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Systems Interface Ltd. (SIL), in collaboration with Tiernan Engineering Ltd., completed the supply, installation, and commissioning of an Indra Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) system at Ireland West Airport Knock. The project involved replacing outdated equipment with the advanced Indra LDB-103 Low Power DME, including a new mast, antenna, and a fully insulated, air-conditioned fibreglass equipment shelter.

SIL provided a complete turnkey package covering project management, system design, equipment provision, installation, and commissioning. The DME Safety Case, prepared by SIL, secured approvals from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA).

The project was completed within budget, with operational use approved on 27 November 2023. Ireland West Airport Knock handled 818,000 passengers in 2023, making it the fourth-busiest airport in Ireland and provides critical Air Traffic Management (ATM), Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS) systems, along with meteorological services from Met Eireann.

Jointline, a Lincolnshire, UK-based airfield and runway specialist, has invested GBP 1 million in enhancing its runway grooving capabilities, marking the most significant investment in its 37-year history. The investment includes new machinery and equipment to support sustained growth and meet increasing industry demands. Jointline, which employs 120 people, specialises in anti-skid grooving on runways and highways to improve safety by increasing surface friction and reducing aquaplaning risks. The company has recently completed projects at major airports such as Heathrow, Stansted, Belfast International, and Shannon Airport, along with several military airfields.

Managing Director Gary Massey highlighted the firm's commitment to fulfilling domestic and international demand while ensuring the safety and development of its workforce. Jointline's new equipment includes five ride-on pavement groovers, a bespoke trailer, and two DAF XF Super Space tractor units, alongside the remanufacture of a water tanker with advanced safety features. The company's use of diamond-cut machines for precise grooving has shown significant improvements in aircraft take-off and landing distances, validated by NASA tests. Jointline's extensive experience includes projects across the UK, Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America.

Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands has initiated a significant digital transformation project to replace its Airport Operational Database (AODB). The new system aims to enhance efficiency, passenger flow, and operational agility, aligning with Schiphol's goal to become the world's leading digital airport. This multi-year project involves three consulting partners: Boston Consulting Group (BCG), PA Consulting Group, and Cognizant.

Cognizant will handle the technical realisation and system construction, PA Consulting will oversee the business implementation, and BCG will manage the program setup, governance, and quality assurance. The transformation will be conducted through a controlled switch-over, running the new system alongside the old one to ensure smooth integration. This new AODB system is expected to improve Schiphol's already high standards further, enhancing real-time data sharing and operational efficiency.

Brussels Airport (Belgium), in partnership with VIL and DHL under the Stargate EU Green Deal project, is testing a hydrogen refuelling station and a hydrogen-powered Mulag towing tractor. This pilot project aims to explore hydrogen as an alternative fuel for ground handling operations, reducing emissions and noise. The mobile hydrogen refuelling station, installed by VIL and WaterstofNet, supports the hydrogen-powered tractor used for transporting cargo. The project includes comprehensive training for various airport personnel and aims to provide insights into the use of hydrogen at airports, including permit processes and safety requirements. The six-week test will serve as a model for other airports in the Stargate project, promoting the broader adoption of hydrogen technology in aviation for a more sustainable future.

For more details, visit the Stargate website. This initiative is part of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme of the European Union.

Brussels Airport, a major European hub, welcomed 22.2 million passengers and handled 701,000 tonnes of cargo in 2023. With the SHIFT 2027 strategy, the airport aims to enhance its sustainability goals and innovative activities. VIL, recognised as a Logistics Spearhead Cluster, brings together diverse sectors for logistics innovation. DHL Express, operating from Brussels Airport, is crucial in global shipments, particularly for Belgian exports.

JFK International Airport's Terminal 7 will debut the first-ever baggage sanitisation system in the U.S. this summer. Developed by Clean, the system uses UV-C light to eliminate 99.9% of viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens from luggage in seconds.

Passengers can trial the system for USD 10 for two pieces of luggage during the pilot program. This innovation aims to enhance traveller safety and combat the spread of infectious diseases. Terminal 7 handles over 2,000 flights monthly from 14 domestic and international airlines. This initiative marks a significant advancement in travel safety and sanitation.

Terminal Aeroportuaria de Guayaquil S.A. (TAGSA), managing José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport in Guayaquil, Ecuador, has implemented Motorola Solutions' Avigilon Unity video security and access control to enhance safety and operational efficiency. This AI-powered system simplifies security management across multiple sites, allowing easier sharing of video clips to improve awareness and collaboration.

Avigilon Unity helps mitigate security threats like theft, organised crime, and terrorism. The new system extends security to previously uncovered areas and enables security staff to make informed decisions. Strategically placed Avigilon security cameras provide critical location monitoring, while video analytics detect anomalies like unusual crowd activity or unauthorised access. Thermal cameras enhance nighttime visibility, detecting intruders in restricted areas based on heat signatures, thus improving security in low-light areas.

Ulises Gomez of Motorola Solutions highlighted that Avigilon Unity allows security staff to efficiently search and analyse video, improving their ability to detect, respond to, and investigate incidents, thereby increasing overall safety at the airport.

South Africa's Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) is progressing with a EUR 4.9 million biometric and e-gate upgrade project, expected to be fully rolled out within the next two years. The project, awarded to IDEMIA, aims to implement the Passenger Flow Facilitation (PFF) solution across nine airports using facial recognition technology to streamline immigration processes, reduce transaction times, and enhance security.

The initial pilot phase faced some passenger reluctance due to unfamiliarity, but ACSA has addressed this with extensive passenger education efforts, including a virtual tour on their app. Additionally, ACSA will introduce OneID, a unique identifier using facial recognition, allowing for automated processes such as bag-drop, pre-security, immigration, and boarding checks, thus eliminating the need for physical documentation and enabling baggage tracking.

The project aims to provide a more seamless and secure travel experience by 2026, in response to the global travel market's expected growth. A recent SITA white paper predicts that by 2026, over 50% of

check-ins and baggage drops will use biometrics, with 70% of airlines having biometric ID management in place.

Vanderlande recently signed contracts to supply baggage handling systems (BHS) for two Vietnamese airports, supporting the new passenger terminal at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City and the upcoming Long Thanh International Airport.

The first contract, signed in Hanoi with Construction Corporation No1 JSP (CC1), involves installing a comprehensive BHS for the new terminal (T3) at Tan Son Nhat, Vietnam's busiest airport. Vanderlande will manage the entire baggage flow, from bag drop to the make-up area. CC1 will handle the construction and installation of terminal equipment, leveraging its extensive experience in infrastructure projects in Vietnam.

The second contract, signed in Ho Chi Minh City with IC ictas insaat (ICTAS), is for the Long Thanh International Airport, slated to open in 2026. Vanderlande will again provide an integrated BHS solution, while ICTAS will oversee various BHS packages. This collaboration aims to ensure efficient baggage handling for the new airport.

These agreements were celebrated during the mission, which marked fifty years of diplomatic and commercial relations between the Netherlands and Vietnam. Adam Matheson, Sales Director at Vanderlande, expressed honour in contributing to the seamless travel experience for passengers at both airports.

SITA, a technology provider for the air transport industry, has acquired ASISTIM, a company specialising in airline flight operations services. This acquisition enables SITA to offer managed Operations Control Centre (OCC) services, allowing airlines of all sizes to outsource part of their operations. This enhances efficiency and scalability and levels the playing field in a high-volume, seasonal industry.

The acquisition addresses challenges like staff shortages, rising costs, and changing demands by providing centralised OCC services that support multiple customers. SITA can now closely monitor and optimise its technology through its own OCC. Combining ASISTIM's expertise with SITA's software and global reach, the enhanced service helps airlines overcome recruitment and training challenges, ensuring high operational standards. This democratises access to advanced technology and experienced personnel, improving efficiency and reliability for all airlines.

David Lavorel, CEO of SITA, highlighted that this move supports their goal of providing comprehensive OCC services, allowing airlines to manage operations more smoothly. ASISTIM, known for its OCC, IT, and training academy services, is now backed by SITA and offers a one-stop shop for airlines. ASISTIM's founder, Svensen Patrick Rossmann, emphasised that joining SITA will help set new industry standards and bring more value to airline operations.

Ardian, a private investment firm, is negotiating to acquire a majority stake in Alstef Group alongside the Group's management team and 260 employee shareholders. Alstef Group founders and Future French Champions will also reinvest. Founded in 1961 and based near Orléans, France, Alstef Group designs and supplies intelligent handling solutions and software.

The company has grown rapidly, acquiring Glidepath in 2020 and SNS in 2023, and has a global presence in 93 countries. Ardian's support will help accelerate Alstef's international growth. The transaction is pending regulatory approval and standard legal conditions.

Publisher's note: The articles in this special report, compiled for **inter airport Europe**, are a few select samples from the biweekly **Momberger Airport Information** newsletter, published since 1973. The newsletter is an advertising-free, global airport news service that consists of 9 modules and allows subscribers to customize their own newsletter package. The modules that make up the biweekly newsletter are: Airport Development (DEV), Calendar of Events (CAL), and the subscriber-selectable modules Airport Operations (OPS), Management, Ownership & Finance (MGT), Ground Support Equipment (GSE), Air Traffic Services (ATC), Consultant & Contractor / Sustainable Aviation (CON), Airport Information Technology (AIT), and Maintenance Base & FBO (MRO). For more information, a sample of a complete newsletter issue, and to order an annual subscription, please visit www.mombergerairport.info