

## Work progresses on Huayxai airport expansion

The runway at Huayxai Airport in Bokeo province is currently being extended to better serve regional transport needs and accommodate the growth of investment and tourism.

Now just 7 percent complete, the project is scheduled to be finished in 2020 at a cost of 149 billion kip, funded by the government.



Project Manager Mr Khampien Lanena told *Vientiane Times* the runway is being expanded from 19 to 36 metres in width and from 1,450 to 1,660 metres in length.

“When the runway is finished, ATR aircraft will be able to land here and the number of tourists travelling to the province is expected to increase. In the past, only small planes with 50 seats could land at the airport,” Mr Khampien said.

“During work on the runway, flights have been suspended,” he added. In the meantime, people wanting to travel to Bokeo have to go by bus or

private vehicle.

When it reopens, the airport will increase the number of flights from one to two a day to accommodate more tourists and businesspeople.

The project began on September 24 and comprises the runway expansion and improvement of aircraft parking, the passenger car park and the passenger terminal.

Huayxai Airport is a little more specialised than other airports in the county because the runway is designed to allow aircraft to land and take off from two directions.

The airport is being expanded to meet the increasing needs of air travellers in the region. Huayxai district is the capital of Bokeo province and is located next to the Mekong River which forms the border with Thailand.

Most visitors treat Huayxai as a stopover en route to other destinations. This is unfortunate as the small town has a lot to offer in terms of local life and it's definitely worth spending a few days here by the riverbank and exploring the environs.

Due to the province's strategic location, the government has set its sights on the development of infrastructure, particularly roads and air connectivity, to attract more foreign investment. Laos' main airports are Wattay Airport International in Vientiane, and airports in Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Savannakhet and Champassak provinces.

**By Times Reporters**

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