

# LCQ12: Manpower of aviation industry

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Ka-piu and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

Regarding the manpower of the aviation industry, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers of (i) flights and (ii) passenger trips arriving in and departing from Hong Kong via Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) in October 2018 and October this year (set out in Table 1);

Table 1

Month	Arriving in Hong Kong		Departing from Hong Kong	
	(i)	(ii)	(i)	(ii)
October 2018				
October 2024				

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers of destinations (including international and Mainland routes) served by HKIA in October 2018 and October this year and set out in Table 2 a breakdown by region (i.e. (i) Asia (including (a) the Mainland, (b) the Middle East, (c) East Asia, (d) Southeast Asia and (e) North Asia), (ii) Europe, (iii) Africa, (iv) South America and (v) Oceania);

Table 2

Region		October 2018	October 2024
(i)	(a)		
	...		
	(e)		
(ii)			
...			
(v)			
Total			

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the number of personnel licences issued by the Civil Aviation Department, (ii) the respective proportions of licence holders who are Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents and (iii) the number of licence holders who have taken up employment in October 2018 and October this year, and set out in Table 3 a breakdown by job type of the personnel (e.g. flight crew and aircraft

maintenance engineers);

Table 3

Job type	October 2018			October 2024		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Flight crew						
Aircraft maintenance engineers						
...						

(4) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of imported workers/talents for all job types in the aviation industry since the introduction of the Talent List of Hong Kong and Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme, and set out a breakdown by talent admission scheme and labour importation scheme;

(5) whether the Government will ensure that aviation enterprises located at HKIA accord priority to local talents in staff recruitment, including posts that require professional qualifications in the industry; whether the Government has assessed the negative impacts brought about by the large-scale introduction of manpower from outside Hong Kong on the income of local aviation practitioners, and whether the Government has plans to promote the airport community to establish a tripartite discussion platform comprising employees, the Government and employers in respect of human resources planning, and maintain communication with the Labour Advisory Board over issues relating to imported workers, with a view to resolving conflicts of interests and creating a conducive working environment for local workers; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) whether it has projected the growth in the number of (i) flights, (ii) destinations and (iii) passenger trips after the commissioning of the Three-Runway System (3RS) of HKIA; whether it has, on the basis of such projected data, assessed in detail the impacts of the commissioning of the 3RS on manpower deployment at HKIA; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) given that Hong Kong is an international aviation hub, whether the Government has recently studied new manpower policies or initiatives for the aviation industry in order to further consolidate and enhance the core role of Hong Kong as an international aviation hub; if so, of the specific policies and initiatives; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is an international aviation hub. This positioning is recognised in the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Government and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) have launched a series of measures to implement this national strategy and to consolidate Hong Kong's status as an

international aviation hub. As we continue to strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and our aviation industry, together with the commissioning of the Three-Runway System (3RS) last month, we expect that the manpower demand of the aviation industry will rise accordingly.

With regard to the question raised by the Hon Tang Ka-piu, my reply is as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the AAHK, the numbers of arrival and departure flights (including both passenger and cargo) and passenger throughput at HKIA in October 2018 and October 2024 are tabulated below.

Month	Arrival		Departure	
	(i) Number of flights	(ii) Passenger throughput	(i) Number of flights	(ii) Passenger throughput
October 2018	18 271	2 373 000	18 245	2 170 000
October 2024	15 825	1 872 000	15 800	1 672 000

Of which, the daily passenger throughput at HKIA in peak season has returned to around 85 per cent of the pre-pandemic level, and is expected to return to the pre-pandemic level in the peak season at the end of this year.

(2) According to the information provided by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), the numbers of destinations for passenger and cargo flights connected to HKIA in December 2018 and October 2024 are tabulated below.

Region		12-month period ended at December 2018 (Note 1)	12-month period ended at October 2024
(i) Asia	(a) Mainland China and Taiwan	53	50
	(b) Middle-east	16	17
	(c) East Asia	22	18
	(d) Southeast Asia	33	28
	(e) South Asia	11	9
	(f) Central Asia	3	3
(ii) Europe		37	25
(iii) Africa		5	4
(iv) North America		28	25
(v) South America		0	1
(vi) Oceania		16	12
Total		224	192

Note 1: The CAD does not maintain relevant statistics as at October 2018.

To resume air traffic as soon as possible and to leverage the opportunities brought by the 3RS, we will develop and expand the aviation network with a more forward-looking perspective and make early preparations for civil aviation co-operation with the "Belt and Road" countries. At the same time, we will support HKIA to strengthen the services of its trunk routes, and work together with the AAHK to strategically attract local and non-local airlines to develop new destinations and increase flights so as to enhance the diversity and competitiveness of the industry.

(3) In accordance with the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Cap. 448C), the CAD issues relevant licences to pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and air traffic control officers. The relevant information is tabulated below.

