

Case study

Shannon Rail Link, Iarnród Éireann, 2006-2007

In 2006, Iarnród Éireann appointed MVA Consultancy, together with Corus Railways Infrastructure, to assess the feasibility of a rail connection to Shannon Airport. The proposed rail link would extend from the recently re-opened Limerick to Ennis Rail Line and connect to the future Western Rail Corridor extending from Limerick to Athenry/Galway and ultimately Sligo.



The challenge

Shannon Airport is strategically located, close to significant population and employment bases. It will continue to have an important role in the future by providing linkages to a range of international destinations.

Access to the airport is currently road based (either by car or bus) and a number of local and regional bodies wanted to examine the feasibility of supplementing access by way of a rail link. The overall objective for the rail link was to provide an alternative to private car use, thus supporting more sustainable access to the airport. A further objective was to help widen the catchment area of the airport to maintain its attractiveness to both inbound tourists and domestic travelers.



Our approach

This feasibility study assessed the viability of a rail connection and appropriate route to Shannon Airport. The study prepared and assessed demand forecasts by a range of travel purposes and user groups; examined route options; and determined the capital costs involved. Finally we conducted a financial and economic appraisal of identified options taking into account economic and social issues in the region.

The key elements of the feasibility study were:

- Objective setting;
- Heavy rail planning and feasibility assessment;
- Option generation and short-listing;
- SWOT analysis;
- Further development of selected option;
- Demand forecasting; and
- Economic and financial appraisal.