

EXPANSION OF HELIPORT FACILITIES AT MACAU FERRY TERMINAL

PROJECT PROFILE

1. BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 Project Title

Expansion of Heliport Facilities at Macau Ferry Terminal.

1.2 Purpose and Nature of the Project

The cross-boundary helicopter traffic between Hong Kong and Macau registered a significant growth rate in the past decade and the demand is expected to grow in future. Moreover, with the continuing economic development and increasing integration in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, there is significant potential to capture the untapped market for developing cross-boundary helicopter services, in particular to the time-sensitive travellers. To cater for the increasing demand for the cross-boundary helicopter traffic, it is proposed to expand the existing cross-boundary heliport at the rooftop of the Macau Ferry Terminal (MFT).

1.3 Name of Project Proponent

Civil Aviation Department, the Government of the HKSAR.

1.4 Location and Scale of Project and History of Site

The existing cross-boundary heliport consists of one elevated landing/take-off helipad, which is located at the rooftop of the Inner Pier of the MFT. The heliport facilities to be included in the expansion project will comprise:

- Construction of a new elevated landing/take-off helipad of size 42m x 42m to the east of the existing helipad.
- Construction of a taxiway to connect the existing and proposed helipads.
- Renovation, extension and re-location of the existing heliport supporting facilities such as passenger lounge, crew office, flight control room, etc.
- Provision of additional means of access, e.g. escalators, to/from the helipads.

The expansion project will also include the following three optional items, the

incorporation of which will be decided at a later stage:

- Expanding the existing helipad from 29.75m x 29.75m to 32m x 32m.
- Upgrading of part of the existing marine refueling facilities at the eastern end of the Outer Pier to support helicopter refueling or construction of new helicopter refueling facilities at the western end of the Inner Pier of the MFT.
- Provision of segregation facilities and measures to accommodate domestic helicopter services.

The locations of the existing and proposed landing/take-off helipads, the proposed taxiway and helicopter refueling facilities are shown in Plan 1. Other heliport supporting facilities may be located within the MFT Building or its rooftop. To cope with the provision of these new facilities, the MFT Building may require structural strengthening works.

The existing MFT heliport, which has been in operation since 1990, is owned by the Government and leased to a private operator under a Tenancy Agreement. It is allowed to operate from 8:00 a.m. to 10:59 p.m. everyday. Upon completion of the expansion project, there will be two helipads operating concurrently at the MFT.

1.5 Number and Types of Designated Projects to be Covered by the Project Profile

Only one Designated Project is covered in this Project Profile. In accordance with Item B.2 in Part I of Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) (Cap. 499), this project is a Designated Project as it involves “a helipad within 300m of existing or planned residential development”.

The existing helipad is exempted from the provisions in the EIAO as it has been in operation before 1st April 1998 when the EIAO came into effect.

1.6 Name and Telephone Number of Contact Person(s)

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2. OUTLINE OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

It is intended to engage consultants to conduct the detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study once the EIA Study Brief is issued. The consultants will be responsible for the preparation, submission and obtaining the approval of the EIA report. The EIA study is tentatively scheduled to commence in the third quarter of 2004 for submission of the EIA report in about 8 months time.

Upon approval of the EIA report, prospective heliport developer-cum-operators will be invited to bid for the MFT heliport expansion project through open tender. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining the Environmental Permit for the expansion project in around the third quarter of 2005. Taking into consideration the timeframe for detailed design, the construction work for the expansion project is estimated to commence in mid 2006 for completion in end 2007.

3. POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The possible transient and permanent impacts of this project are summarised below:

Construction Phase

Noise

The construction activities may generate intermittent and transient noise, which may affect the noise sensitive receivers located close to the MFT. In order not to disrupt the operation of the existing helipad, some construction works may be required at the nighttime.

Air Quality

The construction plant may produce dust and gaseous emissions, which may have impact on air quality in the vicinity of the site. However, having considered the relatively small scale of this project, the air quality impact is expected to be insignificant.

Vibration

There may be structural-borne vibration caused by the strengthening work of the existing MFT building.

Water Quality

The water quality of the part of Victoria Harbour in the vicinity of the MFT may be affected by (i) the construction wastes generated by the structural reinforcement work for the existing MFT Building; and (ii) the surface runoff from the construction activities, if they are not properly discharged, collected or disposed of.

Landscape and Visual Quality

Given the urban context of the location of the proposed development and the relatively small scale of the construction activities that will be involved, there will not be any significant impact to the natural landscape. The visual impact is also expected to be insignificant.

Other Impacts

Other possible environmental impacts such as land contamination and construction wastes arising from the construction activities are expected to be minimal.

Operation Phase

Noise

The key environmental concern is the cumulative noise impact that will be resulted from the concurrent operations of the existing and the proposed helipads, and the helicopter operations along the flight paths for the MFT heliport. The noise sensitive receivers will include the residential buildings and commercial/residential buildings located in the vicinity of the heliport and its flight paths.

