

More funding to enhance aviation and maritime sectors

Concept plans for Changi Airport's Terminal 5 finalised

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TWO funds will receive financial injections to help strengthen Singapore's aviation and maritime sectors, by focusing on areas such as talent development.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) on Wednesday announced that it will replenish the Aviation Development Fund (ADF) from April 1, with S\$160 million over the next five years. The fund, set up in 2010, initially had a size of S\$100 million.

S\$140 million, or the lion's share of the S\$160 million, will go towards raising airport productivity and developing manpower. The remaining S\$20 million will be channelled towards other projects which will benefit the local aviation industry.

Meanwhile, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) will inject a further S\$65 million into the Maritime Cluster Fund (MCF)-Manpower Development (MD) programme, which will be used to attract and develop local talent.

With other airports in the region raising their game, Changi Airport is seeking to boost productivity to maintain its edge as a competitive air hub, against the backdrop of a tight labour market. CAAS said that more sector-level programmes will be introduced, building on existing ones that encourage the adoption of self-service options for passengers and of technology to drive labour productivity.

CAAS will also beef up funding support and lengthen timelines for company-level programmes which transform the way firms operate. For instance, firms could enjoy funding of

up to S\$5 million per project over a five-year implementation window, versus S\$2 million and two years presently.

Stressing that productivity is a key priority for the airport, Tan Lye Teck, Changi Airport Group's executive vice-president (airport management), added: "We are placing emphasis on increasing both manpower productivity and operational efficiency in airport operations, without compromising the experience for our passengers."

Budget carrier Jetstar Asia has implemented 12 self-service kiosks as well as six bag drops at Changi, with an eye on introducing more in the coming months. Other initiatives – such as straight-to-gate check-in and mobile boarding passes – not only make it more convenient for passengers but also deliver greater efficiencies for the airline, it said.

In addition, the ADF will also roll out new programmes to raise awareness of the industry among youths – such as by tying up with

educational institutions – and to engage aviation professionals, who can benefit from job redesign and better career paths.

Concept plans for Changi's upcoming Terminal 5 have also been finalised, as the airport seeks to prepare itself for anticipated traffic growth. With an initial capacity of 50 million passengers annually, T5 will be built to ensure airfield efficiency and with a large main terminal building so that transfer passengers will be able to catch connecting flights quickly and easily. T5 will also provide the greatest number of remote aircraft stands, so more aircraft on longer layovers can be parked there, which would free up the terminal's contact stands for other planes.

T5 will be built in two phases, depending on air traffic growth. While Changi saw passenger growth of only 0.7 per cent last year, growth is expected to pick up to 1-3 per cent this year. Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said during the debate on his ministry's bud-

et: "We expect a long-term growth rate for passenger traffic at Changi of 3-4 per cent per year over the next two decades."

Based on the ministry's projections, the capacity of Changi's existing terminals and the upcoming Terminal 4 will be fully utilised by the mid-2020s.

Meanwhile, MPA also announced that it plans to support firms in the maritime cluster through manpower development and training. Two taskforces were set up last year, both chaired by MPA chief Andrew Tan: the Tripartite Maritime Manpower Taskforce for Seafaring, and the Maritime Manpower Taskforce for Shore-based Sectors.

The first will focus on attracting Singaporeans to seafaring careers, as well as retaining talent and upskilling Singaporeans via training grants and achievement awards. The second will map strategies to help maritime companies fill important shore-based jobs such as those in port operations, ship operations and ship broking.