

At a Glance: Princess Juliana International Airport Reconstruction Case Study

2017 Hurricanes and Economic Impact

2 hurricanes in 14 days in September 2017: Irma (Category 5) and Maria

100% terminal rendered inoperable, full closure

45% GDP tied to airport, dependent on single infrastructure

12% GDP contraction over 2 years, tourism revenues collapse



~ 2M annual passengers pre-hurricanes

A Seven-Year Reconstruction Journey



2017–2018

Emergency response, temporary facility, limited terminal operation

2018–2019

Financing delays, CEO vacancy, political uncertainty, insurance/legal disputes



DECEMBER 2019

US\$149M financing secured: SXM Trust Fund, European Investment Bank, PJIAE funds

2020–2022

COVID-19 shock, technical delays, logistical hurdles



2023–2024

Sequenced construction, phased reopening, formal opening November 2024

"Build Back Better" Design Principles

Hurricane Resilience

- Resilient roof and doors
- Reinforced boarding bridges
- Improved building envelope

Environmental Sustainability

- Installed LED lighting
- High-efficiency HVAC
- Smart building management

Passenger Experience

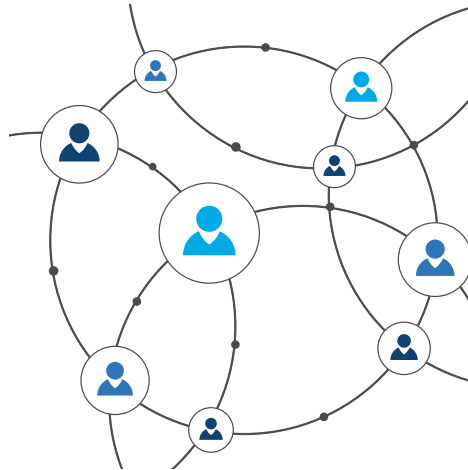
- Self-service baggage drops
- Expanded concessions
- Improved flows, digital signage

Successful Strategic Partnerships and Governance

Dedicated Project Management Unit Staffed through international and local recruiting for high implementation capacity



National Recovery Program Bureau Local coordination, fiduciary and governance tasks



Royal Schiphol Group International expertise, emergency liquidity support



World Bank Critical oversight, technical assistance, capacity-building support

Key Findings in Resilience, Operations, and Recovery



Rebuilt terminal **stronger than pre-hurricanes**, meets rigorous World Bank environmental and safety standards



Carefully sequenced and nighttime work minimized disruption, **phased approach** promoted steady recovery



Reconstructed terminal **revitalized tourism sector**, supported jobs, strengthened local institutions

Three Lesson Areas for Disaster Response

1 Disaster Preparedness

- Insulate corporate governance from political interference
- Diversify insurance coverage and non-airport revenue
- Develop pre-disaster mutual aid agreements, continuity plans

2 Infrastructure and Operations

- Design resilient structures and conduct vulnerability audits
- Set up temporary facilities and phased restoration plans
- Use flexible immigration policies and worker support programs

3 Project Implementation

- Ensure strong leadership, dedicated implementation unit
- Use rated criteria procurement to balance cost, quality
- Engage in early, transparent stakeholder communications

A Model for Climate-Adaptive Infrastructure

PJIA is positioned as a **model for airport owners, operators, regulators, policymakers, and development practitioners** involved in disaster recovery and resilient infrastructure development, especially in small island states. The lessons learned offer **a blueprint for building institutional capacity, fostering international cooperation, and embracing innovation** for long-term resilience.

