

Consultation on the appraisal process for start-up aid for airports with less than 3mppa

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Introduction	
How to respond	
Freedom of Information	
Process for bidding for funding Who is cligible to apply for funding?	
Who is eligible to apply for funding? Process	
Compliance with EC guidelines on start-up aid Initial application process Commercial appraisal	13
Economic and Strategic Appraisal Costs Benefit Analysis Strategic Analysis	15
What will happen next	27
Annex A: GaWC ranked cities	28
Annex B: Full list of consultation questions	29
Annex C: Consultation principles	31
Annex D: List of those consulted Error! Bookmark not	defined.

Executive summary

Introduction

- The Aviation Policy Framework¹ sets out the government's policy to allow the aviation sector to continue to make a significant contribution to the economic growth of the country.
- 2. The Government recognises the very important role airports across the UK play in:
 - attracting new or more frequent international connections to attract new business activity to support the growth of a more balanced economy
 - reducing the need for long-distance travel to and from airports; and
 - giving air passengers greater choice.
- 3. The UK Government believes that airlines operate best in a competitive, commercial environment and it is for individual airlines to determine the routes that they operate. However, the UK recognises that aviation plays an important role in connecting regions and accepts that aid may be necessary to develop air services to airports where local economic conditions prove unattractive to airlines. However, any Government intervention in this market must ensure that it does not distort competition.
- In response to this agenda, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced in the 2013 Spending Round that £20 million would be made available over two years to 2016 to maintain regional air access to London through a Public Service Obligation (PSO) where there was the probability that an existing air service would be lost.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/153776/aviation-policy-framework.pdf

- In the 2014 Budget, the Chancellor further increased the support for regional air connectivity to London from £10 million to £20 million per annum, and extended the fund to include start-up aid for new routes from regional airports which handle fewer than five million passengers per year.
- 6. Start-up aid will allow the Government to provide financial assistance to an airline for a maximum of three years to support the establishment of a new route that will facilitate economic growth in the region served by the airport. Any aid provision will be subject to the 2014 EC aviation State aid guidelines for airports and airlines² ("Guidelines").
- 7. The Department for Transport (DfT) have submitted a draft Protocol to the European Commission (EC) that provides a framework of rules and guidance for aid that can be provided to airlines for new routes from airport of fewer than 3 million passengers per annum. It has been designed to ensure that any start-up given:
 - is in line with the objectives of the Aviation Policy Framework on regional airports;
 - complies with UK and European Union law, especially in respect of State aids and competition policy;
 - operates on a consistent basis, ensuring transparency, nondiscrimination and proportionality; and
 - works with the market to provide carefully targeted, timelimited interventions which help to share the risk of route start-up from regional airports with airport operators and airlines.
- 8. Upon clearance of this Protocol by the Commission, the UK Government can award aid in respect to routes from airports handling fewer than 3 million passengers per annum.
- This Protocol does not directly apply to new routes from airports handling between 3-5 million passengers per annum due to the higher risk of market distortion. The EC state aid for aviation guidelines state that any start-up funding for a new route from airport of between 3-5 million passengers per annum will need to be notified on an individual basis. Therefore if a scheme promoter wishes to be considered for

5

² http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2014:099:FULL&from=EN

- funding for an new air route from airports of between 3-5 million passengers per annum they should contact the Department to discuss the scheme.
- For airports that handling more than 5 million passenger per annum, state aid will not be considered compatible.
- 11. Whilst a route meeting the criteria set out in the Protocol will be eligible for funding the Governments objective for providing start-up aid goes beyond this. It will be necessary for any funding bids to be able to demonstrate that the proposed route will create net economic benefits for the region by improving the connectivity between the UK regions and their domestic or European counterparts.
- 12. Whilst this imposes limitations with regards to routes that can be supported it will ensure that any funding provided will provide for routes that provide directly measurable benefits to the UK and ensure value for money to the tax payer.
- 13. Start-up aid is not intended to support services that have the potential to be commercially viable without assistance, that serve primarily outbound leisure markets, or that will not be commercially sustainable in the medium term. It is expected to be a strictly short-term measure providing limited sums for start-up assistance over a maximum period of three years. It is not intended to distort existing competition by bringing forward routes at one airport that will significantly affect the viability of existing routes from another with a shared catchment area.
- 14. It should work with the market to support new air services by sharing risk during the period of route's start-up. As such, it will provide a mechanism that allows a promoter to bring forward the commencement of new air services that are expected to become commercially sustainable in the medium term, thereby securing the resultant economic benefits to be derived from additional connectivity.
- 15. We have therefore developed an Appraisal Framework ("Framework") that will allow DfT to evaluate bids received against the aims of the fund to determine whether a scheme should receive funding and in cases where funding requests exceed the funding available it will allow the Department to rank scheme to determine which schemes should receive funding.

