



NEW ULAANBAATAR
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Business Focus Magazine

A Bold New Future for Mongolia

When Mongolia's government decided it needed a new airport, it would turn out to be the biggest construction project the country had ever undertaken.

THE NEW ULAANBAATAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NUBIA) IS THE LARGEST PROJECT EVER TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN MONGOLIA. MONGOLIA USED TO BE A COMMUNIST COUNTRY 27 YEARS AGO, AND SINCE THEN ITS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO BUILD AND GROW THEIR ECONOMY. A KEY FACTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THAT ECONOMY IS PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO GET IN AND OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

"Our existing airport didn't have a location for an efficient runway," admits Enkhbat Navaantseden, the project director for NUBIA. "There's a large mountain on the south side of the runway and on the north side we have a river, so there's only one direction planes can take off and land, decreasing the efficiency of the runway down to 73% at times."

It's not a new problem, indeed, Enkhbat tells us the Mongolian government has been wrestling with it since 1993, trying to find a financier who could enable a more effective airport. But only just over a decade ago, they finally began to make progress.

"Finally, in 2006, the Japanese government agreed to finance this project and in 2008 the Mongolian Government signed the agreement with them," Enkhbat says. "Right after that, we designed the airport and planned its construction, and the final stage of the implementation of the main project construction was completed at the beginning of January this year."

The airport is now full tested and commissioned and is now undergoing IATA processes for Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer which should enable commercial flight operations by November this year with the current roughly a million passengers annually on international and domestic flights but can take up to 3 million. Upon transfer from the old to the new airport, the famous name, Chinggis Khaan International Airport, will also transfer.







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AVITECH

Avitech is proud to serve as the key Aeronautical Information Management (AIM) system provider to NUBIA. Avitech's solution supplies aviation related static and dynamic data for airport operations and Mongolian Air Space management in accordance with ICAO requirements. It is operated exclusively by the MCAA AIS Department which has been supported by Avitech since the implementation of Avitech's AIM "Wizdard" and "AviSuite" AIS solutions at Chinggis Khaan International Airport in 2007.

MCAA and Avitech have a long standing cooperation to customise, upgrade and develop the solution according to Mongolian and ICAO AIS to AIM requirements. The system implemented at NUBIA is recognised by associated partners and ICAO Asia Pacific as the most compliant and comprehensive operational AIM solution in Asia.

The state-of-the-art solution, which provides essential data for Flight Operations, Planning and Pilot Briefing, is compliant with redundant operating requirements and continuous 24/7 availability. The system will also be synchronized with the solution installed at Chinggis Khaan International Airport.

Avitech AIM enables MCAA to generate and maintain National Aeronautical Static Data required to be kept by the Mongolian Government to enable flight safety, control of Airspace and aircraft movement within the countries Flight Information Region. In accordance with ICAO requirements, all aspects of data Integrity, quality, availability and ownership are continuously recorded and updated by the system and regularly published to continuously ensure safe flight management.

We congratulate the Mongolian Government, MCAA and the AIS department on the implementation of NUBIA and wish the new airport a prosperous future.

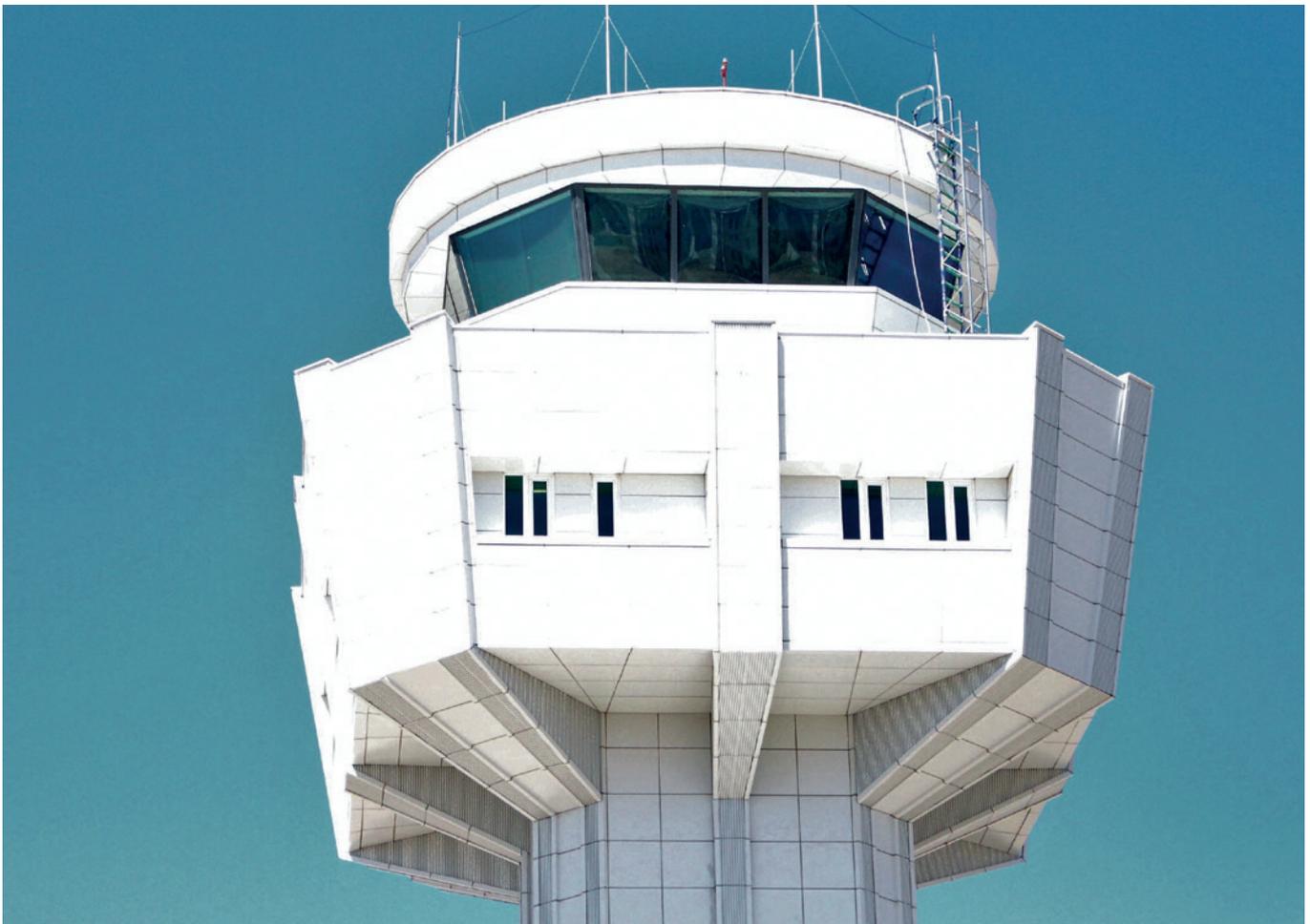
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“We will see a radical reduction in cancellations for weather or pollution, as we will be running at 98% efficiency, similar the rest of the World’s International Airports,” Enkhbat says. “We’re calling in all airlines to use our airport, we’re a modern facility that will enhance their businesses ”

