

HYPER-CONNECTED HONG KONG



Strategically located at the centre of the fast-developing Asia-Pacific Region, Hong Kong is superbly connected to the rest of the world.

The international hub for finance, logistics, trade, shipping and aviation is within a four-hour flight of Asia's key markets and a five-hour flight from half the world's population.

More companies are setting up regional distribution centres in Hong Kong to take advantage of its well-developed air, sea and road transportation infrastructure. Hong Kong's security, transparency, efficiency, speed and connectivity enable logistics service providers to operate highly effectively.

Hong Kong's advanced infrastructure has recently been further enhanced with mega projects that will significantly boost connectivity to meet the city's future needs, expand the economy and forge closer links with the Mainland of China.

Three cities, one bridge

A masterpiece of engineering, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), opened for traffic this month. Spanning 55 kilometres, the mega bridge is the world's

longest bridge-tunnel sea crossing and features a dual 3-lane carriageway.

The HZMB brings the three cities within an hour's commute and most major towns and cities of the western Pearl River Delta (PRD) within a 3-hour commute of Hong Kong. This will foster the

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flow of people, goods and capital and integrate the prosperous Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The bridge slashes travel time between Hong Kong's Kwai Tsing Container Terminal and the manufacturing base of Zhuhai, giving cargo flows from the western PRD, Western Guangdong and Guangxi a direct and shorter route to Hong Kong's air and sea ports, which are highly connected to global markets.

"The bridge will expand Hong Kong's economic hinterland, offer new engines of growth and accelerate the overall economic integration of the PRD region," said Frank Chan, Hong Kong's Secretary for Transport and Housing and Chairman of the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council.

"This is a real advantage for the logistics industry and it's sure to strengthen Hong Kong's position as a trade and logistics hub. Direct road links between Hong Kong and the PRD will make the Hong Kong port more competitive."

Brian Wu, the chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Freight Forwarding and Logistics, also expects major benefits.

"The bridge will enhance connectivity and bring great improvement in logistics efficiency in the region," Wu said. "In the first quarter of 2018, the cargo volume between Hong Kong and Macao was about 560,000 tonnes and between Hong Kong and Zhuhai about 6m tonnes. The new infrastructure could greatly cut transport time, boosting the volume of our business."

Hub port

Hong Kong is the world's fifth busiest container port and a premier regional hub port, with about 320 container liner services per week, connecting to about 470 destinations worldwide.

Shippers prefer to take advantage of Hong Kong's connectivity and high vessel frequency to consolidate cargo before shipping them to other parts of the world. The port's nine container terminals operate round the clock.

"Hong Kong is a major hub port in South China," said transport secretary Chan. "Last year, its container throughput was around 20.8m teu. Hong Kong port has cargo movements to and from 57 of the 80-plus countries covered by China's Belt and Road Initiative. Hong Kong will continue to reinforce its position as a transshipment hub."

Advanced maritime services

The Hong Kong Shipping Register operates separately from that of the Mainland and is the world's fourth largest, with more than 2,500 vessels.

Hong Kong has over 800 shipping-related companies, providing a wide variety of quality maritime services, ranging from ship agency and management, ship broking, marine insurance and finance, to maritime legal and arbitration services.

Many of the world's leading maritime law firms have offices in Hong Kong, while Hong Kong also offers tax incentives for shipping activities.

"Hong Kong has three unique advantages," said Sunny Ho, Executive Director of The Hong Kong Shippers' Council.

"First, Hong Kong is in the geographical centre of Asia and is strategically located on the global trade routes.

"Second, Hong Kong is a free port that's attractive for shipping companies to establish bases and start businesses.

"Third, Hong Kong leads the world with high quality and efficiently managed maritime services."

Fast train to the Mainland

The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL), which started rolling in September 2018, is another groundbreaking project that will enhance Hong Kong's connectivity with the Mainland.

The 26-km Hong Kong section of the XRL connects Hong Kong to the 25,000 km national high-speed rail network – the largest such network in the world. The new train service will slash the journey time between Hong Kong and Guangzhou South to 47 minutes and will also offer long-haul services to 38 destinations including Beijing, Shanghai, Xiamen, and Wuhan.

New boundary crossing

The seventh land crossing between Hong Kong and Shenzhen – the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point – will enable smoother boundary crossing for people and cargo.

"The new crossing, with good facilities for the freight industry, will further reduce commute times between Hong Kong and eastern Guangdong, enhancing regional co-operation and development," said Chan.

Airport 3rd runway

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) – already one of the world's busiest airports – is also expanding capacity.

Work has started on a third runway, which will lift air cargo capacity to 9m tonnes and passenger capacity to 100m and further strengthen Hong Kong's role as a logistics, transport and tourism hub.

Over 120 airlines operate more than 1,100 flights a week to 220 destinations worldwide from HKIA, which handled 73m passengers and 4.94m tonnes of air cargo in 2017.

Hong Kong's strategic location at the heart of Asia and at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta, combined with splendid new infrastructure and a highly globalised and efficient workforce, gives Asia's world city a unique advantage to serve as a premier shipping and logistics hub now and in the future.