

Thinking big: IGA strives to realise Istanbul ambitions

[Content preview – Subscribe to **Jane's Airport Review** for full article]

Phase I construction of Istanbul New Airport passes the halfway mark, but delays and broader security concerns persist. *Paul Cochrane reports*

The first stage of building Istanbul New Airport (INA) – the largest hub in the world – is more than 50% complete, although it is not expected to open as originally planned in early 2018.

According to IGA Havalimani Isletmesi, the operator of INA, about 20,000 people are working on the project. IGA expects this total to rise to 30,000 as work progresses on the airport itself and associated developments, such as the INA Airport City with shopping malls, hotels, and entertainment facilities.



The construction site of INA has attracted opposition from environmentalists. (Nordic – Office of Architecture)

1706962

Phase I of the project encompasses the 1.3 million m² main terminal and four runways, and it was due to be completed in November 2019. “During the course of construction, there was a push to bring the completion date forward,” said Maurice Rosario, aviation director at London-based Scott Brownrigg. “However, given the scale of the development this would have been extremely challenging. The current programme gives a completion date of late 2018/early 2019. This is a build-operate-transfer (BOT) project, so it’s in everyone’s interests to get the scheme finished as soon as possible.”

Scott Brownrigg supports IGA as lead designer of the terminal building. As a Turkish consortium (comprising Cengiz, Kolin, Limak, Mapa, and Kalyon), IGA is building INA on the condition of paying the Turkish government EUR22.1 billion (USD26.1 billion), plus taxes, over a 25-year period.

IGA officially estimates the cost of the project at EUR10.2 billion. It did not respond to requests for comment, but industry observers in Turkey (who spoke to *Jane's* on condition of anonymity) indicated that the cost could rise to EUR18 billion. This reflects two factors: the project is indexed to the euro, but the Turkish lira has depreciated in value against that currency since INA was

launched in 2015; and extra environmental costs. IGA is being built 40 km west of Istanbul on the European side of the city, on the site of disused lignite mines, which were not filled in and became wetlands.

[Continued in full version...]

Environmental groups criticise the location of INA because the construction area is on a bird migration route. Open protests have been rare amid the government clampdown since 2013 on public shows of dissent.

Phase I features the 90 million-passenger-capacity main terminal building plus a 170,000 m² second terminal. Phase II is to include four more runways, and a 500,000 m² third terminal.

INA is not only designed to be the new gateway to Turkey, but it will also compete with the new generation of Middle Eastern hub airports. The capacity of the main terminal in Phase I alone exceeds that of Doha International Airport in Qatar, and the Midfield Terminal Building at Abu Dhabi International Airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Only Dubai Al Maktoum International Airport in the UAE is expected to be larger, at 8 million m².

However, INA should be operational before Al Maktoum is completed.

The main terminal at the new Istanbul hub is “probably the biggest single processor ever built”, said Gudmund Stokke, principal partner at the designer, Nordic – Office of Architecture in Oslo. It will have annual capacity for 100 million passengers with 77 gates across five piers, each of which has capacity for eight aircraft.

[Continued in full version...]

The terminal will be able to handle 15,000 departing and 15,000 arriving passengers at peak hours. “You’re looking at 30,000 plus 30,000 ‘meeters and greeters’, and if you add in the staff, you’re looking at a peak of around 100,000, which is an incredible number of people if these peaks are reached,” said Rosario. “At the [existing Istanbul] Atatürk Airport, it’s sometimes impossible to walk across the shopping area, which has a lot to do with transfers [transit passengers],” said Rosario.

Turkish Airlines, which operates out of Atatürk, struggles to match capacity with high demand for its flights to more than 200 international destinations. INA is expected to alleviate this problem.

“For transfers, and hot transfers [transit passengers who have little time to connect to their next flight], there are all sorts of modes to enable people to move. At peak times it will be around 7,000 passengers per hour. We are talking about 35 aircraft movements per hour, and anticipate 60 or 70 aircraft per hour arriving and departing,” added Rosario.

Giant scale

The main terminal building at INA is one of the largest in the world. “I recall when Heathrow Terminal 5 was constructed, people said how magnificent it was, but it will be dwarfed by the baggage reclaim area [at the new airport],” said Rosario.



How INA might look in 2019. (IGA)

1706963

Two air traffic control (ATC) towers are to be built and equipped with the latest systems. The first was awarded via a competition, won by Turkish architectural firm Kiklop, which is also working on technical buildings as well as facilities for customs and security agencies.

“The ATC tower was going to be a symbol of Istanbul, being shaped like a tulip. That was going to be a really good surprise, but for ease of construction they changed the design a little bit, and there have been some minor changes to fulfill the requirements of the General Directorate of State Airports Authority [DHMI],” said Kabuloğlu.

There have been minimal changes to the design of the main terminal since it was originally planned. The airside hotel is to be enlarged from its current 344 rooms, although the scope of this expansion is unknown. “We designed it, and want to increase it so it will be part landside and part airside, as a transit hotel, but we’re not sure where they [IGA] are with it,” said Rosario.

[Continued in full version...]

Key to developing the Airport City is a network of access roads and bridges to the IGA. “It will need landside infrastructure to develop and mature before people go in and invest,” said Rosario.

IGA is presenting plans to investors, and discussions are under way with global hotel chains for Turkish concessions, including the length of these deals, said another industry executive who requested anonymity.



After Phase I, INA would rival the big Middle Eastern hubs in terms of passenger capacity. (Nordic – Office of Architecture)

1706964

Whether INA can handle 200 million passengers per year at full build out, as planned, depends on the closure of Atatürk and, more importantly, a healthy tourism industry in Turkey. Visitor numbers had been on the rise year on year, peaking at 37 million in 2014 – but then came a spate of terrorist attacks, about 400 in 2015 alone, leading to a 30% fall in European tourists, who had accounted for more than 50% of overall visitor traffic. Despite this, overall passenger traffic at Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen – the other international airport in Istanbul – has continued to rise amid higher domestic demand.

The terrorist attack on Atatürk in June 2016, in which 45 people were killed, did not prompt changes in planned security arrangements at INA, where the most modern hold baggage and checkpoint screening technology was already in the pipeline. It is essential to ensure security at INA, and throughout Turkey in general, to attract the number of airlines to populate the mega-hub.

INA represents a big chance for Turkey to overtake the Gulf as a focal point for global aviation. “But with persistent terrorism, they will need to convince international travellers especially that it is safe from day one if they are going to lure them away,” said David Bentley, chief airport analyst at CAPA – Centre for Aviation.

[Continued in full version...]

For the full version and more content:

Jane's Airport Review

The industry leading source for global developments in aviation security and air traffic control.

[SUBSCRIBE TO JANE'S AIRPORT REVIEW
FOR ACCESS TO THE LATEST NEWS, ANALYSIS AND DATA](#)

For advertising solutions visit [Jane's Advertising](#)