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\$10m study on new rail systems

By ANDY HO

THE Government will soon commission a \$10 million consultancy study on how Hongkong could best develop three new rail systems as part of the transport investments up to 2001.

The winner of the contract is expected to present its findings by October, before the Government asks one of the existing railway corporations to carry out detailed designs and construction of the schemes.

The proposed Railway Development Study will cover three vital aspects of the future rail networks - patronage analysis, financial appraisals, and preliminary engineering feasibility study.

The exercise is expected to cost \$9 million in professional fees and a further \$1 million in site investigations.

The consultant will have to look into how the projects could best be financed in view of the likely resource constraints of the rail operators. The Government earlier said it would either ap-

point the Mass Transit Railway Corporation or the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation to run the proposed rail services.

The latest study follows an earlier consultancy report, the Second Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS-11), which was started in late 1986 and completed last May.

The CTS-11 recommended that three rail projects be constructed in the early 1990s.

They are the Northwest New Territories Urban Link from Yuen Long or Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan, the Tseung Kwan O MTR Extension, and a third Cross-Harbour rail link.

However, detailed planning for the schemes now have to take into consideration the future Chek Lap Kok airport project, announced by the Governor, Sir David Wilson, last October.

The consultant will be asked to advise the Government on the timing of the three CTS-11 rail projects.