

This submission is made on the part of Fexco in support of Kerry Airport.

**Question 1: What category of stakeholder do you represent?**

Fexco is a significant local employer in Kerry with substantial usage of Kerry Airport for business travel purposes.

**Question 2: Having regard to the actions on regional airports in the National Aviation Policy, what are your views on the effectiveness of the current Regional Airports Programme?**

Regionalisation is one of the three key priorities in the government's new 'Ireland for Finance' strategy published in April this year. The strategy is focused on the further development of the international financial services (IFS) sector in Ireland to 2025. A vital issue for this strategy is the promotion and marketing of the regions as locations of choice in Ireland for new and expanding businesses. An effective Regional Airports Programme is fundamental to this commitment to regionalisation. The current Programme and in particular the PSO route between Kerry and Dublin are vitally important to the sustainability of employment in the Kerry region, both outbound business development activity for commercial enterprises like Fexco and inbound tourism activity. The Regional Airports Programme play a critical part in the growth of the IFS sector in the regions and makes it feasible for firms to open up second-site operations or supporting sites outside of Dublin.

**Question 3: What, if any, changes would you like to see reflected in the new Programme and why?**

The new Programme should safeguard the status of Kerry Airport as a sustainable commercial enterprise and key piece of national infrastructure on which local and regional economic prosperity can be built. A commitment to safeguarding the status of Kerry airport ties in with the government's 'Ireland for Finance' strategy and to ensuring that the regions continue to offer businesses lower cost alternatives to Dublin. In addition to the available labour pool, the number of third-level institutions engaged with local businesses and the availability of commercial real estate, air connectivity is an essential for achieving regionalisation.

**Question 4: How do you think the new Programme can best support Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy, having regard to policy on climate action and sustainability?**

Maintaining the PSO route between Dublin and Kerry will continue to provide a meaningful alternative to lengthy road or rail journeys for business travellers, taking cars off the roads and reducing vehicle emissions in towns for which there is no plans to bypass.

**Question 5: What are your views on the PSO Scheme, the air service routes currently being supported and the need for a continuation of the Scheme beyond 2022?**

It is essential that the existing PSO route between Dublin and Kerry is maintained in the new Programme. In addition, this PSO route requires further an expansion of the service to 3 times daily and improvement of departure/arrival times that make it feasible for business travellers from Kerry to arrive in Dublin city Centre for 9am Monday to Friday. An earlier flight from Dublin to Kerry is also required to enable business travellers to arrive in Kerry in the early morning and depart the same day if desired.

As noted in the new 'Ireland for Finance' strategy, air connectivity and the reliable provision of infrastructure are vital for growing and developing Ireland's IFS sector. An international PSO Scheme is also required for Kerry Airport to enable route connectivity to a significant international transit hub such as Schiphol, Heathrow, Frankfurt or Charles de Gaulle airports.

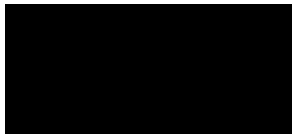
**Additional Comments**

The government has correctly emphasised in its 'Ireland for Finance' strategy that regional connectivity is essential for continued economic and social progress and to ensure that Ireland remains a destination of choice for high-quality investment. Fexco is a significant employer in the Kerry region with almost 1,000 people employed in the region. Kerry Airport is a vital link in growing our business around the globe and sustaining the employment we have created here. Ongoing support for regional airports, and Kerry Airport in particular, through the Regional Airports Programme is essential to this purpose.

An increase in the frequency of flights on the Kerry-Dublin PSO route, improved arrival/departure times to facilitate same-day business travel and the addition of an international PSO route to a major transit hub elsewhere in Europe are improvements to the Scheme that will have significant economic benefits to this region.

This is not a personal submission and I do not wish for my name to appear on the Department's website in relation to this submission.

Thank you



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