

For information
on 18 July 2003

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services

Cross-boundary Passenger Ferry Services between Hong Kong International Airport and the Pearl River Delta

Introduction

In November 2002, the Government briefed Members of the Economic Services Panel on the plan of the Airport Authority (AA) to develop cross boundary ferry services for transit passengers between the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and major ports in the Pearl River Delta (PRD). This paper provides more details on the ferry operation and relevant measures, and reports on the progress of AA's preparation for the commissioning of the ferry services.

Background

2. At the Panel meeting on 25 November 2002, we briefed Members on the Airport Authority Ordinance (Map of Restricted Area) Order proposed by the Director-General of Civil Aviation. The Order expands the boundaries of the airport's Restricted Area to include the ferry terminal at the HKIA and the road linking the ferry terminal with the Passenger Terminal Building (PTB) of the HKIA. It enables the AA to develop ferry services for transit passengers. At that meeting, the Government and the AA also briefed Members on the planned ferry services, design of the ferry terminal, forecast passenger throughput and security measures for the ferry operation. Members requested the Government and the AA to consider their views and brief the Panel again.

Latest Progress

3. The cross boundary ferry services target mainly at mainland visitors transiting via the HKIA and provide them with speedy connecting services. This can enhance the air links between the PRD and other

places and strengthen Hong Kong's status as an aviation hub. Over the past few months, the preparatory work on the ferry services by the AA has progressed satisfactorily. Works relating to the renovation of the ferry terminal and construction of the bonded road¹ connecting the ferry terminal and the Passenger Terminal Building have largely been completed.

4. The AA and relevant Government departments including the Immigration Department, Customs & Excise Department, Hong Kong Police Force and Civil Aviation Department have reached a consensus on the mode of operation and the security measures for the ferry services. Detailed guidelines are being prepared to ensure that ferry passengers will stay within the airport's Restricted Area while transiting and are subject to the same security measures for air transit passengers, e.g. security screening of passengers and baggage before boarding aircraft. Moreover, the AA has separately entered into agreements with airlines and the ferry terminal operator regarding the necessary measures they will take to ensure that the ferry operation will be in compliance with the relevant security requirements. A paper on the mode of operation and security measures for the ferry services prepared by the AA is at Annex for Members' reference.

Annex

5. The Government of the HKSAR and the relevant mainland authorities have maintained close liaison over the introduction of the ferry services and reached consensus on the mode of operation and security arrangements for the ferry services, including the checking of passengers' travel documents and air tickets before departure at PRD ports, repatriation procedures for passengers rejected for boarding or entry, etc.

6. In conjunction with the AA, ferry terminal/services operator and airlines, the relevant authorities of the HKSAR and PRD ports will conduct a site inspection of the facilities of the HKIA's ferry terminal and the relevant PRD ports before the commissioning of the ferry services. There will also be a trial run of the ferry services to ensure smooth operation.

¹ The bonded road is equipped with appropriate security features (e.g. fence, closed-circuit TV, security guarding, etc) and is included as part of the airport's Restricted Area.

Date of Implementation

7. The AA expects that the ferry terminal at the HKIA will be operational in the 4th quarter of this year. The ferry services will initially cover four PRD ports including Shenzhen Fuyong, Shekou, Dongguan Taiping and Macau. Depending on whether the conditions of the relevant ports are ripe, the ferry services will be extended to three more PRD ports including Zhuhai, Zhongshan and Guangzhou at a later stage. Initially, the AA estimates that the ferry services will attract over 23,000 additional passenger throughput per month for the airport. The ferry services will strengthen the air-sea multi-modal connectivity between the HKIA and the PRD and extend the passenger catchment area of the HKIA to the PRD, which will enhance the competitiveness of the HKIA.

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Airport Authority Cross Boundary Passenger Ferry Services - Operational Procedures and Security Arrangements

Objective

The operational procedures and security arrangements aim to ensure that the security standards of the cross boundary passenger ferry services between the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) for transit passengers will be on par with those for air transit passengers, while providing convenient connecting services for passengers at the same time.

