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Annual ranking of world's airports by UBC professor puts spotlight on diversification

A new global survey of airports points to the need for improved cost efficiencies and diversification of revenue sources as the aviation industry grapples with the impact of the global economic recession.

The 2009 Global Airport Benchmarking Report has been released by the Air Transport Research Society (ATRS), which is headquartered at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business.

Based on operating efficiency and cost-competitiveness, airports in Atlanta, Hong Kong and Copenhagen were ranked highest on their continents in the large airport category, which includes airports that handle more than 15 million passengers annually.

In the smaller airports category (under 15 million passengers annually) Raleigh-Durham in the U.S., Xiamen (China) in Asia and Lisbon came out on top.

"This report provides a comprehensive and unbiased evaluation of airport performance around the globe," says ATRS President Tae Oum, a professor at the Sauder School of Business.

"With unprecedented volatility in the aviation sector worldwide, these rankings are helpful to not only the airports and airlines, but also to governments, consultants, institutional investors and yes, airline passengers and taxpayers."

The report stresses the importance of diversification as critical not only for the financial health but also for efficient management and operation of today's airports.

"Airports with a larger share of non-aeronautical revenue, including commercial revenue, achieve higher efficiency and thus are able to offer lower fees for aircraft landings," says Oum, who cites car parking, office rentals, retail activity and real estate development as some of the areas where airports can be successful at supplementing air transport revenues.

In Canada, airports from Vancouver and Calgary were recognized for leading the way in cost efficiencies. Toronto's Pearson International Airport, meanwhile, was not included in the ATRS benchmarking, as it chose not to supply data.

According to the ATRS benchmarking report, however, Pearson has the highest aircraft landing charges in the world by a wide margin, making it the most expensive place to land commercial aircraft.



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ATRS evaluates 142 airports and 16 airport groups in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia and Oceania. The Global Airport Benchmarking Task Force includes leading researchers from Asia, Europe and North America. Visit <http://www.atrsworld.org> for more information.

For the full rankings from the 2009 ATRS Global Airport Performance Benchmarking Project, visit: <http://www.atrsworld.org/docs/Benchmarking2009.pdf> .

The world’s most efficient airports

North America:

Large airports (more than 15 million PAX/annual passengers):

1. Atlanta
2. Orlando

Small airports (less than 15 million PAX):

1. Raleigh-Durham
2. Nashville

Europe: Copenhagen, Oslo, Madrid

Asia-Pacific:

Large airports (more than 15 million PAX):

1. Hong Kong
2. Seoul-Incheon

Small airports (Less than 15 million PAX):

1. Xiamen
2. Seoul-Gimpo

Canada only: (tie) 1. Vancouver. 1. Calgary. 3. Ottawa. (Toronto not included in the 2009 survey).