

VIRGIN GORDA AIRPORT

DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE:

The upgrading and extending of Virgin Gorda Airport will include upgrading of the existing airport to Code 1B level, allowing operation of 19 seats aircrafts. This will consist of obstacle free approach and departure path and the widening and lengthening of the existing runway to approximately 20m wide and 1300m long respectively. It will also involve the re-construction of the existing building, enhanced fire-fighting equipment and it's accommodation, accommodation for extra staff and provision for vehicles. As well as the construction of smoother and better access roads and walkways, the installation of lighting fixtures, communication and emergency equipment. Fencing, drainage and water will also be installed.

BACKGROUND:

and In mid 1994 government formally advised Bankers Trust, who currently holds a charge over Little Dix Bay Hotel Corporation and all its property and who are in fact the current defacto owners, of its wish to purchase the Virgin Gorda Airport and its related assets. This decision was reached when Bankers Trust made it clear that they would not extend the existing Airport Runway which has severely affected access to the island. The effect of this limitation has been especially felt since American Airlines decided to retire its fleet of CASAS in 1993.

Virgin Gorda Airport, which is to date owned and operated by Little Dix Bay Hotel, provides open access for all public transport and private air movements, despite its difficult topography operating restrictions. The Airport serves as a key access point for both scheduled and private charter air services over a range of routes. It operates safely, is maintained in good condition and has adequate facilities for current traffic levels. The size and type of aircraft allowed to use the Airport are constrained by the difficulty of approach and length of runway (945m long and 18m wide).

The upgrading and extension of Virgin Gorda Airport will increase the airlift and number seats into Virgin Gorda from San Juan, St. Maarten and possibly Antigua hubs, for both visitors and locals alike. In addition, it will also provide emergency medical air transport facilities to tourists and residents especially in times of accidents. Finally, the fees, which will be collected from the airports operation, will justify long-term investment according to the consultants.

PROJECT RATIONALE:

The upgrading and extension of Virgin Gorda Airport, including all related facilities, is expected to benefit Virgin Gorda and the British Virgin Islands in various ways:

1. The number of annual arrivals is expected to increase to 34,900 by the year 2030.
2. An increase in tourism expenditure resulting from an increase in tourist arrivals
3. An increase in more business ventures.
4. An increase in trade-related activities, such as retail and wholesale.
5. The hotel occupancy level is expected to increase marginally.
6. Access to emergency services, for example Air Ambulance.
7. An increase in the level of employment due to additional available jobs such as porter services, store attendants, ticket agents, janitors, etc. and other tourism related jobs.

SUMMARY OF RELATED STUDIES:

The Government of the British Virgin Islands wanted to assess the feasibility of upgrading facilities to enable use of the Airport by larger aircraft operating direct services between Virgin Gorda and regional air transport hubs. This is because of the important part played by Virgin Gorda in the tourism industry of the BVI, and the role of air transport in supporting that contribution. The environmental impacts of Airport upgrading appear acceptable in the main. The long-term marine impacts of the runway extension and other works would require further, detailed study but are not likely to be an overriding argument against development. Aircraft noise is an inevitable consequence of traffic growth and can only be effectively tackled through land use control. In addition, construction works would have to be carefully planned and executed to avoid undue impact on the islands and its residents and visitors.

EXPECTED OUTPUT:

Upon construction, it is expected to yield a new airport facility containing the following:

- Passenger Terminal
- Other Buildings – cargo building
- Runway (extended and widened)
- New Access Roads
- Car Parks
- Apron
- Drainage
- Landscaping ,and
- Sewerage Treatment Plant

ASSOCIATED RISKS:

One of the major issues/risks involved is whether or not GBVI should acquire and upgrade to Code1B level or not to acquire. Acquisition of the Airport would entail a change of role of Government, from regulator to both regulator and operator. As such, it would be taking on the

direct responsibility for safe operation and the consequences of any future shortcomings or incidents. Any upgrade of the Airport would be costly and have an impact on the island's environment. Especially in the event of proposing to locate a school and a hospital immediately on the Airport's boundary, due to the increase in the frequency of the noise and wind-blown dust from an un-surface runway.

Another major issue/risk is that of competition between air and air/ferry access to the island. The quality of both modes is a source of local concern, and both have the potential to either constrain or promote economic growth. It would be in the Government's best interest to look at how both modes could be developed to their best advantage and where they might complement each other.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR VIRGIN GORDA AIRPORT UPGRADE AND EXTENSION

	Intervention Logic	Objective Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
Overall Objectives	Increase economic growth and tourism activity on Virgin Gorda. Increase airlift and seating capacity into Virgin Gorda and improve the operational safety level.	Level of employment in Virgin Gorda. New business ventures created in Virgin Gorda.	Employment Statistics. National Accounts. Trade licence Statistics. Population Statistics.	
Project Purpose	Increased tourist arrivals on Virgin Gorda.	Number of annual arrivals raised to 34,900 by the year 2030. Hotel occupancy level expected to increase to approx. 50%. Tourism expenditure expected to increase.	Annual Tourism Review. Hotel records, Visitor survey and National Accounts.	Tourism growth follows current trend. Private sector exploits new opportunities. Terminal building and Runway expanded in the near future.
Results	Virgin Gorda Airport Upgraded and Extended. Land and airside facilities fully operational.	Runway widened to 20m and lengthened to 1100m. Lighting, communications and emergency equipment to be installed. LIAT and Am. Eagle use airport with Dash-8 and ATR's thereby creating additional full-time jobs,	Supervisor's reports Airport operation records. Budget for airport operation and maintenance.	GBVI maintain tourism promotion and marketing operations globally. Maintenance of new facilities performed over time.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land Acquisition. 2. Design and Feasibility Studies. 3. Tender and contract for supervision. 4. Tender and contract for work. 5. Train personnel. 6. Supervise works 7. Install equipment and Commission. 	<p align="center">MEANS</p> <p>Items</p> <p>Land Acquisition Design and feasibility studies, Environmental studies Supervision and Project Management Construction of Runway Renovation and extension of Building External works Sub-Total Contingencies</p> <p align="center"><u>TOTAL</u></p>	COSTS (US\$000)	PREREQUISITES Land Acquisition. Competent contractors and supervisor commission. Equipment supplied and installed.