

Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIBD)

AN AIRPORT AT THE HEIGHT OF
A COUNTRY WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS





AIBD

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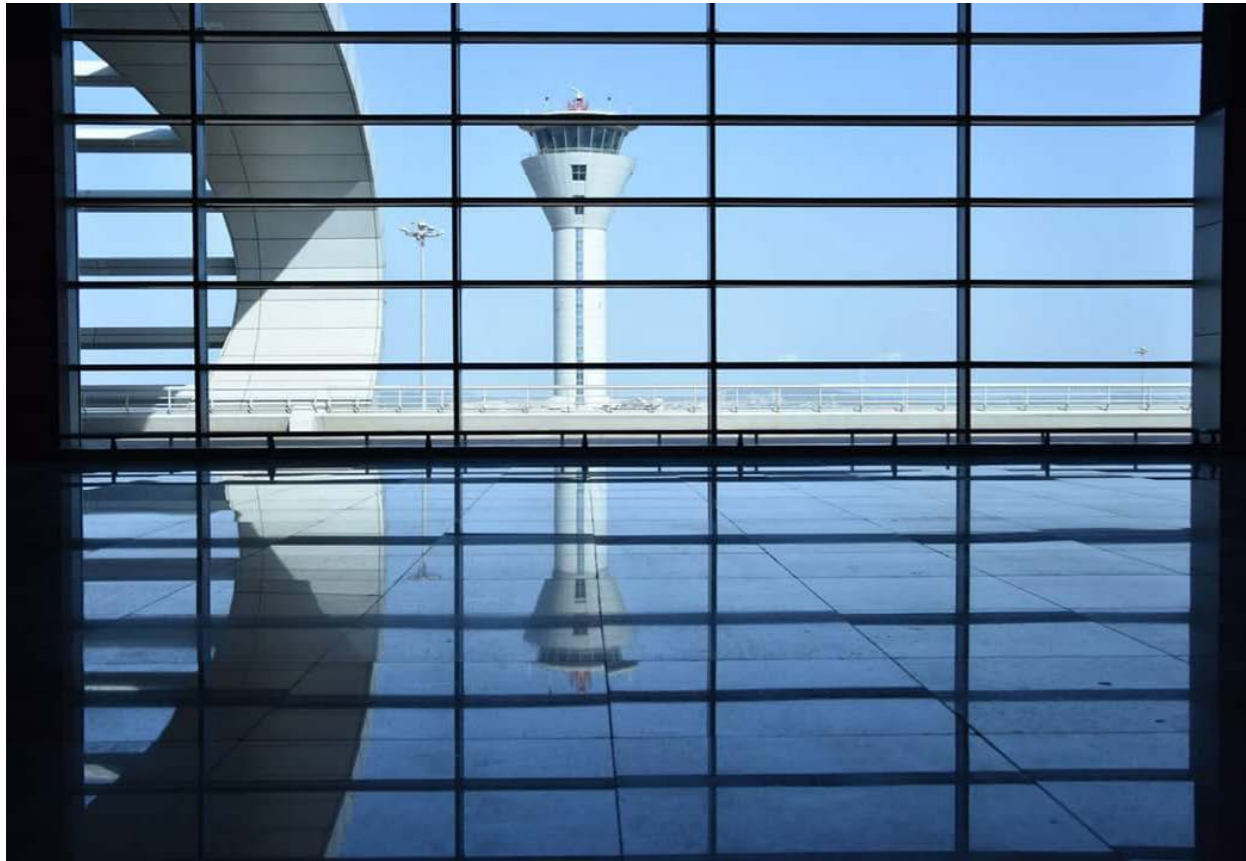
RESEARCH BY **ABI ABAGUN**



Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIBD) is located near the city of Ndiass, a town in the African country of Senegal. The airport was named after the Senegalese politician who in 1914 became the first black African deputy in the French National Assembly. It serves as the new airport for Dakar, the country's capital, since the old Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport became too small for the number of current operations. The airport is located 58 km (36 miles) west of the city of Dakar, and it is the new main air terminal in Senegal, which operates international flights to various destinations in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the United States..

Drums, dances and the popular Senegalese mbalax in the voice of the singer Youssou N'dour welcomed the new Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIBD), back on December 7, 2017. After 10 years of work, runways finally opened that day and





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hundreds of people, mainly from nearby towns, gathered to attend the opening ceremony officiated by President Macky Sall. The inauguration featured four African heads of state and government as guests of honour.

The airport isn't too big but it's very modern, especially when compared to the ancient facilities of the Léopold Sédar Senghor. AIBD is the result of the efforts of former President Abdoulaye Wade and the tenacity of his successor Macky Sall. One of the objectives was to decongest the collapsed city of Dakar.

AIBD's importance and impact

The strategic partners who contribute the most to AIBD's operations are the three shareholders of LAS namely: LIMAK, AIBD SA and SUMMA. In addition to these three main partners, LAS benefits from the contribution of all airport operators, whether institutional or private.

Business Excellence Magazine had the opportunity to interview Mr Askin Demir, Chief Executive Officer at LAS LIMAK AIBD SUMMA SA. According



to Mr Askin Demir, “since its opening, the airport has contributed 160 billion FCFA to the economy of Senegal through various activities. Regarding traffic, there was a 10% increase in passenger traffic in the first year of operation. The airport has also passed many certifications on operations, such as ICAO, ISO, ACA, AHA, among others”.

Did you know?
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- Senegal’s socio-economic and political environment, which favours investment and business. This advantage will be greatly accentuated with the exploitation of oil and gas.

