

# Sangster International Airport

A UNIQUE AIRPORT AT THE  
HEART OF THE CARIBBEAN



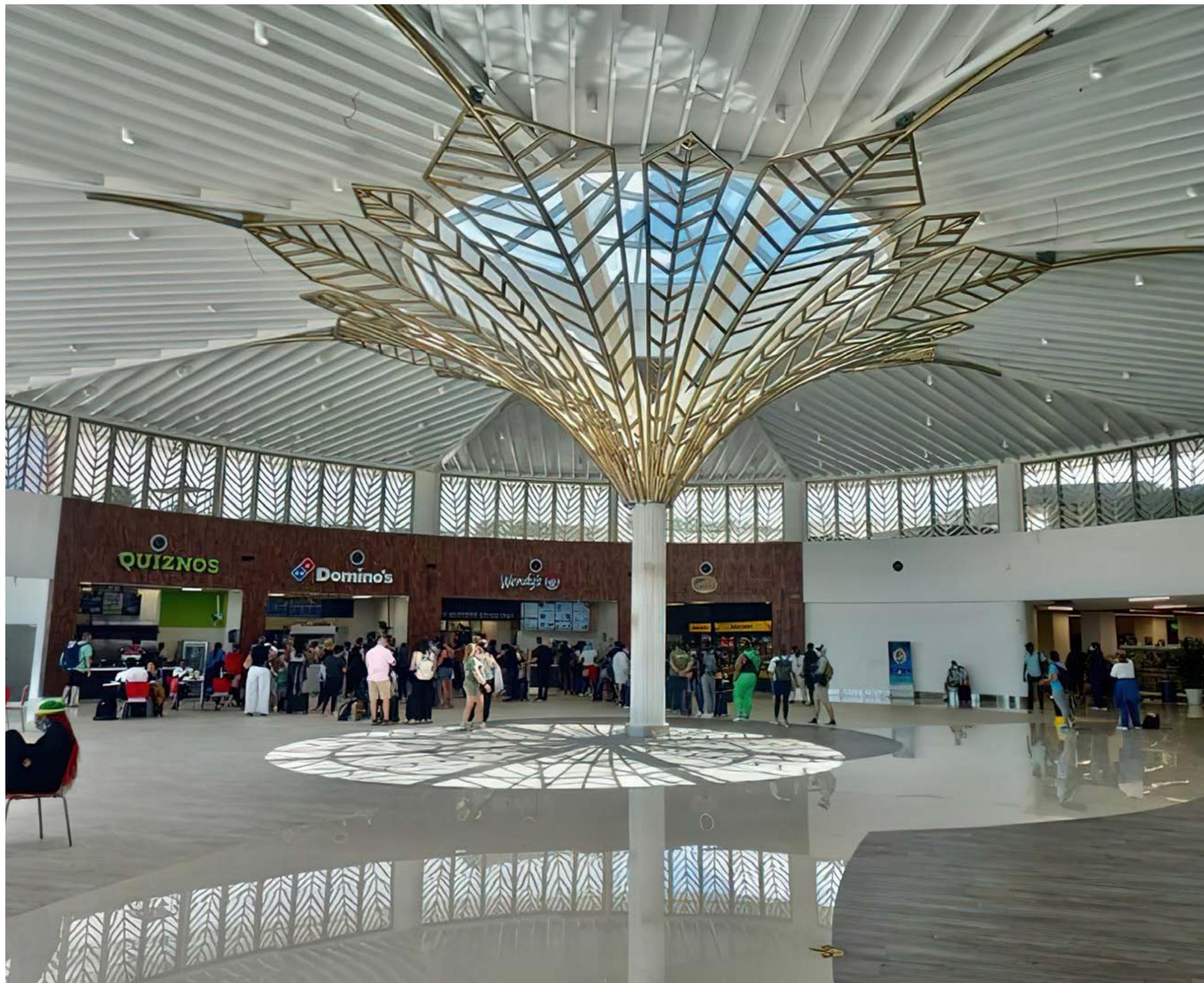


MBJ

# SANGSTER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

A unique airport at the heart of the Caribbean

RESEARCH BY TAYO AKANBI



**T**he Sangster International Airport (SIA) is the primary gateway to Jamaica, enabling the transit of more than 85% of tourists arriving on the island. In 2019, SIA received over 4.7 million total passengers. The operators aim for it to remain a significant terminal in the Caribbean and to be recognized globally as a leading tourist destination. Business Excellence Magazine discussed the developments at SIA with Mrs Sharon Hislop-Holt - Manager, Commercial Business Development & Marketing at MBJ Airports Limited.

