



**Topic of the consultation:** Whether an airport is the most appropriate option for access to St Helena in the current economic climate

**Scope of the consultation:** to seek views of interested parties on the following three options before the Government takes a final decision on whether an airport is currently the most appropriate option:

- a) Go ahead with the airport now (approximate cost £230-260 million over five years)
- b) Decide now not to build the airport and commission a new ship (approximate cost £50-70 million over five years)
- c) Defer a decision for a period of up to five years and continue to provide access by sea in the meantime, either by extending the life of the RMS St Helena or by chartering separate passenger and freight vessels (approximate cost £20-30 million over five years)

We are not seeking to re-open discussions of other access options that were considered as part of the Feasibility Study (2004). But we are open to proposals on how any of the options we have identified could be modified to be more acceptable to interested parties.

It would be helpful if you could structure your response to address the questions below, but you should not be restricted to these questions. Please send us any information that you feel is relevant to support your response.

### Consultation questions:

#### Question 1

What is your view on the three options above?

#### Question 2

How would each of the three options affect you, or the organisation that you represent?

#### Question 3

Before he reaches a decision, is there any other relevant information or proposals that the Secretary of State for International Development should take into account?

When you are responding, please state whether you are an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please state the name of the organisation, your role within it and how the views of members were assembled.

### Preferred option: Option C

Building the airport (Option A) would cost approximately £200 million more than either of the other two options over the next five years. However, it is the most likely option to generate economic sustainability for St Helena in the long term.

Keeping options on the airport open may enable the Government to reconsider the case when the economic conditions are right. Either extending the life of the RMS or chartering alternative vessels would allow this.

This prolongs a degree of uncertainty and the alternative of commissioning a new ship now (Option B) would remove uncertainty. However, it would make it less likely that the Government would wish to reconsider the case for the airport during the lifetime of the new vessel.

Taking all these factors into account, the least constricting option appears to the Government to be to defer the decision (Option C) which keeps open the possibility of reconsidering the options when global economic conditions improve.

However, a decision not to proceed with the airport now would have implications for both the people of St Helena and investors with an interest in the island, and we need to take these views into account before making a decision on which of the three Options is most appropriate at this time.

**Costs of the options:** A summary of the financial costs and of the economic cost/benefit analysis of the options can be found in the Consultation Document in paragraphs 34-42 and Annex A.

**Target audience:** This consultation is intended for St Helenians, both resident in St Helena and expatriates, as well as any other stakeholders and interested parties who have an interest in access to St Helena, and those with an interest in the overall use of the Government's development budget. These groups will include representatives of potential investors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

**Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:** Department for International Development (DFID)

**Duration:** 9th April 2009 to 31st July 2009

**Enquiries:** Copies of this consultation document can be found at [www.dfid.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/consultations), or [www.sainthelenaaccess.com](http://www.sainthelenaaccess.com), or by contacting DFID publications on [enquiry@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk) or +44 (0) 1355 843132..

If you have any general queries about this consultation or if you consider that this consultation does not comply with the seven consultation criteria in Annex I or if you have comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Coordinator  
Overseas Territories Department  
DFID  
1, Palace Street  
London SW1E 5HE

or

[Consultation-coordinator@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:Consultation-coordinator@dfid.gov.uk)

**How to respond:** Written responses can be submitted to the addresses below.

By 09 July:

The Governor's Office  
The Castle  
Jamestown  
St Helena

By 31 July:

St Helena Access consultation  
Overseas Territories Department  
DFID  
1, Palace Street  
London SW1E 5HE

Or

[St.helena-consultation@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:St.helena-consultation@dfid.gov.uk)

**Additional ways to become involved:** There will be a series of meetings on St Helena in June, as well as a meeting on Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands in July. There will also be a meeting in the UK. The meetings will be organised by an independent facilitator, who will make a record of all views expressed. Details of meetings will be publicised in advance.

We have made every effort to bring this consultation to the attention of St Helenians around the world, with the help of Saint FM, the St Helena Herald and the St Helena Independent, the office of the St Helena Government's UK Representative, and on the DFID and St Helena

Access Project websites. We have disseminated the document to a wider audience through the DFID Bulletin, to UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through the representative groups British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) and the British Overseas Aid Group (BOAG), and directly to representatives of potential investors with a known interest. If you think there are other ways that we can increase awareness of the consultation please let us know on [Consultation-coordinator@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:Consultation-coordinator@dfid.gov.uk)

**After the consultation:** We will not be able to consider any responses received after 31 July 2009. From 1 August 2009 to 30 September 2009 we will assess the evidence and opinions received, and we will publish a summary report soon after that. We expect to announce the preferred option for access to St Helena by the end of 2009.

### **Compliance with the Code of Practice on**

**Consultation:** This consultation complies with the Government Code of Practice on Consultation, and adheres to the seven consultation criteria which can be found in Annex I.

**Background:** The RMS St Helena was built in 1990 with an expected working life of 20-25 years, and the Government now needs to decide how to replace the ship. In 2003 the Government commissioned a Feasibility Study, which looked at a range of access options and concluded that an airport could generate higher levels of economic development on the island than any shipping option. In May 2007, the Government re-tendered the contract to design, build and operate an airport for the island, but the tender process was paused on 08 December 2008 following a deterioration in the global economic climate.

The Government is undertaking this consultation to seek views of interested parties before taking a final decision on whether an airport is currently the most appropriate option for access to St Helena. The Government intends to make a final decision by the end of 2009.

**Previous engagement:** A summary of previous consultations on the subject of access to St Helena, including the 2002 Referendum for Saints resident on St Helena, Ascension, the Falkland Islands and the RMS St Helena, is contained in annex C of the document.