TIME WAITS FOR NO AIRPORT

Of course, getting to this point was no easy feat. Such a large project was not achieved without facing up to some challenges. For this project, the biggest obstacle was simply time.

“The contract we had with the government instructed us to complete the airport within 43 months,” Enkhbat noted. “We started in June, 2013, and since our weather is so harsh in the Winter, the initial external works of large scale civils and buildings structural was stopped during the two long Winters in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, so in actual fact we only had 33 months.”

The challenge was even greater because the airport was being built on a greenfield site.

“We had nothing on the site when we started construction,” Enkhbat says. “Access road, power, phone, fresh water, sewage systems, etc. -we had to build everything in that time. The majority of the materials and equipment was specifically imported for this project which was a big procurement logistics challenge. But despite all that, it was completed on time and on budget.”

The secret to the project’s success, according to Enkhbat, was sheer teamwork.

“It was a good cooperative atmosphere,” he says. “Our multi-national top management of the Funding Agency, Client, Consultant, Main Contractor and Subcontractors were all appreciative of each other in how they sought to and actually overcame the many challenges of Mongolia. It was a very friendly team and that’s the main point. Personal attitudes are essential to making an effective team when the challenges are many and difficult. We built up a friendly team to succeed at this project.”

A DESTINATION AIRPORT

While many airports function as way stations or connecting chain links between other airports, currently NUBIA is a destination in and of itself.

“The airport is currently an end destination type of airport, we have no transit passengers. It’s a gateway to Mongolia,” Enkhbat says.

Promoting Mongolia as a destination is a vital step for the country’s economy, which currently depends heavily on the mining industry. When world commodity values fluctuate, the affects in Mongolia are immediate, creating budget instability and can leave the country’s economy vulnerable, and so this airport is a vital part of the strategy to change that.

“We need to expand and diversify, and this airport will allow us to do that. The airport will increase our economy through tourism, and new business opportunities. It will be a good push for the economy,” Enkhbat says.

That said, Enkhbat can foresee a time when NUBIA becomes an essential transport hub for the region.

“Geographically we are a very large country with a good location especially for great circle routes such as flights over the North Pole from North America to Asia. When it comes to attracting the foreign airlines for transferring cargo or passengers, previously the problem was the runway at the old airport which created random delays. But that problem is fixed now with the new airport and arrival / departure timing slots can be planned with a normal degree of punctuality allowing the opportunity of connecting flights,” he says. “We are in discussion with Japanese airport companies about operating the



**“THE NEW AIRPORT WILL
BUILD OUR ECONOMY
THROUGH TOURISM,
AND NEW BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES.”**







terminal buildings, and we're now talking to our existing partner airlines and many others new to Mongolia about the new opportunities that the new airport will allow."

As a potential transport hub, Mongolia faces strong competition from China and Russia, but Enkhbat believes there is a viable niche in the market for NUBIA.

"Those huge countries are our only neighbours so we're building ourselves into a good passenger and cargo hub for reaching those big destinations and also as a less congested, more agile alternative to them," Enkhbat says. "We're also looking at business from other markets, for example Siberia. There are approximately 80 million people living in Siberia, and if they want to fly to Southern Asia they need to fly through Moscow to get to the southern regions. We have the opportunity to attract those passengers to transfer through our airport to get to Southern Asia."

Ironically, the qualities that make NUBIA a destination airport may also turn out to be the qualities that lead to its success as a transport hub.

"Our big neighbours have in many ways a restrictive business culture," Enkhbat points out. "Our parliament is currently discussing legislation to make NUBIA and the surrounding area a Free Economic Zone.

In closing Enkhbat thanked this writer for the interest shown in the project and looked forward to the readers taking full advantage of the exciting opportunities that the new Chinggis Khaan International Airport will provide. ◀