Easy and Convenient Transit

2. Transit passengers using the cross boundary ferry services will stay within the airport's Restricted Area while in transit. Like air transit passengers, there is no need for these transit passengers to go through customs and immigration checks while in transit at the HKIA. In this way, the transit passengers using the ferry services enjoy a hassle-free, time saving and convenient journey directly to their destinations.

Sea-to-Air Transit Passengers

3. Before sea-to-air transit passengers are accepted for ferry boarding at the PRD ports, the Ferry Terminal staff stationed at the port concerned will implement measures to segregate them from the other passengers and conduct a first check of their air tickets and travel documents. The Ferry Terminal staff will also provide passenger manifest to the airlines to facilitate the check-in process. When passengers arrive at the Ferry Terminal at the HKIA, airlines will be responsible for examining the validity of the air tickets and travel documents/visas, issuing boarding passes and accepting check-in baggage. The passengers will be screened by the Aviation Security Co. Ltd (AVESCO) and will then board the sealed bus¹ and be conveyed via the bonded road² to the Restricted Area of the airport's Passenger Terminal Building (PTB) where they take their flights to their final destinations.

¹ Sealed bus means that the vehicle conveying the passengers between the Ferry Terminal and the PTB will have a security label affixed on its door after AVSECO has completed checking of passenger boarding.

² The road connecting the Ferry Terminal and the PTB has been equipped with appropriate security features (e.g. fence, closed-circuit TV, security guarding, etc) and is included as part of the airport's Restricted Area.

Air-to-Sea Transit Passengers

4. After arriving at the HKIA by plane, the transit passengers should proceed to the transfer area where they will be screened by AVESCO under normal procedures. They will be directed to designated waiting lounges where the Ferry Terminal staff will check the validity of their travel documents/visas and ferry tickets. The passengers will then board the sealed bus and be conveyed to the Ferry Terminal along the bonded road.

Segregation of Passengers

5. As part of the security arrangements, all air-to-sea and sea-to-air transit passengers, as well as their baggage will be segregated from each other by physical separation. In areas where physical separation is not provided e.g. the bus loading area and the pier area, operation controls agreed with the Government departments will be imposed to ensure that either air-to-sea or sea-to-air transit passengers will be present at any one time to maintain segregation.

Maintenance of Airport Security

6. For sea-to-air transit passengers, to maintain the standards of airport security, airlines or their handling agents will set up check-in counters at the Ferry Terminal to validate the air tickets and travel documents/visas upon the passengers' arrival at the Ferry Terminal. Only passengers possessing valid travel documents will be admitted and issued with boarding passes. All carry-on bags and personal items will be screened by AVSECO before entry into the Restricted Area is permitted.

Repatriation Arrangements

7. For sea-to-air transit passengers, arrangements have been made with the relevant authorities of the PRD ports to accept the repatriation of inadmissible passengers by airlines. Ferry services operator will be responsible for transporting these passengers back to their ports of departure. For passengers who have been allowed to proceed to connect flights at the HKIA but are refused entry at the destination airport, the airlines concerned will be responsible for transporting them back to the HKIA and arranging with the ferry services operator to transport these passengers back to their ports of departure.

8. For air-to-sea transit passengers, the ferry operator will be responsible for transporting passengers being refused entry by the PRD ports back to the HKIA and arranging with the airlines concerned to transport the passengers back to the country of departure.

Baggage Handling Process

9. For sea-to-air transit passengers, when baggage arrives at the HKIA, the baggage will be delivered to a designated waiting area by the ferry terminal operator. Passengers will identify their baggage and if necessary check-in their baggage at the airline counters within the Ferry Terminal. Checked baggage will be tagged in the same manner as normal check-in baggage. Baggage handling agent will handle the checked baggage on board the baggage vehicles and deliver the checked baggage via the bonded road to the central transfer facility at the PTB for screening by AVSECO.

10. For air-to-sea transit passengers, arrangements will be made by the baggage handling agent to transfer their baggage from the plane to the ferry via the bonded road. Passengers will not need to reclaim the baggage at the baggage reclaim hall during transit.

Review

11. The operational procedures and security arrangements will be kept under regular review to ensure the high standards of security will be maintained for the ferry services.

Airport Authority
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