- 16. The Framework is designed to be objective, consistent and transparent, providing auditable information for public reporting. It will provide an overarching framework for the scope of the appraisal process and the procedure for assessing applications for start-up aid, which will ensure funding can be allocated in an open and fair method. It is expected that applicants provide the calculations and analysis set out in the framework to facilitate decision making.
- 17. Applications will be assessed in two stages.
 - Initial Application Stage: This will include a screening process to establish whether the application fits the key requirements of the start-up aid, as set out in the start-up aid Protocol.
 - ii. Economic and Strategic Appraisal Stage: A full economic and environmental appraisal, from which a Benefits-Costs ratio will be calculated and the strategic quality score. These will be combined to provide a final assessment to decide if fund should be provided.
- **18.** To ensure that we get the process right, we are seeking your views on the Framework.

How to respond

The consultation period began on 13 November 2014 and will run until the 11 December 2014. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date.

Please send consultation responses to:

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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

1. Process for bidding for funding

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

- 1.2 In accordance with EC Guidelines on start-up aid, funding can only be provided to an airline to cover up to 50% of airport charges. However we are proposing that bids for funding should be made up of a consortium made up of at least:
 - airport that meets Guideline's criteria;
 - airline that will operate the route;
 - and where suitable devolved or regional body that the airport that meets the criteria is located in.
- 1.3 We believe that a consortium made up of these entities will ensure the relevant information for the appraisal process can be collected and any costs can be shared by those entities that will benefit from start-up aid funding. This consortium will be known as 'scheme promoter'.

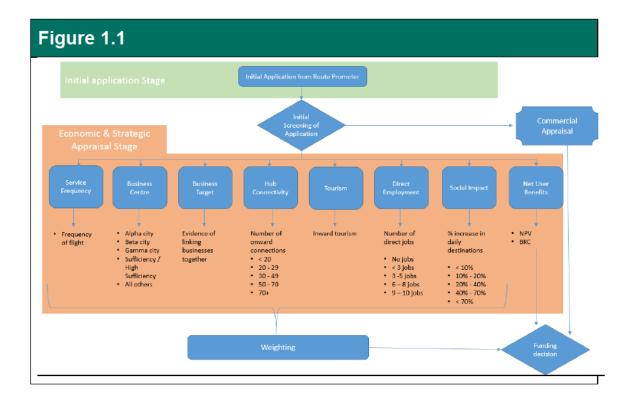
Question 1

Do you believe that a consortium of an airport and airline is the most suitable model, and should devolved or regional bodies be involved?

Process

- 1.4 Applications will be assessed in two stages.
 - Initial Application Stage: This will include a screening process to establish whether the application fits the key requirements of the start-up aid, as set out in the start-up aid Protocol.

 Economic and Strategic Appraisal Stage: A full economic and environmental appraisal, from which a Benefits-Costs ratio will be calculated and the strategic quality score.
 These will be combined to provide a final assessment to decide if fund should be provided.



- 1.5 Each stage will require the scheme promoter to submit evidence to the Department for assessment followed by an assessment period by the Department.
- 1.6 The initial application stage will enable the Department to establish whether the proposed route fits with the key objectives of the start-up aid. This will include consideration of whether:
 - the route or planned service meets the objectives and criteria set out in the Department's Protocol;
 - the airline has an EU operating licence, and is a credible provider of the service;
 - slots are available to meet the planned schedule;
 - the airport is able to handle the service at the planned operating times;

- there is prima facie evidence that the service is capable of being commercially viable at the end of the funding period.
- 1.7 To ensure openness the Department will publish a list of routes that it received initial application for and will allow a week for other airlines or airports within the same catchment to make representation to the Department if they are planning to operate the route commercially.

Tabl	Table 1.1					
Step	Stage	Time period				
1	Initial application stage	5 Jan. 2015 - 16 Jan. 2015				
2	DfT publish list of application routes	19 Jan. 2015				
3	Representation should be received of any concerns regarding proposed routes	26 Jan. 2015				
4	DfT publish successful bids at initial application stage	30 Jan. 2015				
5	Economic & Appraisal stage	30 Jan. 2015 - 27 Feb. 2015				
6	DfT publish list of successful bidders	26 March 2015				

Question 2

Does the timetable set out in Table 1.1 allow sufficient time to provide the necessary evidence?