In the consultancy study commissioned by the Civil Aviation Department in 2001, a preliminary assessment has been conducted to assess the general environmental acceptability of the proposed expansion of the MFT heliport. Three noise sensitive buildings within 300m of the MFT heliport were identified in the consultancy study at that time. The assessment indicates that, during daytime, the expanded heliport could accommodate operations of two helicopters currently deployed for cross-boundary services without causing unacceptable noise impact to the identified noise sensitive receivers. Detailed quantitative measurements and assessments of the cumulative noise impact of the concurrent operations of the existing and proposed helipads at the MFT and

along the flight paths to all possible noise sensitive receivers (including those along the coast of the Western District) will be carried out in the EIA Study.

Air Quality

The air quality may be affected by the increased frequency of helicopter movements and the hydrocarbon vapour generated from the helicopter refueling facilities.

Risk of Helicopter Refueling Facilities

A risk assessment will be conducted to assess the possible hazard of the proposed helicopter refueling facilities to the operations in the MFT and the environment.

Landscape and Visual Quality

Given the urban context of the location of the proposed development and the relatively small scale of the heliport expansion in relation to the surrounding built-up environment, the operation of the expanded heliport will not generate significant landscape and visual impacts.

Other Impacts

The operation of the new helipad and taxiway is not expected to generate other significant environmental impacts to the water quality, land contamination and waste management.

4. MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The MFT is a busy cross-boundary ferry terminal. The areas to the immediate south of the proposed project site are mainly the commercial and mixed commercial/residential buildings, whereas the areas to the north of the site are the MFT Outer Pier and Victoria Harbour. The Outer Pier is proposed to accommodate berthing and unberthing of cruise ferries. The Government Pier and the Outlying District Ferry Services Piers are located to the east of the project site, whereas the ex-Sheung Wan Gala Point is on the west.

The noise sensitive receivers identified in the surrounding environment of the proposed project site include some existing buildings which are used primarily for residential or commercial/residential purposes and are located in the vicinity of the heliport and the flight paths for the heliport.

The majority of the existing built-up areas in the vicinity of the MFT heliport and its flight paths are zoned Commercial/Residential on the Sai Ying Pun and Sheung Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H3/20. They will be the potential noise sensitive receivers if the existing commercial buildings are to be redeveloped for residential use.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES TO BE INCORPORATED IN THE DESIGN AND ANY FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Construction Phase

Noise

To mitigate the possible construction noise, the measures as recommended in ProPECC PN 2/93 “Noise from Construction Activities – Non-statutory”, quieter powered machinery and/or movable noise barriers will be used as appropriate and when necessary to reduce the noise generated to acceptable levels. To mitigate nighttime construction noise impact, relevant legislation, regulation and guidelines on nighttime construction will be observed and followed.

Air Quality

The potential dust impact will be controlled by the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 311) and its subsidiary Regulations. Appropriate dust suppression measure such as watering will be used as appropriate and when necessary.

Vibration

The possible structural-borne vibration caused by the strengthening work of the existing MFT building will be mitigated by proper design of the helipad and other heliport supporting facilities, and appropriate construction practices.

Water Quality

The possible water quality impact generated by the structural reinforcement works and construction wastes will be mitigated by proper engineering design and appropriate construction practices.

Operation Phase

Noise

Civil Aviation (Aircraft Noise) Ordinance (Cap. 312) is the legislative means to control the helicopter noise arising from the operation of the heliport. Administrative means will also be used as appropriate to reduce the noise impact of the heliport operations on the nearby residents. These may include imposing restrictions on the hours of the heliport operations and the number of flights using the heliport in the evening.

Air Quality

The air quality impact of the helicopter operation is expected to be infinitesimal because the turbulence created by the helicopter rotors will readily dissipate the exhaust gases from the helicopter itself. With the use of proper engineering design and appropriate operation practices, the air quality impact of the minimal hydrocarbon vapour, if any, generated from the helicopter refueling facilities is expected to be insignificant.

Risk of Helicopter Refueling Facilities

A quantitative risk assessment with appropriate recommendations on the emergency action plan in respect of the helicopter refueling facilities will be prepared in consultation with relevant government departments.

History of Similar Projects

The MFT heliport is the only cross-boundary heliport in urban Hong Kong. It has been in operation since 1990 and therefore is exempted from the provisions of the EIAO. There is no history of other similar projects for reference.

Public Consultation to Date

The Economic Services Panel of the Legislative Council was consulted on the MFT heliport expansion proposal on 15 January 2004. The Panel members were generally in support of the project proposal. The proposal was then discussed at the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC) meetings on 12 February and 25 March 2004.

Public Interest and Political Sensitivity

The original plan for the project implementation was to have the EIA Study undertaken by the private heliport developer-cum-operator, who could carry out the detailed design of the development in parallel with the EIA Study. However, the C&WDC, at the consultation meeting on 12 February 2004, felt strongly that the EIA Study should be conducted by the Government prior to the tendering process of the heliport expansion project and passed a motion to that effect on 25 March 2004. In light of this, it was decided to advance the EIA Study and have it carried out by the Government with the involvement of consultants.

6. USE OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED EIA REPORTS

There are no previously approved EIA reports that are applicable for reference in this project.

ATTACHMENT:

Plan 1

Civil Aviation Department
May 2004