MBJ Airports Limited operates Sangster International Airport through a concession agreement with the Government of Jamaica. The Mexican company, Grupo Aeroportuario Del Pacífico, is the majority stakeholder in the concession, and Vantage Airport Group from Canada owns the remaining proportion. Jamaica's Government remains the owner of the airport asset through the life span of the agreement, which ends in March 2033.

This public/private partnership has been hugely successful. It has led to significant expansions and improvements in SIA's quality of service. Plans for the airport in the short, medium, and long-term aspire to go beyond the life of the compromise.

**MBJ has invested over 280 million USD in airport infrastructure through private debt and equity capital**

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## Runway Expansion Project costs USD 70 million

### Investments in Infrastructure

MBJ has invested over 280 million USD in airport infrastructure through private debt and equity capital, removing the dependence on government fiscal resources. This year, there have been investments of over 19 million US dollars or just under 3 billion Jamaican dollars.

Recently, MBJ invested USD 26 million to resurface the taxiways, shoulders, and ramps in some areas using concrete rather than asphalt to ensure durability. The passenger check-in area was also renovated, with new floors and ceilings, plus the expansion and remodelling of public restrooms.

The airport's runway is being extended to meet the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization. This extension also improves the runway's safety with the addition of Runway End Safety Areas (RESA), a special requirement levied by authorities. Furthermore, the total Runway Expansion Project costs USD 70 million.

There is also a solar project underway. The goal is to reduce MBJ's reliance on power from the national energy grid, decreasing its operating costs and carbon footprint. Considering that the airport's peak electricity demand coincides with solar peak output, the airport will use 100% of production. The solar project will reduce reliance on the national energy grid by approximately 11%, with plans to increase

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solar production in the existing parking areas.

The waiting area space for departures has been recently completed and now has an additional 2,700m2. This project also seeks to renovate and build 15 retail units, a large lounge, and a food court. The departure lounge will offer more seating, better natural light, entertainment, and new and exciting retail offerings. Shops will be more attractive and easily accessible, offering high-quality items and creating a memorable experience for passengers enjoying their last moments in Jamaica.

**Digital Transformation**

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven the need for significant digital transformation, by the introduction of touchless and seamless passenger processing technology

for both departures and arrivals. MBJ intends to reshape the passenger journey with the short-term implementation of next-generation technology. This will allow for the airport to be well-positioned to address post-COVID-19 requirements.

Some of those requirements have to do with the use of e-gates, biometric processing, and mobile check-in. Introducing these systems will further reduce the processing time for passengers and decrease the facility demand requirements in the short-medium term. Enhancements in outbound security screening equipment will also specifically:

- Reduce the number of passenger touchpoints
- Decrease the number of items passengers need to remove from the luggage

- Improve the speed of the screening process

**Community Involvement**

MBJ Airports Limited continues to invest in and transform the Sangster International Airport through infrastructure, improved processes, and modern technology. The company believes investing in human capabilities and future talents within local communities are crucial.

Through its Change for Children initiative, MBJ continued to impact the community in which it operates positively. The airport

