meets the Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) Contour 25 predicted in the EIA report, the project proponent should update the NEF Contour 25 for submission to DEP with actual operational data after a full year of operation of the project, and thereafter once every five years. The project proponent should continue to review the operational data annually and if there are major deviations from the assumptions adopted in the EIA report, interim updating of the NEF should be performed.
- (r) The project proponent should develop an Aircraft Noise Monitoring Plan with noise measurement in terms of decibel (dB(A)) targeting at sensitive locations in the Ma Wan, Tsuen Wan, Ting Kau, Siu Lam and Tuen Mun

areas for easy reference by the affected communities.

- (s) The project proponent should set up community liaison groups comprising members of the affected communities to facilitate communication, enquiry and complaint handling on environmental issues related to the project. A detailed Complaint Management Plan including a dedicated complaint hotline and an email channel should be established for timely response to complaints.

Recommendations

- (a) The project proponent should further discuss with the relevant authorities in Hong Kong and the Mainland to adopt a reduced speed limit for HSF operated by the SkyPier and other operators when navigating in important CWD habitats in Hong Kong and PRE waters which is one of the core areas for CWD; and should make efforts to avoid entering the core area of PRE CWD National Nature Reserve if possible.
- (b) The project proponent should target for the BEAM Plus Platinum certification taking into account its pledge to develop Hong Kong International Airport as the greenest airport.
- (c) The project proponent should consider further waste minimization and recycling strategy and develop a Food Waste Management Plan (The Plan) for food & beverage outlets managed by his tenants in the Airport facilities. The Plan should include appropriate facilities to support sustainable food waste separation and reduction.
- (d) The project proponent should draw up a Relics and Antiques Rescue Plan to resurrect items of conservation value/significance in the event of archaeological discovery during construction of the project.

ADVICE SOUGHT

- 13. Members are advised to consider whether the recommendations in paragraph 12 above should be approved.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
September 2014