2. Compliance with EC guidelines on start-up aid

Initial application process

2.1 The appraisal guidance sets out in Chapter 2 the information route promoters will need to supply in the initial application stage. The intention is that the information requested will enable the Department to make a judgement on whether a route meets the requirements for state aid set out in EC guidelines as clarified in the UK's Protocol to the Commission.

Question 3

Is there any information that you think would be difficult to supply?

Question 4

Is there any information that you think would be useful to supply that has not been listed?

Commercial appraisal

- 2.2 As part of the initial application process the route promoter must supply evidence to show that the route is not currently viable without fund and at the end of the funding period the route has the prospect of being profitable for the airline.
- 2.3 Whilst this will be enough for a route to pass the initial application stage, further work will be undertaken by the Department during the 'economic and strategic appraisal stage' to verify this evidence.

- **2.4** We therefore propose to undertake an independent analysis of the route to ensure that the route is not:
 - Viable without funding, and
 - at the end of the funding period the route will be commercially viable, taking into account any ongoing support from the airport operator.

Economic and Strategic Appraisal

- 3.1 The promoter of schemes that have passed the initial screening process will be required to develop a business case for the route setting out economic benefits the new route will generate and whether the scheme meets the strategic objectives of the fund. There are two key elements to the appraisal DfT will undertake to underpin the business case for support and to differentiate between applications:
 - Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) Where possible benefits should be monetised in line with WebTAG and will amongst others consist of journey time savings and journey costs savings. These benefits will be compare to the monetary asks for the scheme to produce a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR).
 - Strategic Analysis Benefits that cannot necessarily be monetised, but will generate benefits for the region and meet the strategic aims of the scheme. These will be made of a seven individual scores.

Costs Benefit Analysis

- 3.2 Cost benefit analysis will allow the Department to compare in monetary terms the benefit the new route will provide compared to the subsidy the Government would provide.
- **3.3** There are two indicators in the economic appraisal framework:
 - Net Present Value (NPV) this is the present value of the monetised benefits minus the present value of the support costs (funding requirements);
 - Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR) this is calculated by dividing the sum of the monetised benefits by the present value of the support costs (funding requirements).

- **3.4** The benefits generated should include:
 - Economic impacts changes in journey times (business, leisure and freight)
 - Environmental impacts noise, air quality, greenhouse gases
 - Social and distribution impacts human experience of the journey (quality, accessibility etc.) and how the benefits are shared across the different social groups
 - Public accounts changes in tax receipts
- 3.5 These benefits should be calculated over a ten year period. This will take account of the first three years of funding, and given the aim of the start-up aid if for the route to be commercially viable at the end of the funding period we will take into account a further seven years of benefit after the funding ends.

Question 5

Do you agree a ten year appraisal period is suitable, if not how long would you propose?

Strategic Analysis

- 3.6 The cost benefit analysis will allow us to assess whether the scheme generates value for money but it does not take into account some of the wider aims of the fund. These aims are to create economic benefits for the region by improving the connectivity between UK regions and their domestic and European counterparts. Therefore to allow the Department to assess whether a proposed route meets these aims it will be necessary for the route promoter to provide evidence against the following seven criteria:
 - Service Frequency
 - Business Centre Link

- Business Target Market
- Hub Connectivity
- Tourism Impact
- Direct Employment
- Social Impacts
- 3.7 Scheme promoters will be expected to provide evidence against each of the seven criteria to allow the Department aware points against each criteria.

Service Frequency

- 3.8 The availability of more frequent of direct air services will allow businesses located in the region to reach their customers, suppliers, partners and, for multi-national companies, other parts of their organisation more easily, quickly and cheaply. The same benefits will also accrue to customers, suppliers, partners and colleagues visiting the region. This will lead to increased business productivity and competitiveness, with resulting benefits for the economic prosperity of the region.
- 3.9 Therefore a route will score higher is the frequency on offer is greater. Table 3.1 sets out the proposed scoring system.

Table 3.1					
Current situation	Score				
Less than a single daily return flight	1				
A Single daily return flight	2				
More than a single daily return but less than a double daily return	3				
Double daily return	4				
More than a double daily return	5				

Example

A scheme promoter bring forward a scheme for funding to start-up a route operating a return flight in the morning and another return flight in the evening (i.e. double daily return) this will score 4, whist if the wish to only operate a single flight in the morning and a return in the evening (i.e. single daily return) they will receive a score of 2.