**Did you know?**

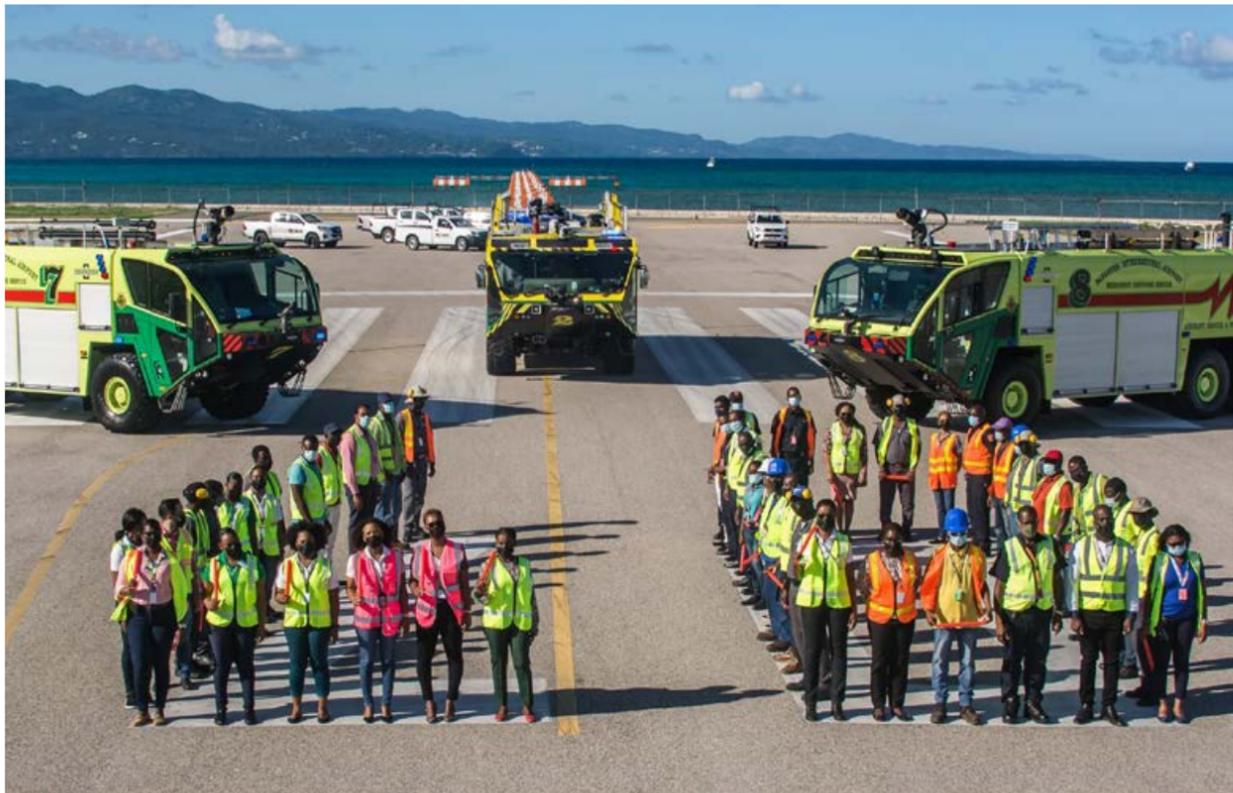
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has recently hosted its second Charity Run/Walk, which raised USD 30,000 for academic scholarships for those in need. They also continue to work with the Victory Whitehouse Early Childhood Centre and the Flankers Primary & Junior High schools.

MBJ is also committed to safety for all airport operations; as such, it has instituted a Safety Management System intending to achieve the highest level of Safety Performance and meet regulatory requirements with supervision by a Safety Oversight Committee.

Airport staff receives training at onboarding; said training continues throughout their tenure to ensure that all





the workforce understands, adheres to, and is aware of their safety responsibilities.

**Sustainable Contributions**

Sustainability and the environment are also of importance to MBJ. That explains their participation in global carbon management programs such as the Airport Carbon Accreditation and Annual International Coastal Clean-up Day.

The investments underway demonstrate confidence that more passengers will continue to visit Jamaica. A significant economic driver for all stakeholders is ensuring the facilities are up-to-date with international standards. Over 7,500 people work at SIA and over 80% of the businesses are locally owned. The airport has contributed an estimated USD 244 million to the economy of Jamaica directly.

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SIA is also honoured to receive the award for the Caribbean’s Leading Airport at the World Travel Awards 2022. The airport has won this prestigious award for the 14th consecutive year. This accolade was first bestowed on SIA in 2005, then again in 2009, and every year since. The airport concession remains committed to meeting and exceeding the level of service requirements in the agreement.

customer feedback. The goal is to continue to be a nationwide point of reference, while being uniquely Jamaican and a true pearl in the heart of the Caribbean.

To sum up, the airport’s operator has committed to continually exceeding passenger expectations. The latter is evident through their constant investment, impressive plans for the future, and

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