

**For Information
on 6 August 2003**

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the arrangements for taking forward the advance work for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge project.

BACKGROUND

2. At the third meeting of the Mainland/Hong Kong Conference on the Co-ordination of Major Infrastructure Projects (the Conference) held on 20 September 2002, it was agreed that a joint study should be conducted on the transport linkage between Hong Kong and Pearl River West.

3. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the HKSARG commissioned the Institute of Comprehensive Transportation to conduct the study. It includes mainly an assessment of the need for a sea channel crossing linking Hong Kong and Pearl River West, forecasts on the passenger and freight traffic flow and an analysis on the macro socio-economic benefits of the crossing. The study began in January 2003 and was completed in July 2003.

THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

4. The study analyses the current situation of the transport linkage between Hong Kong, Macau and Pearl River West, the existing problems and deficiencies and forecasts the passenger and freight traffic flow between Hong Kong and Pearl River West. The report points out that currently the transport linkage between Pearl River West and Hong

Kong is weak and land transport involves a detour via Human Bridge resulting in an increase in transport time and cost. According to the forecasts in the study report, the passenger traffic flow between the eastern and western banks of the Greater Pearl River Delta (PRD) in 2020 will reach 180-240 million and freight traffic 169–220 million tonnes. Of these traffic volumes, the passenger and freight traffic flow between Hong Kong and the western bank of the PRD will be 38.93-54.12 million and 46.73-62.17 million tonnes respectively. Taking into account the induced demand as a result of the Bridge, the passenger flow of the Bridge are projected to be 44.86-65.01 million in 2020. Containerized cargo demand and breakbulk cargo demand are projected to be 2.56-4.41 million TEUs and 1.56-2.88 million tonnes respectively.

5. The study has considered three alignments linking the two banks of Pearl River. Fieldwork and seminars have been conducted, and views and analyses from various sources have been taken into consideration. The result of the study is that the Hong Kong (Lantau)-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge proposed by the HKSAR Government, a link connecting the three places under the “one country two systems”, is the most urgent one and bears significant political and economic implications.

6. The study points out that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will alter the present passive condition of the transport linkage between Hong Kong and Pearl River West which relies mainly on water transport. It will shorten the distance from Hong Kong to Macau and Zhuhai to 30km, and reduce the journey time to within half an hour. As a result, Pearl River West will lie within the 3-hour transport network that radiates from Hong Kong as its centre.

7. The report points out that the construction of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will promote the socio-economic development of Pearl River West mainly by enhancing the transport linkage between Pearl River West, western Guangdong,

Guangxi, Hainan, the south-western areas and Hong Kong. As a result, these areas will be better positioned to take advantage of the effect radiating from Hong Kong as the hub of the region, to press ahead with their development programmes more effectively and achieve greater socio-economic development. At the same time, the construction of the Bridge will significantly facilitate the revitalising of our economy and contribute to the development of tourism, logistics, finance and trade in Hong Kong, bringing substantial benefits to the economy.

8. In summary, the report points out that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will yield the following macro socio-economic benefits:

- (a) promoting the socio-economic development of the Pearl River West;
- (b) reinforcing Hong Kong's status as an international shipping and aviation centre;
- (c) promoting the development of regional tourism industries; and
- (d) perfecting the regional transport network.

9. The report points out that large-scale projects such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge would usually take five to seven years to complete. The time required will be even longer if the advance work is included. As such, the construction of the Bridge should start as soon as possible, otherwise it would be difficult to meet the growing demand for passenger and freight transport between Hong Kong, Macau and the Mainland.

10. The report suggests that efforts should be made in the following aspects without delay:

- (a) building a consensus on the necessity and urgency of the

construction of the crossing as soon as possible;

- (b) setting up a dedicated co-ordinating agency as soon as possible;
- (c) finalising the proposals on the form, alignment and landing points of the crossing as soon as possible;
- (d) studying the impacts on the environment, river pattern and hydrology at an earlier date; and
- (e) improving the traffic and vehicular control between Hong Kong and Mainland.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE REPORT AT THE 4th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE AND APPROVAL BY THE STATE COUNCIL

11. At the 4th Meeting of the Conference held in Beijing on 31 July, the NDRC and the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau were briefed by the Institute of Comprehensive Transportation on the outcome of the study and expressly endorsed its conclusion on the need and urgency of the Bridge. The Conference agreed that the NDRC should make a recommendation to the State Council for the authorisation of the commencement of work for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. The State Council has approved the report of the Institute of Comprehensive Transportation and agreed on 4 August that the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau should set up a Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Advance Work Coordination Group (Coordination Group) and press ahead with the advance work for the construction of the Bridge.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION BY THE HONG KONG/GUANGDONG CO-OPERATION JOINT CONFERENCE

12. At the 6th Plenary Session of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-

operation Joint Conference held in Hong Kong on 5 August, the governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong welcomed the State Council's approval for the commencement of advance work for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. In accordance with the approval of the State Council, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau will set up the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Advance Work Co-ordination Group (Co-ordination Group) to press ahead with the advance work of the project. Hong Kong will be the convenor and each of the three sides will appoint three representatives as members of the Co-ordination Group. Representatives of the NDRC and the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office will attend the meeting as liaison officers. The Co-ordination Group will commission an institute/institutes to conduct the preliminary feasibility studies on various subjects, including economic benefits, alignment, environmental protection and hydrology. The reports, when completed, will be submitted to the NDRC to apply for the creation of the project.

THE WAY FORWARD

13. The HKSARG will follow up with the governments of Guangdong and Macau on the arrangement of the Co-ordination Group meetings as soon as possible. We will also seek to commence the various studies of the project at an early date.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

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