Question 6

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing frequency, if not what changes would you like to see?

Business Centre Links

- 3.10 New direct air services to/from a region offer the potential for fast, frequent and efficient links to major business centres across Europe are likely to bring more benefits to a region than connections to smaller urban areas. The business centre links indicator measures the importance of a new service in terms of the significance of the city served by the destination airport as a business location.
- 3.11 The Business Centre Links indicator is based on the work undertaken by the Globalisation and World Cities (GaWC) network based at Loughborough University. The GaWC ranks cities into 12 categories which we have converted into a score on a scale of 1-5 (Table 3.2). Further information on the GaWC can be found using the following link http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2012t.html and Annex A contains the GaWC ranking.

Table 3.2	
Destination City	Score
All cities not in any of the categories below	1

Sufficiency / High Sufficiency	2
Gamma World Cities	3
Beta World Cities	4
Alpha World Cities	5

Example

If a route promoter wishes to start a new route to Paris it would score a maximum score of 5 whist a route to Bordeaux will receive a score of 2.

Question 7

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing business centre links, if not what changes would you like to see?

Business Target Market

- 3.12 The previous criteria assigned a scored based on a generic assessment of cities, however this may not always be a true indication of the full wider business benefits an air link two another city might provide. Therefore a score will be assigned based on the impact the new route will have on the following areas:
 - Target FDI Markets the key foreign direct investment (FDI)
 market targets for a region can for instance be identified
 from an analysis of recent trends in the number of projects
 and the number of jobs created by the country of origin of
 the investing company, and discussions with the relevant
 agencies regarding specific country markets;
 - Export Market Targets the key export market targets for a region can for instance be identified from an analysis of recent data on regional exports by country and discussions

with the relevant agencies regarding specific country markets.

3.13 It will be for scheme promoters to submit evidence to show that the route meets these requirements and the Department will based on this evidence award a score in line with Table 3.3.

Table 3.3						
Evidence level	Score					
Limited evidence of impact	1					
Evidence of impact in one area	2					
Evidence of impact in both areas	3					
Strong evidence of impact in one area, evidence of impact in the other	4					
Strong evidence of impact in both areas	5					

Question 8

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing business target market, if not what changes would you like to see?

Connectivity

- 3.14 New services to / from a region to airports that offer significant opportunities for onward connections (hubbing) can be valuable to businesses because they offer the potential of easier indirect links to a wide range of business destinations.
- 3.15 The connectivity score is calculated by summing the number of onward connections available at the destination airport within a two-hour window of the arrival of a flight from the relevant UK regional airport, allowing for a 45-minute

connecting time, across the 'typical' flight schedule. To obtain the full benefits of onward connecting the airline requesting funding should have the ability to interline with other flights at the airports, without this ability it will not be possible for the passenger to receive all the benefits of an onward connection and therefore any scores should be halved. Accordingly, scores will be awarded in line with Table 3.4

Table 3.4					
Number of onward flights	No through ticketing possible	Through ticketing possible			
<20	0.5	1			
20-29	1	2			
30-49	1.5	3			
50-70	2	4			
70+	2.5	5			

Example

If the proposed schemes has flights arriving at a destination airport at 0700 hours each day and on average for each day there are 32 flights departing from that airport between 0745 – 0945 (i.e. 45 minutes after flight is due and for a two hour window), the scheme will receive a score of 1.5 if it is not possible to through ticket or a score of 3 if the airline operating the route offers through ticketing to other destination served by the airport within the two hour timeframe.

Question 9

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing connectivity, if not what changes would you like to see?

Tourism Impact

- 3.16 Air services are a fast way for business and leisure visitors to travel to an area, thus supporting employment in a wide range of facilities, including hotels, restaurants, shops, conference and exhibition centres and visitor attractions.
- 3.17 In economic terms, the proposed air services can generate additional benefits if leisure visitors generate greater expenditure, thus supporting greater employment, than would otherwise have occurred. Stimulated visitors to a region from overseas and, other parts of the UK will be relevant in this context.
- 3.18 The tourism score will be derived from the number of passengers forecast by the independent route forecaster. We have decided not to use an absolute measure but rather provide the maximum score (five) to the route that generates the highest tourism numbers receive the full score (five) for tourism impact and the other routes receiving a relative score depending on the number of inbound tourist generated.

Example

Table 3.5 gives a hypothetical example of the number of inward tourist for four routes and the score they would receive. As scheme A will generate the highest number of inbound tourists it receives the full 5 marks, whilst scheme C will only generate a fifth of the tourist, so will only receive a fifth of the full mark (i.e. 1).