- The new airport infrastructure that facilitates upkeep and technical maintenance.

- The presence of a strong airline, making AIBD a connecting hub in the region.

- A toll motorway that links it with Dakar and a railway line, the TER, is under construction. Likewise, the airport enabled a whole network of bus lines with up to 80 vehicles from Dakar, Thiès and Mbour, and also assigned 100 new taxis to this facility.

We asked Mr Askin Demir about Blaise Diagne International Airport’s competitive advantages. He mentioned the airport “has a strategic geographical position that gives it a competitive advantage in the West African sub-region”. Other competitive advantages he mentioned were:



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Growth strategy in the midst of “revenge travel”

Blaise Diagne International Airport experienced its biggest traffic peak since opening in July 2022. This confirms the phenomenon of “Revenge Travel” currently seen at airports worldwide. However, as the AIBD has a tradition of a peak period in the summer season, practical operational arrangements were already underway to deal with this phenomenon.

Regarding the airport’s growth strategy, according to Mr Askin Demir “the strategy is mainly linked to the development of the national airline Air Senegal, which currently holds 40% of the traffic and operates nearly half of the airlines”. For a country without great natural resources (at least until the oil already discovered on the deep seas begins to flow), but with surprising political and social stability, this airport also represents a firm commitment to tourism, another of the axes of the government’s plan. Visitors who want to explore the country without the hassles of the capital will find it easier than ever.



In the cargo sector, a second terminal will be set up and the airport has committed to the WLP (World Logistics Passport) program which aims to retain cargo customers. The advent of the TER (Regional Express Train) at the AIBD in its phase 2 is also an asset for the development of the airport and the strengthening of its connectivity.

A holistic public-private effort

In the area of sustainability, AIBD has made great strides since its commissioning by obtaining Carbone Level 2 accreditation (ACA 2) and by engaging in consolidation projects aimed at Level 3. AIBD is also working on a solar farm project, in its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.



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“For the coming years, LAS will work to maintain the trend of increasing AIBD traffic through various airline development actions, in conjunction with our partner Air Senegal to consolidate the Dakar hub” stated Mr Askin Demir. “The finalization of the “Airport City” project of our partner AIBD SA will also be a priority for the Airport in the coming years as well as the development of a new terminal to support the development of traffic”.

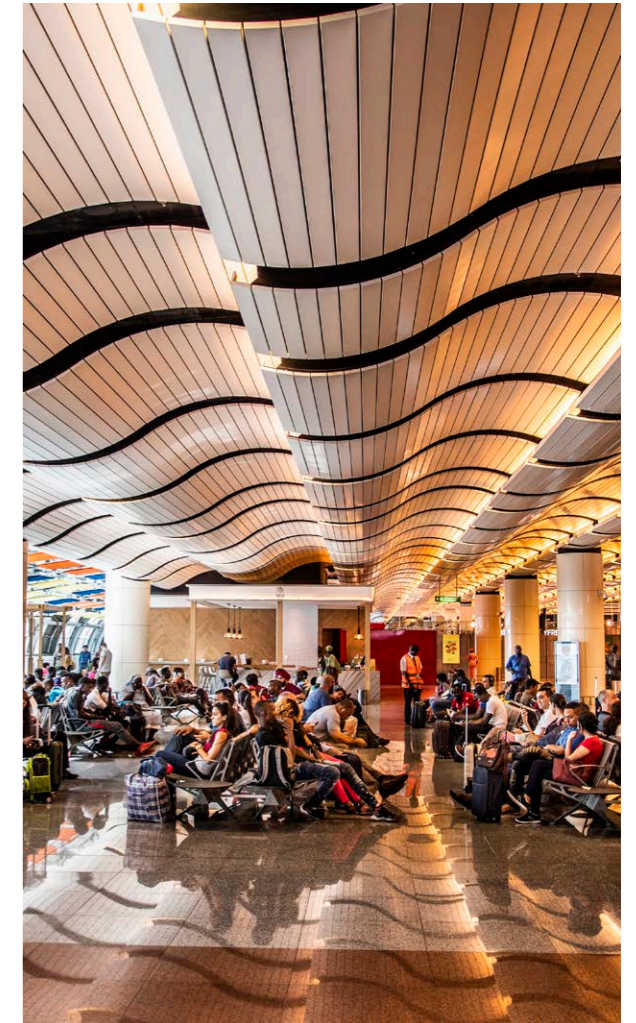


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Through the PSE (Plan Sénégal Emergent), the government of Senegal has given definite assets to the air transport sector to provide it with modern airport infrastructure. The AIBD was carried out within this framework and the state continues this program with the modernization of airports in the interior of the country. The latter will make it possible, in the long term, to provide Senegal with an efficient air network.

Dakar, located on a peninsula that is stifling its growth, no longer lives up to the dreams of this country. In addition to the airport, the city already has a renovated Conference Center and an exhibition center, a sports complex, a ministerial city, an industrial center, and thousands of homes, among other infrastructures that are under construction. These collective efforts aim to turn the Diamniadio-Diass area in Senegal into the new administrative and economic center of the country.

With a cost of 492 million USD and a capacity of three million passengers per year, the airport aims to be much more than an airport and become an



intercontinental hub that, at the same time, stimulates the promising Senegalese economy. So, if Senegal is in your plans anytime soon, you’ll find vibrant cities, and an airport that lives up to the stature of a country with great expectations.

AIBD

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