The air transport sector makes a major contribution to Thailand’s economy

It creates jobs...
Airlines, airport operators, airport on-site enterprises (restaurants and retail), aircraft manufacturers, and air navigation service providers employed 110,000 people in Thailand in 2014. In addition, by buying goods and services from local suppliers the sector supported another 390,000 jobs. On top of this, the sector is estimated to have supported a further 86,000 jobs by paying wages to its employees, some or all of which are subsequently spent on consumer goods and services. Foreign tourists arriving by air to Thailand, who spend their money in the local economy, are estimated to have supported an additional 2.7 million jobs in 2014.

...and generates wealth
The air transport industry is estimated to have supported a $9.4 billion gross value added contribution to GDP in Thailand in 2014. Spending by foreign tourists supported a further $39 billion gross value added contribution to the country’s GDP. This means that 12 percent of the country’s GDP is supported by the air transport sector and foreign tourists arriving by air.
The importance of air transport to Thailand

Air transportation facilitates exports, foreign direct investment, and tourism

The ten most popular direct flight links:
1. China
2. Malaysia
3. Singapore
4. Hong Kong
5. South Korea
6. India
7. Myanmar
8. Japan
9. Cambodia
10. Vietnam

The scale of investment, exports, and inbound spending in Thailand

Air transport brings tourists and investment into Thailand, and helps businesses trade their goods and services around the world. In 2014, foreign tourists spent US $38.5 billion in Thailand, supporting restaurants, hotels, transport providers, and others who cater to tourists. In addition, Thailand exported US $280 billion worth of goods and services in 2014. Over time, the country has accumulated US $190 billion in foreign direct investment.
The air transport sector connects people around the world

The air transport sector’s ability to connect Thailand to emerging countries and fast growing cities can help drive economic growth. There are 59 direct flight destinations among the ten fastest growing countries in the world as measured by GDP growth and 67 direct flight destinations among the 20 fastest growing countries. There are 187 direct weekly flights among the ten fastest growing cities in the world as measured by GDP growth and over 1,100 direct weekly flights among the 100 fastest growing cities.

Arrivals by continent

Europe and the Middle East are the largest sources of arrivals to Thailand after Asia-Pacific. In 2014, 7.8 million passengers arrived to Thailand from Europe (12.3 percent of the total) and 1.3 million passengers arrived from the Middle East (2.1 percent).

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1 Fastest growing countries are Ranked by Oxford Economics’ forecasted real GDP growth 2015-2030, with a threshold of >US $100 million GDP. Fastest growing cities are ranked by Oxford Economics’ forecasted real GDP growth 2015-2030, with a minimum city size of 5 million.
Ease of travel, cost competitiveness, and infrastructure are vitally important

Survey evidence of infrastructure and ease of travel

Executives surveyed by the World Economic Forum suggest that Thailand’s air transport infrastructure quality ranks 10th out of 25 countries included in the survey in Asia-Pacific and 35th globally. Thailand ranks 9th out of 25 in Asia-Pacific for visa openness and 7th for cost competitiveness.

Key infrastructure facts about Thailand’s air transport

Around 710,000 aircraft land or take off from Thailand every year. The country has 2 airports that are in the top 100 in the world (ranked by passenger numbers). Suvarnabhumi - New Bangkok International Airport airport carried the most passengers - 43.9 million - in 2014.

Number of passengers travelling annually through the five busiest airports in the country (000s)

Number of airports among the top 100 in the world: 34

1. **Suvarnabhumi - New Bangkok International Airport**: 43,900,000 passengers
2. **Don Muang International Airport - Formerly BKK**: 20,100,000 passengers
3. **Phuket Intl**: 10,000,000 passengers
4. **Chiang Mai Intl**: 6,200,000 passengers
5. **Hat Yai International**: 2,700,000 passengers

Infrastructure quality score: 4/7

Visa openness score*: 6/10

Cost competitiveness score*: 9/10

* Entry visa requirements for a tourism visit from worldwide source markets (10 = no visa required for visitors from all source markets, 0 = traditional visa required for visitors from every source market).
* Based on ticket taxes, airport charges, and VAT (10=low cost, 0=high cost).

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This report is one of several that examine the air transport sector’s importance around the world. Access them all from IATA’s website.

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Sources: IATA, Oxford Economics, International Monetary Fund, and national statistics.