	October 2018 (Note 1)		October 2024 (Note 2)	
	Number of licences issued by the CAD (Note 3)	Number of licensees being employed	Number of licences issued by the CAD (Note 3)	Number of licensees being employed
Pilot	6 383	(Note 4)	6 561	(Note 4)
Aircraft maintenance engineers	2 190	(Note 4)	2 090	(Note 4)
Air traffic control personnel	238	238	270	270

Note 1: Number of valid private and professional pilot's licences (aeroplanes and helicopters), aircraft maintenance licences (i.e. the licence required for aircraft maintenance engineers) and air traffic control licences as at October 31, 2018.

Note 2: Number of valid private and professional pilot's licences (aeroplanes and helicopters), aircraft maintenance licences (required for aircraft maintenance engineers) and air traffic control licences as at October 31, 2024.

Note 3: The CAD does not maintain a breakdown of the respective proportions of aviation personnel licence holders who are Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents.

Note 4: The CAD does not maintain a breakdown of the number of licence holders who have taken up employment.

(4) At present, the Talent List of Hong Kong and the Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme mentioned in the question do not cover any job types in the aviation industry. Under the principle of not affecting the promotion of localisation of aviation personnel, the aviation industry may address the imminent manpower shortage problem through the General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals

(ASMP). The Immigration Department does not maintain a breakdown of different job types in the aviation industry under various talent admission schemes.

Moreover, in order to relieve the serious manpower shortage problem in the aviation industry, the Government launched the Labour Importation Scheme for the Transport Sector – Aviation Industry in July last year, allowing aviation-related companies with direct contractual relationship with the AAHK to suitably import workers for 10 types of frontline non-supervisory jobs on the prerequisite of safeguarding the employment of local workers, with a quota ceiling of 6 300. As at end October this year, 3 575 imported workers had arrived to work in Hong Kong. The breakdown by job type is as follows:

Job type	Number of imported workers having arrived to work in Hong Kong
1. Passenger Services Officer	1 193
2. Ramp Services Agent	736
3. Cabin Worker	492
4. Aircraft Maintenance Mechanic/Technician	30
5. Tractor Driver	392
6. Warehouse Operator/Cargo Handler	218
7. Equipment/Loader Operator	265
8. Customer Services Agent	140
9. Aircraft Tug Driver	24
10. Maintenance Technician	85
Total	3 575

(5) The GEP and the ASMP aim to attract qualified overseas and Mainland talent and professionals to work in Hong Kong in order to meet local needs and enhance Hong Kong’s competitiveness in the global market. These talent must possess special skills, knowledge or experience essential to Hong Kong and not readily available or in shortage locally to contribute to the daily operation of the concerned enterprises and sectors with a view to promoting economic development in Hong Kong. Under the principle of ensuring that local employment is accorded priority, if an enterprise has aviation-related job vacancies and intends to recruit overseas talents via the above two schemes, the enterprise must conduct a market availability test to prove its difficulties in local recruitment; and the remuneration package must also be comparable to the prevailing market level for professionals in Hong Kong.

In addition, under the Labour Importation Scheme for the Transport Sector – Aviation Industry, employers must prove that they are unable to meet the manpower requirements for business expansion despite the conduct of local recruitment before they can apply for importing workers. In the meantime, under the AAHK’s coordination, eligible airport frontline workers have

started receiving transport subsidies since May this year. We are closely monitoring the implementation of the scheme, and maintaining communication with stakeholders of both the employers' and employees' sides through the stakeholder consultative group under the scheme to ensure that the employment situation of local workers is safeguarded during the scheme's implementation. We will also report regularly to the Labour Advisory Board on the implementation status of the scheme.

(6) and (7) Upon the commissioning of the 3RS, the annual handling capacity of HKIA will increase to 120 million passengers and 10 million tonnes of cargo by 2035. We expect the airport manpower requirement will also increase gradually. According to the 2023 Manpower Projection report published by the Labour and Welfare Bureau last month, the manpower shortage of the Hong Kong aviation industry will increase to around 18 000 and 23 000 people in 2028. To more accurately assess the short-term manpower requirement, the AAHK will launch a new round of airport manpower survey. The Government will consider the way forward of the Labour Importation Scheme for the Transport Sector – Aviation Industry having regard to a number of relevant factors such as the results of the said survey, the implementation status of the scheme, views from the stakeholder consultative group under the scheme, etc.

Apart from the above-mentioned policies on labour importation and talent admission, the Government and the AAHK are maintaining close contact and communication with the aviation industry, and have implemented a series of measures to support the sustainable development of the aviation industry. In this regard, the Government established the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (MATF) in 2014 and supported the AAHK in establishing the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy (HKIAA) in 2016 to promote the professional development of the aviation industry and to attract more young people to join the industry. To attract and nurture more aviation talents, the Government explores possible enhancements of the training and incentive schemes under the MATF from time to time; while the HKIAA has been continuously updating, enhancing and expanding its training courses in accordance with industry needs. At the same time, the AAHK has been encouraging the airport community to conduct local recruitment, such as organising employment information days; actively improving the working environment and welfare of the employees in collaboration of the airport community; as well as applying technology and smart techniques in airport services to reduce manpower pressure.