



UK SHORTLISTS 15 NEW REGIONAL ROUTES FOR GOVERNMENT STARTUP FUNDING

News / Airlines



The UK Department for Transport (DfT) has short-listed 15 new routes from UK airports handling less than 5 million passengers a year that it believes qualify for government startup funding according to European Commission guidelines.

The all-new domestic and regional routes are eligible to receive startup aid through the government's Regional Air Connectivity Fund and the DfT is inviting airlines that submitted route proposals in the first phase of the bidding process earlier this year to formally apply to operate the routes. The fund has £56 million (\$86 million) available to cover three years of startup aid.

In addition, the DfT is asking competitor airlines to provide supporting evidence if they believe funding for any of the new routes would distort the marketplace if, for example, they were planning to operate the route commercially themselves or if they believe the route is already served within a radius of approximately 100 kilometers.

At the close of the initial bidding process, the DfT had received bids [for 19 new routes](#) from a number of regional airlines. It has now whittled the 19 down to 15 and is asking each route

promoter to submit a letter and detailed information outlining details of the route and the amount of state funding required, as well as evidence of how the route would be commercially viable at the end of the funding period. In addition, each route is subject to a full economic and environmental appraisal, from which a benefits-costs ratio will be calculated and a quality score developed, and a strategic appraisal to assess benefits that cannot necessarily be monetized, but meet the strategic aims of the scheme.

The closing date for this stage of the bidding process is Oct. 9.

The 15 short-listed routes are:

Doncaster Sheffield-Frankfurt (BMI regional); Derry-Dublin (City Wings); Carlisle-Belfast, Carlisle-Dublin, and Carlisle-Southend (Stobart Air); Dundee-Amsterdam, Newquay-Leeds Bradford, Norwich-Charles de Gaulle, Norwich-Dublin, Norwich-Exeter, Southampton-Lyon, and Southampton-Munich (Flybe); and Norwich-Newcastle and Oxford-Edinburgh (Links Air).

The Regional Air Connectivity Fund was launched in June 2013 to help boost connectivity through the UK's regional airports and has already supported strategic routes from Dundee and Newquay to London.

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