Table 3.5						
Scheme	Estimated inward tourism	Calculation	Score			
А	1,000	Highest number of tourist so receives the maximum score	5			
В	800	800/1000 * 5	4			
С	200	200/1000 * 5	1			
D	50	50/1000 * 5	0.25			

Question 10

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing tourism impact, if not what changes would you like to see?

Direct Employment

- 3.19 Credit we be awarded where the development of a new route generates new employment. The more direct jobs created by the development of a new route the higher the score. However a job can only be counted if it does create totally new employment rather than the use, or displacement, of existing personnel. For example, no credit would be given where an airline makes use of existing flight crew to operate a route.
- 3.20 Where an airline is proposing to operate more than one service from an airport, the estimated number of new jobs is divided pro rata between the individual services. Where an airline is proposing to base a new aircraft at the airport that will also operate non-supported routes, if a majority of the routes are supported all of the projected employment should be included in the route appraisal. If only a minority of the routes are supported, the number of new jobs is divided pro rata between the individual services.
- 3.21 Scores will be awarded in line with Table 3.6. These scores have been based on the analysis undertaken by York Aviation for Scottish Enterprise, which used the maximum number of direct airline jobs that was created by a Route Development Fund route (the original Glasgow to Dubai Emirates service).

Table 3.6	
Number of jobs supported	Score
No additional employment	0
Less than three jobs created	1
Three - five jobs created	2
Six - eight jobs created	3

Nine to ten jobs created	4
More than ten jobs created	5

Example

If a new route requires a flight crew of five but these are already employed by the airline and will be operating other flights during the day, then a score of zero will be allocated for the route as no new direct jobs have been created, however if the airlines needs to employ an additional check-in staff member due to handle the extra flight then the route will receive a score of one.

Question 11

Do you agree with the scoring system for direct employment generated, if not what changes would you like to see?

Social Impacts

- 3.22 In addition to economic impacts, air services also generate a number of social benefits. For example, air services are important, especially in remote areas, for links to health services and cultural and sporting events, whilst the ability to access convenient air services in order to take overseas holidays is a significant quality of life factor. The scoring reflects the proportionally larger impact of additional services at less well connected airports.
- 3.23 Therefore routes shall be assessed based on the percentage increase that adding a new daily service will add to the number of daily non-stop destinations that an airport services. The percentage increases in the social connectivity index are converted to a score on a scale of 1-5 (Table 3.7) The scoring reflects the proportionally larger impact of additional services at less well connected airports.

Table 3.7					
Increase in destinations with at least a daily service	Score				
Less than 10%	1				
Between 10% and 20%	2				
Between 20% and 40%	3				
Between 40% - 70%	4				
Greater than 70%	5				

Example

If a new route is proposed from an airport with only one existing daily service it would receive a score of 5 as the additional service would see 100% increase in destinations with at least a daily service, whilst an airport with four existing service would see an increase of 25% in destinations served and therefore receive a score of 3.

Question 12

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing social impact, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 13

Are there any other criteria you believe should be included as part of the appraisal process?

Question 14

Are there any other issues you would like to raise in response to the appraisal process?

What will happen next

In light of consultation responses amendments will be made to the appraisal framework and published within three weeks of the end of the consultation.

If you have questions about his consultation please contact:

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Email address: ian.elston@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A: GaWC ranked cities

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Annex B: Full list of consultation questions

Question 1

Do you believe that a consortium of an airport and airline is the most suitable model, and should devolved or regional bodies be involved?

Question 2

Is the timetable set out in Table 1.1 allow sufficient time to provide the necessary evidence?

Question 3

Is there any information that you think would be difficult to supply?

Question 4

Is there any information that you think would be useful to supply that has not been listed?

Question 5

Do you agree a ten year appraisal period is suitable if not how long would you propose?

Question 6

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing frequency, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 7

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing business centre links, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 8

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing business target market, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 9

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing connectivity, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 10

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing tourism impact, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 11

Do you agree with the scoring system for direct employment generated, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 12

Do you agree with the scoring system for assessing social impact, if not what changes would you like to see?

Question 13

Are there any other criteria you believe should be included as part of the appraisal process?

Question 14

Are there any other issues you would like to raise in response to the appraisal process?

Annex C: Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available at

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principlesguidance

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

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Department for Transport
Zone 1/29 Great Minster House
London SW1P 4DR
Email consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk