

## AFRICAN AIRPORTS IN THE AGE OF AI: STRATEGY, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Nelson de Oliveira,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
TAAG Angola Airlines

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### FEATURE

- How Digital Content Is Changing Pilot Learning in Africa
- Fatigue Management In Air Traffic Management

### INTERVIEW

- African Aviation Is Entering A Phase Of Consolidation, Resilience And Renewed Growth

### NIGERIA

- Nigeria's Airport Authority, FAAN Attains Dual ISO Certification



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## TRAINING CALENDAR FEBRUARY-MARCH, 2026)

### FEBRUARY 2026

DATES	PROGRAMME TITLE
February 02 - March 11	IATA Foundation Programme (Regular)
February 19 - 20	Customer Service
February 16 -19	Aircraft Maintenance Planning and Technical Records
February 23 - March 24	Cabin Crew Ab-initio Programme
February 23 - May 07	Advanced Aircraft Technician Course
February 23 - 27 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course
February 27 - May 30	IATA Foundation Programme(Executive)

### MARCH 2026

DATES	PROGRAMME TITLE
March 02 - 04	Aviation Stores Management
March 02 - 30	Managing the Travel Business
March 02 - 04	Radio Telephony Course
March 09 - 13	Dangerous Goods Regulations course
March 09 - 13	Passenger Handling Course
March 16 - 18	Customer Service Course
March 30 - May 11	IATA Foundation Programme (Regular)
March 23 - 27 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course
March 30 - May 06	Advanced Flight Dispatcher's Programme

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## COVER DESIGN

Features  
**Mr Nelson de Oliveira,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
TAAG Angola Airlines

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The Aviation sector in Africa ended year 2025 in a particularly good fashion with year-on-year increases for both passenger and cargo traffic. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) said Africa's air cargo demand grew by 6% over 2024 and above the 3.4% global growth rate. On the passenger side, IATA reported that Africa had a 7.8% passenger traffic increase over the same period. IATA has projected a slowing of the air cargo traffic rate globally but the recent extension of the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act by the Trump Administration after delays may be a timely shot in the arm for the African air cargo industry.

Whilst the continued growth of the aviation sector in Africa is heartwarming, the way forward demands a clear-eyed focus on implementing tested strategies that will drive the sustained development of air transport on the continent. The industry should implement fully without further delays air transport liberalization through the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); free movement of persons in Africa and removal of barriers to trade in Africa through the full adoption of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In the same vein, there is need for continental policies to confront challenges in the industry including, but no limited to, lack of access to finance, high price of jet fuel, high charges and fees and concomitant high air fares, and weak infrastructure. Other areas deserving attention are the adoption of newer technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and the need for increased investment and participation in the Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) ecosystem.

It is therefore fitting that there are many events planned to discuss these issues in the coming months. The African MRO Summit being organized by the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March; and the African Aviation Expo being hosted by the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) in Lome, Togo in June 2026 will provide platforms to galvanize the African air transport industry to make the needed changes.

As the year rolls by, stakeholders will also be keen to see how the reduction of fees and charges agreed by the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) which commenced on January 1, 2026 is being implemented especially for the anticipated impact on air fares.

An area the African aviation industry needs to pay attention to is Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this edition of Aviation & Allied Business Africa Journal, we invited a thought-leader in the sector, Dr. Sheryl Walters-Macolm to share insights on Artificial Intelligence and the African Airport sector. We also feature articles on the evolving trend in pilot training and the issue of blocked airline funds.

TAAG Angola Airlines has been making waves in the recent past with their investment in new airplanes, movement to the new Augustinho Neto International Airport and training of pilots and mechanics to support the growth of the airline. Our interview guest in this edition is the CEO of TAAG, Mr. Nelson Rodrigues de Oliveira who speaks on what is driving the airline.

As we navigate these exciting times, we look forward to continuously partner with you for the growth of the African air transport industry.

Thank you.

CAPT. (DR.) ED BOYO

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE JOURNAL

This is your industry Journal and we encourage you to submit articles we can consider for publication. We give preference to unpublished materials on aviation and allied business, especially those relating to Africa. The majority of our readers are decision makers, senior industry executives in core aviation and allied business sectors as well as pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, aviation consultants, air traffic controllers and engineers, aviation lawyers, bankers, aviation insurance experts and oil company executives. By contributing to the Journal, you and your firm will gain recognition and our readers will benefit from your expertise.

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# Codeshare Agreement

## South African Airways Signs Domestic Codeshare Agreement With CemAir



Group CEO, SAA, Prof. John Lamola and CemAir CEO, Mr Miles van der Molen signing the Agreement

In line with calls for more collaboration between African airlines in the domestic sector, Southern Africa carriers, South African Airways (SAA) and CemAir have signed "a landmark codeshare partnership that will redefine domestic air travel in South Africa." SAA says this

collaboration "strengthens connectivity between major cities and niche destinations not previously served by SAA's network."

According to South African Airways, "This partnership is exclusively domestic, designed to enhance

accessibility and convenience for travellers across South Africa. Both airlines will place their codes on each other's flights, enabling customers to book integrated itineraries through official websites, mobile apps, and authorized agents. Passengers will enjoy seamless connections, single-ticket itineraries, and baggage through-check, all underpinned by aligned service standards."

Group CEO of SAA, Prof. John Lamola commented: "This partnership is a game-changer for domestic travel in South Africa. Unlike our international codeshares, this agreement focuses on connecting major cities with regional and leisure destinations that were previously beyond SAA's reach."

CemAir CEO, Mr Miles van der Molen said: "This collaboration represents a shared vision to offer travellers better access, more flexibility and greater reliability. By combining our strengths, we are helping to create a stronger, more connected network that benefits both business and leisure travellers." ▣

# Acquisition

## Harith Signs Agreement to Acquire FlySafair

Investment Holding Company, Harith says it has "entered into a Sale and Purchase Agreement to acquire FlySafair, one of South Africa's most successful and fastest-growing airlines." According to the company, "the transaction remains subject to customary regulatory approvals, including approval by the Competition Commission."

According to the South African airline, FlySafair, it "will continue to operate under its existing brand, leadership and strategy, delivering the same affordable fares, reliable operations and strong on-time performance that customers have come to expect."

FlySafair says "the proposed transaction reflects confidence in a business built on operational discipline, a committed workforce and a clear strategic focus,

positioning FlySafair for long-term sustainability."

According to FlySafair, "a regulatory process relating to its structure, following findings issued by the Air Services Licensing Council in early 2025, remains ongoing. The proposed transaction was not initiated in response to those findings, which are subject to an ongoing legal review. Transactions of this scale and complexity are typically developed over an extended period and have been under discussion for some time."

The airline says: "while the transaction would result in the airline being owned by South African investors, it does not automatically resolve the matters under consideration by the licensing authorities, who will assess the proposed structure in accordance with their statutory

mandates. The transacting parties respect the independence of those institutions and will continue to engage fully and transparently as required."

The acquiring company, Harith says: "As with all transactions of this nature, the acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals, and the parties continue to engage constructively with the relevant authorities, including the Competition Commission and relevant aviation authorities as part of the normal oversight applicable to licensed airlines."

Consistent with its value-focused, long-term investment approach, Harith says "the intention is to support FlySafair as a disciplined and successful business, maintaining continuity under its existing leadership and further bolstering Harith's strategy to secure an integrated transport network." ▣



# New Orders

## Ethiopian Airlines Orders Nine Boeing 787 Dreamliners Airplanes



Source: Ethiopian Airline

The new Boeing 787-9 aircraft order brings ET's total order to 20 aircraft.

**E**thiopian Airlines Group has confirmed the "purchase of nine Boeing 787-9 aircraft, with deliveries planned between 2031 and 2033." According to the airline, the addition of the aircraft "aims at expanding the airline's route network and enhance its international connectivity, providing more flexible flight options for passengers."

The airline confirms that it's "latest B787 order follows its commitment for 11 737 MAX jets announced at the Dubai Airshow. The 787 and 737 MAX purchase was finalized in December 2025 and boosts Ethiopian Airlines' order book by 20 fuel-efficient Boeing airplanes."

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said: "This order underscores our continued commitment to enhancing

our fleet with modern, fuel-efficient aircraft, thereby further strengthening our customer service.

Boeing Vice President of Commercial Sales and Marketing for Africa, Mr. Anbessie Yitbarek said: "The 787 Dreamliner family has proven to be a game-changer for airlines around the world, and we are proud to support Ethiopian Airlines in their mission to connect Africa with the global community. Together, we look forward to shaping the future of air travel with advanced, efficient and comfortable airplanes to serve their passengers."

According to Ethiopian Airlines Group, the order with Boeing brings Ethiopian Airlines' "total number of Boeing 787-9 aircraft on order to 20 aircraft. Furthermore, including the previously ordered Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, Ethiopian Airlines has significant firm orders as well as options and purchase rights for Boeing 737 MAX and Boeing 777X aircraft." ◻

# Partnership

## TAAG Angola Signs Strategic Partnership With Standard Bank Angola

**T**AAG Angola Airlines has signed a strategic partnership with Standard Bank Angola that "makes travel more accessible to the local community."

TAAG Angola says "Standard Bank Angola clients can purchase TAAG flight tickets and pay in monthly installments. Whether you are planning a domestic getaway or an international trip, this new payment option is designed to help you manage your budget while exploring the world."

According to TAAG Angola, certain key details will be put in place. These



Source: TAAG Angola

The new partnership will allow TAAG's passengers purchase tickets and pay in installments

include: "Valid for all TAAG-operated flights departing from Angola, Exclusive for Standard Bank Angola customers and

Available at all TAAG stores nationwide or via the Call Center." This installment payment plan will help customers. ◻

# Aircraft Lease

## Airlink Purchases Two Embraer E190s From TrueNoord



Source: Airlink

This agreement further strengthens Airlink's existing relationship with Embraer

**A**ircraft lessor, TrueNoord has finalised "the sale of two Embraer E190 aircraft to existing lessee customer, Airlink. The aircraft were delivered to Airlink, who operate the African Continent's largest fleet of Embraer aircraft, in December 2025."

TrueNoord says, "Amid ongoing global supply chain issues, Airlink intends to salvage parts from the E190 airframes and retain the engines as spares but are also

evaluating options for future operation of the aircraft."

Chief Commercial Officer, TrueNoord, Richard Jacobs said: "The sale of these aircraft reflects TrueNoord's agility in remarketing assets and its commitment to supporting operators with tailored solutions."

Maarten Grift, TrueNoord Sales Director, said: "This transaction underscores TrueNoord's commitment to supporting operators with flexible solutions that

address today's operational challenges. We were pleased to work with Airlink's experienced and knowledgeable team and help strengthen their fleet resilience despite dynamic market conditions."

Airlink CEO, de Villiers Engelbrecht said: "Securing these aircraft is a strategic move to safeguard the reliability of our Embraer fleet. By acquiring additional engines and components, we can mitigate the impact of global supply chain disruptions and maintain the high standards of service our customers expect. We value our partnership with TrueNoord and appreciate their flexibility in completing this transaction."

Richard Jacobs, TrueNoord CCO, concludes: "Further strengthening our existing relationship with this leading African operator, our joint collaborative efforts ensured the sale was finalised in a timely, streamlined and efficient manner. It was a pleasure working with Airlink's entire team, and we look forward to partnering again on future opportunities. Additional thanks also goes to the aircraft's previous lessee, Breeze, for their support throughout the process." 

# Recognition

## Royal Jordanian Ranks Second in OTP in the Middle East and Africa for 2025

**R**oyal Jordanian Airlines has achieved "a new milestone after ranking second in on-time performance across the Middle East and Africa for 2025, with a performance rate exceeding 90%, according to a report issued by global aviation analytics firm Cirium, published in early 2026."

According to Royal Jordanian, this ranking places it among "the top five airlines worldwide in one of the aviation industry's most critical and influential performance indicators: on-


time arrival performance."

Royal Jordanian says, the achievement reflects the strength and discipline of its "operational system, as well as its ability to maintain a high level of operational performance despite ongoing operational challenges and complex regional conditions."

Vice Chairman and CEO, Samer Majali, stated that "this progress is the result of integrated institutional efforts and the efficiency of Royal Jordanian's workforce, who continue to deliver services to passengers with the highest levels of

professionalism."

He added that "maintaining this advanced performance level is a national responsibility, emphasizing Royal Jordanian's continued commitment to investing in its people and enhancing operational performance in line with passengers' expectations, while reinforcing Jordan's position on the global aviation map."

The Cirium report is based on a comprehensive analysis of precise operational data collected over a 12-month period. 



# Infrastructure Development

## Ethiopian Airlines Commences The Construction Of Bishoftu International Airport



Source: Ethiopian Airlines Group

Bishoftu International Airport stands as a defining project for both Ethiopian and African aviation

**E**thiopian Airlines Group has announced "the official construction commencement of Bishoftu International Airport. Construction has begun today, January 10, 2026, following an official groundbreaking ceremony."

ET reports that the event was graced by His Excellency Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministers, high level government officials, industry leaders, stakeholders, and Ethiopian Airlines executives.

Ethiopian Airlines unveiled "the airport's design and highlighted the successful completion of the resettlement and livelihood restoration project for the affected communities of the project area. F.D.R.E Prime Minister, His Excellency Dr. Abiy Ahmed alongside highlevel government officials, and Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mr. Mesfin Tasew,

placed the plaque marking the official commencement of the construction."

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mr. Mesfin Tasew said: "This is truly a proud moment for Ethiopian Airlines and for all of Africa. We are embarking on a new chapter with the groundbreaking of Bishoftu International Airport that will redefine the continent's aviation ecosystem. As we celebrate 80 years of service, this project stands as yet another milestone, underscoring our commitment to shaping the future of the African air transport industry, while supporting the growing demand for our passenger and cargo services. Bishoftu International Airport is a major step towards addressing the infrastructural gap in Africa and a key player in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and at Ethiopian we are committed to realize the completion of this project."

Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed described the event as "a milestone in Ethiopia's journey toward modernization and

prosperity." He noted that "Ethiopian Airlines is a source of national pride, not because it has been free of challenges, but because of its resilience, its ability to overcome obstacles, and its role as a trailblazer for Africa." He emphasized that the "airline's greatest strength lies in its strong corporate culture, built on: Giving priority to safety and security, leadership driven by creativity and hard work, a workforce of over 26,000 employees who believe in the airline as their flag carrier and honor what it represents, a continuous commitment to learning and capacity building."

Ethiopian Airlines added: "Bishoftu International Airport stands as a defining project for both Ethiopian and African aviation, facilitating trade, tourism, and people-to-people interactions within Africa and beyond. Phase One of the project is expected to be completed by 2030 and will accommodate 60 million passengers annually and when fully completed it will have the capacity to handle 110 million passengers." ■

# Action Plan

## Egypt CAA Submits National Action Plan To ICAO For The Aviation Sector Until 2028



The action plan will help redefine Egypt aviation sector

The Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) has submitted a national action plan for the aviation sector until the year 2028 to the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO).

Egypt's Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr. Sameh El-Hefny said: "We are moving forward with a national plan that transforms sustainability from an international commitment to an economic power that enhances Egypt's position in the field of regional and global air transport."

According to Egypt CAA, "The National Action Plan was prepared through cooperation between the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority and the European Aviation Safety Agency, with the participation of Egyptian airlines operating in the sector, Cairo AirPort Company, Egyptian Airports Company, and the National Air Navigation Services Company. The plan is implemented through the National Standing Committee for the State Plan for the Aviation Sector, chaired by the President of the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority, and the membership of Pilot Karim

Jameel, Advisor to the President of the Authority and Rapporteur of the Committee's Activities, and Eng. Abdel Ghaffar El-Sayed, Director General of Fixed Equipment and Inspector of Validity at the Authority, to ensure effective follow-up and continuous implementation in accordance with the latest international standards issued by ICAO."

Dr. El-Hefny commended the "efforts of the members of the National Standing Committee for the State Action Plan for the Aviation Sector, and thanked all Egyptian airlines participating in the preparation of the strategic plan." The following entities were represented by: "EgyptAir Airlines, Air Cairo, Nile Air, Air Arabia, Nessma Air, Egyptian International Air, Cairo Air Port Company, National Air Navigation Services Company, and Egyptian Airports Company."

ECAA states that the National Action Plan includes "a forecast of 6% annual growth in international air traffic until 2027 and 7% per year until 2050, which calls for immediate operational

measures to ensure sustainable growth and in line with international commitments. It also relies on key pillars in accordance with ICAO guidelines, including improving the efficiency of operation and air navigation, developing modern aircraft technology and standards, introducing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), developing green airports, and improving air routes in Egyptian airspace."

"The plan has adopted 25 operational measures for a number of Egyptian airlines to reduce fuel consumption and emissions, such as improving continuous landing tracks and reducing the use of ground power units, which will contribute to increasing fuel efficiency and reducing emissions over the next three years." ECAA added.

Head of the Air Transport Sector at ICAO, Mr. Mohamed Rahma expressed his appreciation for the Egyptian Action Plan for Sustainable Aviation and noting "its effective role that will contribute to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals in various activities, praising the National Plan for the Aviation Sector, pointing out that it is an advanced model for sustainable strategic planning, and is compatible with the principles and documents of ICAO, and represents a practical framework that ensures a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation."

It is worth mentioning that the National Action Plan for the Civil Aviation Sector is not a formal commitment, but rather a permanent institutional national path, in which all government agencies, the industrial sector, and private airlines participate, to ensure the environmental and economic sustainability of the sector, and enhance its competitiveness regionally and internationally. ■



# In-Flight Connection

## Qatar Airways Launches World's First Starlink Equipped Boeing 787



Source: Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways is the first in the world to secure Starlink certification for Boeing 787-8

**M**iddle East Carrier, Qatar Airways, has "become the first carrier globally to enable Boeing 787-8 with Starlink." The airline says it has also "equipped its entire Airbus A350 fleet within record-breaking eight months in December 2025."

Qatar Airways confirms that to date, "it is operating three Dreamliners with the fastest Wi-Fi in the sky, bringing the total of its Starlink-connected widebody aircraft to nearly 120."

According to Qatar Airways, "Marking the fastest and most ambitious Starlink widebody rollout programme in global aviation history, the airline is progressing at an unsurpassed pace. Within just 14 months, Qatar Airways started and completed the Boeing 777 and Airbus A350 Starlink installation programmes, and then expanded to its Boeing 787 Dreamliners."

Qatar Airways noted that "this progress cements the airline's position as the global leader in Starlink-enabled long-

haul and ultra-long-haul connectivity while also achieving the world's first and largest Starlink-equipped A350 fleet - building on Qatar Airways' legacy as the aircraft's global launch customer."

Also, Qatar Airways was voted The World's Best Airline by Skytrax in 2025 for the ninth time and it is also "the first in the world to secure Starlink certification for Boeing 787-8."

Qatar Airways stated that "the impact of this leadership is already being experienced by travellers globally, with over 11 million passengers enjoying free, gate-to-gate, faster-than-home Wi-Fi onboard since the airline launched the service in October 2024."

In 2025, "Starlink connected over 21 million passengers across global airlines. Qatar Airways' Starlink-connected passengers comprise nearly half of that, with over 10 million passengers being the first in the world to enjoy the complimentary service onboard widebody aircraft across long- and ultra-long-haul routes operated by the airline." ▣

# New Orders

## Delta Airlines Orders 60 787 Dreamliners From Boeing

**B**oeing has announced that U.S. carrier, Delta Air Lines has "placed its first direct order for up to 60 787 Dreamliners to support long-haul international growth and renew the airline's widebody fleet. Delta's purchase of 30 787-10 jets - with opportunity for up to 30 more of the largest 787 variant - will enable the airline's expansion and modernization plans on high-demand transatlantic and South American routes."

Delta's Chief Executive Officer, Ed Bastian said: "Delta is building the fleet for the future, enhancing the customer

experience, driving operational improvements and providing steady replacements for less efficient, older aircraft in the decade to come."

"With capacity for up to 336 passengers and 25% lower fuel use than the airplanes it replaces, the 787-10 offers the lowest operating cost per seat of any widebody airplane. Delivering superior comfort for passengers, the 787 Dreamliner features the largest windows of any widebody airplane flying today and air that is pressurized at a lower cabin altitude, which will help Delta's customers arrive at their destinations

feeling more refreshed." Bastian added.

President and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Stephanie Pope said: "The 787 Dreamliner's unmatched efficiency, range, and passenger comfort make it a perfect fit for Delta's international expansion and fleet modernization."

According to Boeing, this purchase brings "Delta's firm order book to 130 Boeing airplanes, including the airline's order for 100 737-10 jets. The efficiency and flexibility of the 787-10 and 737-10 will enable Delta to fly more passengers on more routes." ▣



## VISION

To be amongst the best airport groups in the world

## MISSION STATEMENT

To develop and profitably manage customer- centric airport facilities for safe, secure and efficient carriage of passengers and goods at world-class standards of quality.



# African Airports in the Age of AI: Strategy, Risks, and Opportunities

By Dr. Sheryl Walters-Malcolm

## Executive Summary

**A**frican aviation stands at a defining inflection point. Passenger traffic on the continent grew 7.8% in 2025, setting a record load factor of 74.9%. The African Union has responded with a landmark \$30 billion infrastructure modernization initiative, featuring, among other measures, the incorporation of advanced technologies like Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) to facilitate integrated airspace management across the continent.

With global airline and airport IT spending reaching \$46 billion annually, African airport leaders face a critical question: not whether to implement AI, but how to deploy it effectively given their unique operational, regulatory, and infrastructure contexts.

This article identifies high-impact AI opportunities, addresses implementation challenges, and outlines the organizational capabilities needed for successful deployment.

## Why AI Is Both Viable and Urgent

Three forces have converged to make AI deployment critical for African airports:

**Data Infrastructure Accessibility:** Modern airports generate vast streams of operational information: flight schedules, baggage movements, passenger flows, equipment sensor readings, weather feeds, among others. Until recently, many African airports lacked the systems to capture, integrate, and act on this data in real time. Cloud computing and software-as-a-service models have dramatically lowered the cost of data infrastructure, making sophisticated analytics accessible to airports that could not afford on-site enterprise systems.

**Production-Ready AI Technologies:** Machine learning has matured from experimental to operational. Predictive maintenance algorithms forecast equipment failures before they cause delays. Computer vision monitors turnaround activities and flags timeline deviations. Natural language processing powers passenger-facing chatbots that handle routine inquiries in multiple languages. These are no longer concepts. They are running daily at airports worldwide.

**Competitive Necessity:** African airports compete globally for



Dr. Sheryl Walter-Malcolm

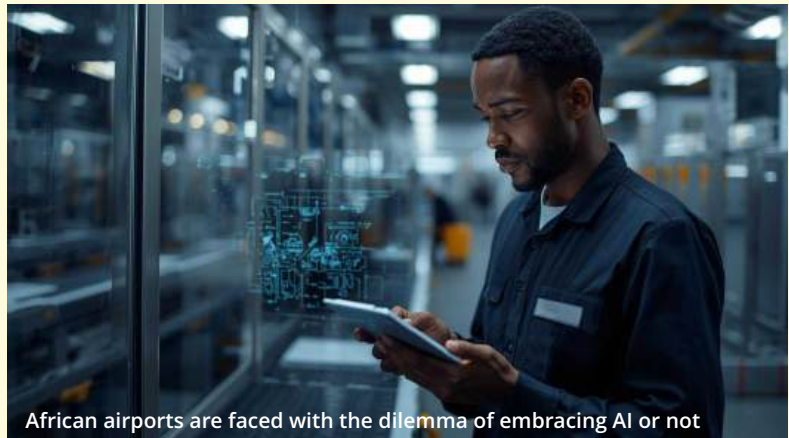
connecting traffic, cargo hubs, and airline investment. Gulf carriers route significant volumes through their home hubs, and these airports deliver operational reliability and seamless experiences. As African passenger numbers approach 500 million by 2050, airports unable to manage congestion, minimize delays, and process travelers efficiently will lose ground to better-equipped competitors.

## The Regulatory and Technology Landscape

Several global developments provide essential context for African airport leaders evaluating AI strategies. Regulatory Frameworks Are Maturing: ICAO's 42nd Assembly endorsed the establishment of an AI Task Force to develop comprehensive implementation strategies, with emphasis on standardized certification frameworks and AI-specific performance evaluation methodologies. The European Union

Aviation Safety Agency has published an AI Roadmap, defining trustworthiness requirements for AI systems in aviation operations. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration released its AI Safety Assurance Roadmap, articulating principles for incremental deployment and human oversight. These frameworks signal that AI is moving from experimentation to regulated operational status.

**Biometric Adoption Is Accelerating:** Approximately half of global airports now use biometric technology for passenger processing. The benefits are clear: shorter wait times, reduced document inspections, faster processing, reduced crowding, better staff utilization, and enhanced security through reliable identity verification.



African airports are faced with the dilemma of embracing AI or not

**Predictive Maintenance Delivers Proven Value:** Airports use AI to anticipate failures in baggage handling systems, loading bridges, escalators, HVAC, and ground support equipment by analyzing sensor and performance data. This proactive approach minimizes unplanned outages, reduces costs, extends asset life, and enhances reliability.

## Opportunities for African Airports

African airports can realize value from AI across a wide range of functions, particularly where applications are tailored to the continent's unique operating conditions.

**Turnaround and Ground Operations:** Aircraft turnaround represents significant opportunities, where even small efficiency gains can produce substantial network-wide benefits. By analyzing historical turnaround data, live flight schedules, weather inputs, and real-time ramp activity, AI systems can optimize crew assignments, fueling sequences, catering logistics, and ground support equipment deployment. Computer vision can monitor ramp safety and equipment positioning, while predictive models help anticipate delays before they cascade across the day's schedule. The result is faster, more reliable turnarounds, improved asset utilization, reduced idle time, and stronger on-time performance, achieved not through expansion, but through smarter coordination of existing resources.

**Passenger Flow Management:** As traffic outpaces terminal capacity expansion, passenger flow management becomes critical. AI-powered analytics can predict congestion points by combining flight schedule data, historical passenger patterns, and real-time sensor feeds. Several airports in Africa have already implemented digital tools, including biometrics to manage passenger flows more efficiently, while others are pursuing similar digitization initiatives. These systems help operators dynamically adjust staffing and resource allocation rather than relying on static schedules that cannot adapt to irregular operations.

**Predictive Infrastructure Maintenance:** This application of AI addresses a persistent challenge: keeping aging equipment operational with limited technical staff. Rather than reactive maintenance that leads to unexpected failures, AI systems can identify early warning signs of issues in baggage handling systems, escalators, and critical building systems. For airports constrained by procurement complexity and spare parts availability, weeks of advance notice allows time to source components and schedule work during off-peak periods.

**Commercial Revenue Optimization:** Non-aeronautical revenues represent approximately 40% of global airport revenues. AI analysis of passenger demographics, flight schedules, and retail behavior helps concessionaires tailor offerings and airports optimize lease terms. ACI World's Airport Commercial Digital Transformation Best Practices (2024) provides specific guidance for maximizing commercial potential through data-driven strategies.

## Implementation Challenges

Implementing AI in African airport environments involves distinct challenges that generic technology strategies fail to address.

**Infrastructure Gaps:** Reliable power, high-bandwidth connectivity, and modern sensor networks cannot be assumed. AI systems that depend on constant connectivity or realtime sensor feeds will fail if internet links are unreliable. Leaders must design for resilience, with offline-capable systems in case connectivity fails.

**Skills Shortage:** Beyond general analytics, AI initiatives require specialized expertise in areas such as data engineering for integrating complex data sources, model monitoring, drift detection, and responsible AI governance. As AI adoption increases, African governments are urged to prioritize the development of human capital. Airports implementing AI without adequate personnel investment, risk underutilization or misapplication of these systems.

**Vendor Lock-In:** International providers may offer compelling solutions that trap customers in proprietary ecosystems with escalating costs and limited local support.

African airports should prioritize solutions built on open standards, demand data portability, and negotiate service-level agreements that reflect local operating conditions rather than accepting terms designed for mature markets.

**Interoperability Requirements:** Airports coordinate with airlines, ground handlers, air traffic management, customs, and border agencies. AI systems unable to exchange data with partners deliver limited value. ACI's ACRIS (Aviation Community Recommended Information Services) program defines a framework for airports, airlines, partners, and suppliers to share data and business processes across different companies and providers. African airports should demand ACRIS compatibility from technology vendors.





Cybersecurity Risks: As airports in Africa adopt more digital technology, cybersecurity risks increase. AI systems create new vulnerabilities, including manipulation by adversarial inputs, poisoned training data, and potential leaks of sensitive information. Cybersecurity must therefore be foundational to any AI deployment in airport systems.

## Building AI-Ready Capabilities

Successful AI deployment requires building organizational capabilities, not just purchasing technology. Airports that achieve meaningful results from AI investments share distinct characteristics that others can replicate.

They pilot small projects before scaling. The best results come from addressing clear, contained problems with measurable outcomes. For example, an African airport might use predictive maintenance for baggage handling systems before attempting larger projects like passenger flow optimization. Pilot initiatives build expertise and justify wider investment. They blend operational insight with technical skills.

Implementations fail when IT and operations don't collaborate. Successful airports form teams that share responsibility across customer service, operations, and technology, leveraging both hands-on knowledge and data expertise for practical solutions.

They invest in workforce development as well as technology. AI is only effective when staff understand and can manage it. This requires training programs, clear guidelines for human oversight, and career growth opportunities for those with mixed skills. Treating AI solely as a replacement usually leads to resistance.

They ensure strong data foundations first. High-quality data is essential for effective AI. Airports need robust governance, integrated information sources, and reliable data pipelines. Without these, advanced applications like optimizing passenger flow are not possible.

They create governance that supports innovation and accountability. Clear roles, auditing processes, and oversight must be defined from the outset to address errors and safety concerns, ensuring responsible and successful AI deployment.

## Action Plan for Airport Leaders

The path forward for African airport leaders is clear, even if the execution is complex.

Begin by auditing current data assets and infrastructure. Understand what data you generate, where it resides, and what gaps exist. Assess the reliability of power and connectivity in operational areas. This baseline determines what AI applications are feasible in the near term and what foundational investments must precede more ambitious deployments.

Identify one or two high-impact use cases aligned with your most pressing operational constraints. For many African airports, turnaround optimization and predictive maintenance for critical equipment offer the clearest returns. Resist the temptation to pursue passenger-facing AI applications before mastering operational fundamentals.

Invest in people alongside technology. Recruit or develop the data engineering and analytics capabilities required to operationalize AI. Build partnerships with regional universities, technical training institutions, and peer airports that can accelerate capability development.

Engage proactively with regulators. ICAO's AI Task Force and regional aviation authorities are developing frameworks that will govern AI deployment in aviation. African airport operators should participate in these processes to ensure guidance reflects African operating realities.

## Conclusion: The Window of Opportunity

The African Union's \$30 billion aviation modernization initiative represents more than financial commitment. It signals a shift in how the continent approaches aviation infrastructure. It also represents a rare alignment of capital, regulatory momentum, and technological maturity. This window will not remain open indefinitely.

Airport executives who act now, investing in digital infrastructure, building organizational capabilities, and forging strategic AI partnerships, will establish competitive advantages that compound over decades. These early adopters will attract airline investment, capture connecting traffic, and develop institutional knowledge that cannot be purchased or replicated quickly.

Conversely, waiting for ideal circumstances means waiting perpetually. Infrastructure improves iteratively through deployment, not planning. Skills develop through application, not preparation. Regulatory frameworks emerge from implementation experience, not abstract policy.

The implications extend well beyond individual airports. Should African airports as a whole fail to leverage this opportunity, future aviation growth across the continent may be channeled through alternative global connecting hubs. Without the parallel development of organizational and technological capabilities, the projected \$30 billion investment is likely to result in reduced returns.

It is not a matter of whether artificial intelligence will influence airport operations; the transformation is already taking place worldwide. The key consideration is whether African airports will proactively guide this evolution or respond only after competitive advantages have been firmly established by others. ■

*Dr. Sheryl Walters-Malcolm is an aviation and business strategist with more than 30 years of experience advising organizations on growth, operational efficiency, and transformation. As the Founder of Alvionex, an AI consulting firm, she provides comprehensive support to aviation entities and professionals through tailored AI training, workforce capability development, and strategic guidance for adopting artificial intelligence and related digital technologies. Dr. Walters-Malcolm previously served as an Adjunct Professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, teaching Aviation Management and Finance in the MBA program. She holds a Doctorate in International Business, an MBA in Aviation Management, and a BBA in Finance, reflecting her strong academic foundation complemented by substantial industry experience*

# Airport Modernisation

## VINCI Airports Completes Modernisation Works In Cape Verde Airports



Source: Vinci Airports

Vinci Airports has completed major modernisation works in Cape Verde Airports

**V**INCI Airports has celebrated a major milestone with the completion of modernisation works in Cape Verde Airports. The Group announced the "completion of the first phase of airport modernization and the launch of an ambitious new investment program to continue supporting air traffic growth and fostering the economic and tourism dynamism of the archipelago."

The airport operator says since its takeover in 2023, it has "significantly strengthened the connectivity of Cape Verde's airports. This development has resulted in a marked increase in passenger traffic: +60% between 2022 and 2025, notably thanks to the opening of 35 new air routes, including 15 in 2024 and 20 in 2025. The Group's efforts to attract low-cost carriers have made travel more affordable while promoting tourism and improving mobility for Cape Verde's diaspora."

VINCI Airports said: "The completion of the first phase of works (Phase 1A) in 2025, involving substantial investments of €80 million, represents a significant step forward for Cape Verde's airports."

The key achievements include: "Runway renovations at Sal and São Nicolau airports, Modernization of passenger spaces and terminals, Reconfiguration of aircraft parking areas. Installation of self-service check-in counters, and Deployment of advanced IT solutions."

VINCI Airports confirms that together with Cabo Verde Airports, it is "launching an ambitious new development plan, called Phase 1B, involving €142 million over three years to increase the capacity of airports throughout the archipelago."

According to VINCI Airports, "the project includes terminal expansions, new commercial areas, and important operational improvements such as the runway extension at Boa Vista. From Sal to Praia, Boa Vista, São Vicente, São Filipe, São Nicolau, and Maio, each airport will also benefit from enhanced facilities, such as waste treatment and wastewater processing plants."

VINCI Airports says: "This comprehensive program is made possible by a robust and virtuous Public-Private Partnership model.

Financing has been solidly structured, with an initial €60 million sustainability-linked loan secured for Phase 1A in 2023. Phase 1B is backed by a new €120 million sustainability-linked loan contributed by IFC, DEG, and EAAIF, with its financial closure completed in December 2025. The shareholders continue to support these developments by providing equity funds, ensuring the sustainability of the investments."

President of VINCI Concessions and VINCI Airports, Nicolas Notebaert said: "The completion of this first phase and the launch of the next stage of airport modernization mark a significant advancement for Cape Verde. We are proud to contribute to turning its airport infrastructure into a benchmark for economic growth and sustainable development. In close partnership with Cape Verdean authorities, VINCI Airports is committed to delivering modern, efficient, and well-connected airports while placing passenger experience improvement at the core of our priorities." 

# Pilot Training Market 2025: Ab Initio Growth Contrasts With Type Rating Slowdown

The global flight training market in 2025 was largely defined by contrasts. Initial pilot (ab initio) and MPL (Multi-crew Pilot License) training expanded as airlines invested in future pilot pipelines. Type rating activity, on the other hand, faced headwinds from aircraft delivery delays and market adjustments.

For training organizations, 2025 required balancing immediate constraints with long-term positioning. The year showed that airlines were no longer simply reacting to staffing gaps but building structured pathways to meet demand they knew was coming. Aira Klusaitiene, Chief Sales Officer at BAA Training, one of the leading global aviation training organizations delivering both Ab Initio and Type Rating training, says that airlines are now starting to plan ahead much more substantially.

"After years of reactive hiring, we're seeing serious investment in ab initio and cadet programs. They know they'll need pilots, and they're acting on it now."

## Airlines Invested In Ab Initio And MPL Training Pipeline

Throughout 2025, ab initio training saw renewed momentum as airlines shifted from short-term solutions to long-term workforce planning.

Multi-Crew Pilot License programs moved further into the mainstream. While MPL has existed in Europe for years, 2025 brought notable expansion. For example, the Spanish low-cost airline Volotea launched its partnership with BAA Training in February 2025, offering cadets a job-guaranteed pathway. Qatar Airways and other carriers continued expanding their established cadet initiatives across Europe as well.

"Airlines using MPL programs consistently tell us their cadets are better prepared for line operations," Klusaitiene says. "The training is tailored to airline procedures from day one, which makes the transition smoother. We're also seeing airlines value the stability—they know exactly when pilots will be ready and what competencies they'll have." For training academies, MPL offered greater stability. Programs backed by airlines reduced reliance on self-funded students and aligned training output directly with airline



Aira Klusaitiene, Chief Sales Officer, BAA Training

demand. The model was proving its value not as an alternative to traditional routes, but as a strategic workforce tool.

## A Constrained Year For Type Rating

Type rating activity in 2025 told a different story. Aircraft delivery delays from Boeing and Airbus created a trickle-down effect across the training market. With manufacturers struggling to meet delivery schedules—and not expecting to fully recover until 2031-2032—airlines worked with the resources they already had.

Fleet growth stalled, and so did the need to train pilots on new aircraft types. Airlines maximized existing capacity rather than expanding, which meant fewer type rating courses than in previous years. The situation was complicated by airline exits from the market late in the year, which returned experienced pilots and aircraft to the available pool.

"Last year was challenging for type rating," Klusaitiene notes. "Deliveries slowed significantly, and airlines focused

on optimization. We saw experienced pilots put back into the market. But even with that, fleet transitions—like airlines switching aircraft families for cost-effectiveness—still created pockets of demand."

Narrow-body aircraft, which represents approximately 60% of the commercial aircraft market, remained the focus for future fleet planning. As of mid-2025, narrow-body orders accounted for 88.9% of Airbus's backlog—7,660 aircraft out of 8,617 total. However, delivery delays meant airlines had to defer expansion timelines and optimize existing capacity while waiting for new aircraft.

### Looking Ahead To 2026

While 2025 presented challenges for type rating, the outlook for 2026 signals a geographic and operational shift in training demand.

Asia and the Middle East are positioned to drive the next phase of growth. Middle Eastern carriers placed hefty aircraft orders during 2025. FlyDubai ordered 225 aircraft (150 A320neos and 75 B737 MAXs), while Qatar Airways secured 160 widebody aircraft (130 B787 Dreamliners and 30 B777-9s) in what became Boeing's largest widebody order.

"2026 looks different regionally," Klusaitiene says. "Middle East orders are significant. Qatar Airways alone ordered 160 widebody aircraft. When those deliveries accelerate, training demand will follow. In Vietnam, for example, we're seeing both fleet expansion from established carriers and new airline launches. This creates sustained pilot demand across multiple fronts."

Vietnam exemplifies the regional growth trajectory. Vietjet ordered 20 A330neos in May 2025, doubling its widebody commitment, while Vietnam Airlines planned a tender for 50 narrowbody aircraft. The market also attracted new entrants: Sun PhuQuoc Airways launched in November 2025 with plans to operate 100 aircraft by 2030, targeting 20 million passengers annually.

The concentration of narrow-body orders, particularly A320 and B737 families, means training demand will align closely with delivery schedules. Manufacturers have indicated they expect to address the current backlog by 2031-2032, but as deliveries begin to normalize, training organizations will need to scale type rating capacity accordingly. The Middle East's aviation sector provides context for this growth. In the UAE, aviation contributes 18.2% to national GDP, five times the global average of 3.9%. The region's aviation sector is projected to reach \$730

billion in GDP contribution by 2043, more than doubling from current levels.

Airlines continue to face uncertainty around delivery timelines, which affects their ability to plan training intake with precision. However, the underlying demand remains clear: when aircraft arrive, pilots will need to be ready.

### How 2025 Shaped Up To Be

Pilot training in 2025 reflected a market in transition. Ab initio and MPL programs expanded as airlines invested in long-term pilot pipelines, while type rating activity contracted under the weight of aircraft delivery delays and market adjustments. It became clear that airlines were planning strategically rather than reacting tactically.

The year reinforced that training demand follows fleet movement. When deliveries stall, type rating slows. When airlines commit to future growth, ab initio investment accelerates. For training organizations, 2025 required balancing immediate capacity constraints with positioning for the demand that manufacturers' backlogs promise will eventually arrive.

Geography also played a defining role. While Europe maintained steady activity, the Middle East and Asia emerged as the centers of future growth, driven by substantial aircraft orders and ambitious aviation expansion plans. Vietnam's launch of Sun PhuQuoc Airways and the Middle East's record-breaking orders signal where the next wave of training demand will concentrate.

As 2026 begins, the training market stands at an inflection point. Aircraft will eventually be delivered. Airlines will need pilots ready to fly them. Training providers that built capacity, maintained partnerships, and aligned with airline planning cycles during the constrained period will be positioned to meet that demand when it materializes.



Cadets at Simulator training Center, BAA Training

# African Aviation Is Entering A Phase Of Consolidation, Resilience, And Renewed Growth

*Mr. Nelson Rodrigues de Oliveira, a seasoned and experienced veteran in the African aviation industry and current Chief Executive Officer of TAAG Angola Airlines, in this exclusive interview with Aviation & Allied Business Journal discussed the current state of the airline and African aviation industry at large, SAATM, supply chain challenges in Africa and other issues regarding the industry.*



Mr. Nelson Rodrigues de Oliveira, CEO, TAAG Angola Airlines



Fleet modernization is one of the central pillars of our operational turnaround. The introduction of the Airbus A220 on regional and domestic routes has delivered tangible efficiency gains, including fuel savings of around 25%, higher dispatch reliability, and improved passenger comfort.

**Q** : What is your major preoccupation as the Chief Executive Officer of TAAG Angola? **A:** My primary focus is to lead a deep and sustainable transformation of TAAG into a financially resilient, operationally excellent, and customer-centric airline. Our ambition goes far beyond transporting passengers; it is about building a modern aviation platform that supports national development, regional integration, and global connectivity.

We are systematically strengthening corporate governance, reinforcing compliance standards, and embedding a performance-driven culture across the organization. At the same time, we are modernizing our commercial, digital, and operational processes to ensure long-term competitiveness. This transformation is anchored in measurable improvements in safety, punctuality, service quality, and financial discipline. Our ultimate objective is to position

TAAG as a reference airline in Africa and as a strategic pillar of Angola's economic diversification agenda.

**Q:** TAAG has experienced significant fleet upgrades in the last two years with the deliveries of the series of A220 and the Dreamliners. How has this impacted the airline's efficiency and services? What is your fleet strategy? Are you retiring some aircraft?

**A:** Fleet modernization is one of the central pillars of our operational turnaround. The introduction of the Airbus A220 on regional and domestic routes has delivered tangible efficiency gains, including fuel savings of around 25%, higher dispatch reliability, and improved passenger comfort. Similarly, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner has transformed our long-haul operations, offering superior fuel efficiency, extended range, and a significantly reduced environmental footprint. These aircraft enable us to operate profitably on both mature and emerging intercontinental routes.

Our strategy is based on a multi-brand approach, aimed at providing a versatile range of equipment tailored to each flight type-domestic, regional, and intercontinental. Simultaneously, this choice allows us to avoid exclusive dependency on a single OEM, granting us greater maneuverability and resilience in the face of high global demand for maintenance and spare parts. The Airbus A220 and the Dreamliners allow us to offer superior service with significantly lower fuel costs. Regarding the retirement of aircraft, we will gradually be phasing out older units to ensure a young, modern fleet that is fit for current market demands.

**Q: At the 57th AFRAA AGA which you hosted, it was reported that TAAG Angola is targeting breakeven by 2028. What plans are in place to ensure that the airline will be a net profitable airline by 2028?**

**A:** Our journey towards sustainable profitability is structured around rigorous cost discipline, revenue diversification, and commercial agility. On the cost side, we are renegotiating supplier contracts, optimizing fuel management, and streamlining internal processes through digitalization. On the revenue side, we are strengthening cargo operations and leveraging data analytics to optimize pricing and network planning. Commercially, we are focusing on high-yield routes, strategic partnerships, and improved distribution channels. The 2028 breakeven and profitability target is ambitious, but it is grounded in realistic traffic forecasts, improving load factors, and a disciplined execution culture that is already delivering measurable results.

**Q: Last year, TAAG transferred all its international flights to Luanda's new Dr. António Agostinho Neto International Airport (AIAAN). How significant has this transfer been to TAAG's development?**

**A:** The transition to AIAAN represents a structural transformation in TAAG's operating model. For the first time, we have access to world-class infrastructure that fully supports hub-and-spoke operations, long-haul connectivity, and cargo development.

The new airport significantly reduces congestion, improves on-time performance, and enables faster and more reliable connections. It also provides modern cargo, maintenance, and passenger facilities that enhance both efficiency and service quality.

AIAAN positions Luanda/Icolo e Bengo as a competitive aviation gateway between Southern Africa, Europe, and the Americas. This strengthens TAAG's role as a regional hub carrier and supports Angola's ambition to become a logistics and transport platform for the region.

**Q: What has been the impact of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) on TAAG airlines operations?**

**A:** SAATM is a transformative initiative for African aviation. We see it not merely as a liberalization framework, but as a

catalyst for integration, efficiency, and sustainable growth. For TAAG, SAATM facilitates access to new markets, reduces regulatory barriers, and enables the development of strategic partnerships across the continent.

It encourages healthy competition, which in turn drives innovation and service improvement.

By strengthening intra-African connectivity, SAATM contributes directly to trade, tourism, and economic development. TAAG is actively positioning itself as a leading participant in this integrated African aviation ecosystem. Overall, SAATM, if fully implemented, is arguably a great catalyst for intra-Africa air traffic growth. To date, the impact is partial. While Angola has affirmed its commitment to SAATM, traffic benefits are delayed by the pace of implementation, which is still ongoing.

**Q: Africa regions are said to have some of the most expensive ticket prices. How do you think this can be resolved for the growth of the industry?**

**A:** The relatively high cost of air travel in Africa is largely structural. It reflects elevated airport charges, multiple taxes and fees, high fuel prices, and limited economies of scale. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated action. Governments need to review and rationalize aviation-related taxes. Airlines must deepen cooperation through alliances, code-sharing, and joint procurement. At the same time, fleet modernization is essential to reduce operating costs per seat. TAAG is actively engaging with regulators, industry associations, and regional partners to advocate for policies that promote affordability and stimulate demand. Our objective is to make air transport more accessible to African citizens while maintaining financial sustainability.



Mr. Nelson Rodrigues with the Secretary General of AFRAA, Mr. Abderahmane Berthe at AFRAA's 57th AGA hosted in Luanda, Angola





**Q: A major challenge in African aviation today is the retention of skilled professionals. How is TAAG able to recruit the aviation professionals that are necessary for your increasing capacity?**

**A:** Human capital is the cornerstone of our transformation. We are investing in continuous training, leadership development, and technical certification programs to mitigate global shortage.

We offer professionals the opportunity to participate in a national flagship project with regional and global relevance. This sense of purpose and long-term vision is a powerful driver of retention and engagement.

We highlight, as a practical example, our AB INITIO initial pilot training program and our AB INITIO initial aircraft maintenance technician training. These programs are clear evidence of our efforts to prepare the next generation of professionals, ensuring that TAAG has a highly qualified workforce aligned with international standards to sustain our growth.

**Q: What are your thoughts on the current state of the African aviation industry and how do you see TAAG's position in the African aviation market evolving in years to come?**

**A:** African aviation is entering a phase of consolidation, resilience, and renewed growth. Despite structural

challenges, long-term demand fundamentals remain strong, driven by demographics, urbanization, and economic integration.

In this context, TAAG is evolving from a primarily point-to-point operator into a strategic hub carrier for the South Atlantic and Southern Africa. Our ambition is to connect Africa more effectively with South America, North America, Europe and Asia.

Over the coming years, I see TAAG becoming a consistently profitable, well-governed, and technologically advanced airline that serves as a benchmark for modernization and professionalism on the continent

**Q: Has TAAG Angola been impacted by the global supply chain issues?**

**A:** Like all major airlines, TAAG has been affected by global supply chain disruptions, particularly in relation to spare parts, engines, and maintenance services.

However, we have been proactive facing these challenges and implemented proactive mitigation measures. These include strengthening strategic inventories, diversifying suppliers, and deepening partnerships with OEMs and MRO providers.

As a result, our operational resilience has increased, allowing us to maintain as much as possible our schedule integrity and protect the passenger experience. ■

# Appointment

## Air Botswana Appoints Dr. Bao Mosinyi As General Manager

**B**otswana's national carrier, Air Botswana has appointed Dr. Bao Mosinyi as its General Manager.

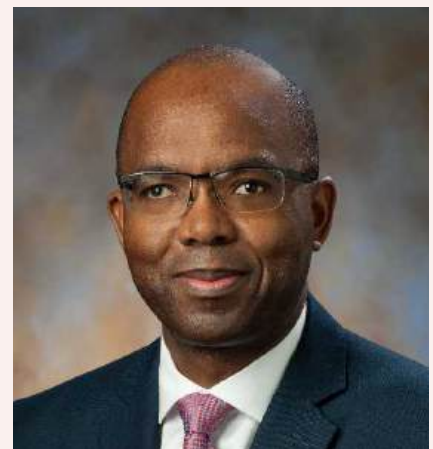
According to the airline, "Dr. Mosinyi brings extensive experience in aviation, engineering, and organisational leadership, spanning both the public and private sectors. He is an aerospace engineer by training and has over two decades of experience across aviation regulation, airline operations, aircraft manufacturing, and executive leadership."

Air Botswana reports that Dr. Mosinyi's background includes "senior roles within Botswana's civil aviation

sector as well as international aviation and aerospace organisations."

The airline importantly notes that his appointment "comes at a pivotal time as Air Botswana continues to focus on operational stability, service improvement, and long-term sustainability in support of national development priorities."

Air Botswana says it "welcomes Dr. Mosinyi and looks forward to his contribution in advancing the Airline's mandate of providing safe, reliable, and sustainable air transport services for Botswana and the region." Air Botswana expresses optimism about future collaboration with Dr. Mosinyi and expects him to contribute to fulfilling its mandate to



**Dr. Bao Mosinyi,**  
General Manager Air Botswana

provide safe, reliable and sustainable air transport services for the airline. ■

# Partnership

## GE Aerospace GENx Engines To Power Delta Airlines New Boeing 787-10s

**G**E Aerospace has confirmed that Delta Air Lines has selected its "GENx engines to power 30 new Boeing 787-10s with options for 30 more aircraft. The agreement also includes spare engines and long-term services support."

GE Aerospace Chairman and CEO, H. Lawrence Culp, Jr. said: "For more than 60 years, GE Aerospace has been proud to partner with Delta Air Lines, and we're honored the GENx now will be underwriting to support their international growth plans. The GENx engine will provide reliability, efficiency, and durability for years to come."

According to GE Aerospace, "Engineered with advanced materials and cutting-edge technologies, the GENx engine family represents a major leap in modern propulsion with higher time-on-wing and reliability. Since its introduction in 2011, the GENx family has accumulated more than 70 million




Source: Boeing

GENx engines will power Delta Airline 30 new Boeing 787-10s

flight hours and today powers two-thirds of all 787 aircraft in operation."

Delta's Chief Executive Officer, Ed Bastian said: "GE Aerospace's GENx engines will enable us to connect our passengers to international destinations across the globe with greater efficiency and improved reliability and are foundational to our growth vision. We look forward to bringing these cutting-

edge engines into our fleet."

GE Aerospace added that its relationship with Delta Air Lines "began in 1956 powering the Convair 880 with CJ-805-3 engines. Today, Delta Air Lines operates an extensive fleet of more than 1,300 GE Aerospace and CFM\* powered aircraft that includes CF6, CFM56-7B and LEAP engines." 

# Agreement

## Eve Air Mobility Secures \$150 Million Funds to Accelerate eVTOL Development


**E**ve Air Mobility (Eve), a global leader in the development of next-generation electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) solutions, has "secured \$150 million in debt financing from a syndicate of leading financial institutions. The 5-year loan included Itaú, Banco do Brasil, Citibank, and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, underscoring strong market confidence in Eve's vision and long-term strategy."

Chief Financial Officer at Eve Air Mobility, Eduardo Couto said: "This successful debt raise represents a significant milestone for Eve and a strong endorsement of our leadership

in shaping the future of urban air mobility. The confidence of large banks reinforces our commitment to delivering a fully integrated eVTOL ecosystem. This financing provides long-term resources necessary to accelerate development, advance certification, and execute our strategic roadmap through 2028 and beyond."

Eve Air Mobility says "the proceeds will support Eve's research and development, including the integration of its eVTOL aircraft into a comprehensive urban air mobility ecosystem. This funding accelerates technological progress and strengthens

partnerships with infrastructure providers and regulatory bodies. With these resources, the Company can advance aircraft certification and commercialization while ensuring compliance with global aviation standards. This transaction enhances Eve's capacity to meet rising global demand for sustainable, low-emission transportation and enables scalable operations in key urban markets."

"With this transaction, Eve's total funding now reaches \$1.2 billion, reaffirming its status as one of the best-capitalized companies in the emerging eVTOL market," Eve added. 



# Fatigue Management In Air Traffic Management

By Dina Abd Elghany



Ms. Dina Abd Elghany, Air Traffic Controller, NANSO

**O**n the night of 1 July 2002, at 23:35:32 CEST, a tragic mid-air collision occurred over the city of Überlingen in southern Germany between two aircraft: Bashkirian Airlines Flight 2937 (a Tupolev Tu-154M operated by a regional Russian airline based in the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia) and a DHL International Aviation flight (Flight 611), a Boeing 757 cargo plane operated under Lufthansa Cargo.

The air traffic controller on duty at that moment was Peter Nielsen, working for Skyguide, the Swiss air traffic control center responsible for that sector (RC). At the time, multiple failures and exceptional circumstances had occurred simultaneously: the primary radar system was under maintenance, forcing the controller to compensate by working with a backup system. At 23:29 (CEST), the DHL aircraft reached FL360 (Flight Level 36,000 ft) after being cleared to climb. Then, around 23:30, the Bashkirian flight contacted controller Peter and reported that it was also at FI360.



Fatigue remains one of the most paramount physiological factors affecting air traffic controllers, influencing alertness, reaction time, and decision making. Therefore, it's a shared huge responsibility between individuals (ATC) and the air navigation service provider (ANSP).

This was the beginning of the catastrophe - a heart-stopping moment for the controller as adrenaline surged and the Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) alarms blared. The TCAS warned the Bashkirian aircraft to "Pull up" (climb), but Peter issued ATC clearance instructing it to descend to FL350. Simultaneously, the TCAS on the DHL aircraft issued the opposite instruction - "Descend to FL350" - to avoid collision.

At precisely 23:35:32, the two planes collided at an altitude of approximately 34,890 ft, disappearing from Peter's radar screen. Darkness fell, and both heart and mind seemed to stop. The sky - a realm of peace and calm - was turned into a stage for destiny by the single mistake of one air traffic controller. And so we arrive at the existential question: "To be or not to be." This is the fundamental question every air traffic controller faces - the line between preserving life and losing it.

An air traffic controller is a human being who never sees the passengers but feels the weight of their presence. He does not see their tears or hear their prayers, yet he controls their fates through radar screens and radio frequencies - through decisions made in a fraction of a second.

Psychological pressure is not an abstract concept for them - it is a daily reality that intensifies with every task and every control center where responsibility exceeds human limits. Long working hours, night shifts, sleep disturbances, biological clock disruption due to frequent shift changes, and technological stress from occasional radar or surveillance malfunctions - all of these

contribute. TCAS systems can issue conflicting commands, and technical crises can arise without warning. The controller rarely has the luxury of stopping: pilots' voices are on the other end, aircraft are at close altitudes, and every second of delay could mean tragedy.

The Überlingen accident casts a dark shadow over this truth: 52 children were on board the Russian plane - little ambassadors of future dreams, students on a school trip. They left their homes seeking daylight, but the sky swallowed them due to an accumulation of human, organizational, psychological, and technical errors.

So, when is a controller "to be"? To be - means staying calm amid anger, being mentally present despite exhaustion, balancing between instructions and warning systems, between regulations and human instinct, between professional performance and the limits of physical and mental endurance.

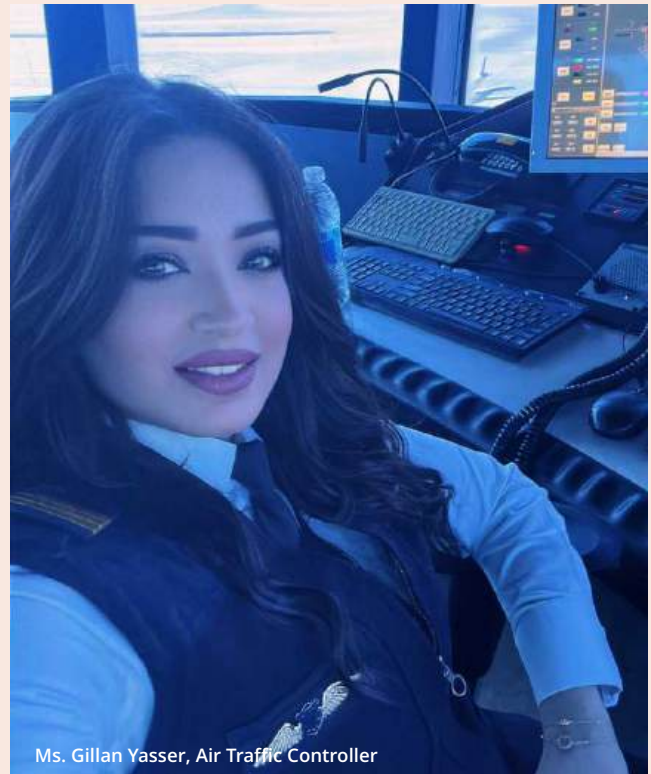
And when is he "not to be"? When pressures accumulate, the person is internally drained, errors become possible, and the endings turn tragic. To highlight the psychological and moral state of air traffic control heroes worldwide, regional and international organizations in general, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in particular, have shown interest in the importance of setting control measures, limitations and precautionary measures for the risks of fatigue for air traffic control officers. International and regional workshops and conferences have been held under the slogan (FRMS) Fatigue Risk Management System to reduce operational and coordination pressures at operational radar and procedural sites.

The real question is: Who is the invisible enemy of the air traffic controller? It is psychological pressure. It is unseen, yet it infiltrates his soul, mind, and heart at the moment of decision, becoming inseparable from the question of "to be or not to be." This is not Hamlet's famous line from Shakespeare's play - it is the daily reality of every air traffic controller. In the end, air traffic control remains a field that goes beyond technology - it reaches deep into humanity itself.

## Dealing With ATC Fatigue and Psychological Pressures

Fatigue remains one of the most paramount physiological factors affecting air traffic controllers, influencing alertness, reaction time, and decision making. Therefore, it's a shared huge responsibility between individuals (ATC) and the air navigation service provider (ANSP). From our side (ATC), there are many applicable means we may use and implement to improve work environment which will ease and relieve controllers and reduce the side effects of fatigue.

- Applying health sleep habits and managing sleeping patterns especially at night shifts.



Ms. Gillan Yasser, Air Traffic Controller

- Stress management professionals supporting through available consultants, facilitators providing effective descriptions to how to manage stress and release pressure of work.
- Efficient safety team works proactively to monitor any signs of controller's fatigue, sleep problems especially in night shifts and shifts rotation, bad nutrition, work load stress and exhaustion.

## The Recovery Strategies

At the organisational level, the (ANSP) plays essential role in designing a fatigue resilience mechanism this includes

- Providing adequate comfortable rest places to improve health sleep hours.
- Ensuring the spread of safety culture that no one will be blamed for reporting their concerns regarding the work environment or the fatigue.
- Validate accountable persons to use all means and ways of authorisation to enhance work environment and constant channels of communication with controllers.

Dear colleagues and friends - fellow warriors of this profession - I urge you to uphold integrity, to hold fast to determination and willpower. O hidden warrior, step into the operations room with determination, conviction, and courage. You are the first and last witness to the skies - the very skies that Allah raised and set in balance.

Your balance is - to be or not to be. ■

*Ms. Dina Abd Elghany is a Senior Air Traffic Controller, National Air Navigation Services Company (NANSC).*

# From Classroom To Smartphone: How Digital Content Is Changing Pilot Learning In Africa

By Oscar Obierofu



## The African Cockpit Is Going Digital

**W**alk into any flight school briefing room in Lagos, Pretoria, Nairobi or Accra today and you will still see whiteboards, paper charts and POH binders. But look at the students' hands and you see the real revolution: smartphones, tablets, YouTube playlists, CBT apps and WhatsApp study groups.

Across Africa, mobile internet use is climbing fast. GSMA estimates about 416 million mobile internet users on the continent (28% penetration), with the mobile sector contributing 7.7% of Africa's GDP in 2024 and expected to rise further as 4G/5G expand (GSMA, 2024a). In Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile internet penetration reached 27% in 2023, with a large but shrinking usage gap linked to device cost and digital skills (GSMA, 2024b). Smartphone ownership is set to grow steadily toward 2030 (Ecofin Agency, 2024; KT Press, 2023).

In parallel, African pilot training is quietly moving from chalkboard-only to a hybrid ecosystem: traditional schools + CBT platforms + online ground schools + creator-led

technical channels like Dwaynes Aviation and Fairchild Aviation, which I run.

This article looks at how pilots in Africa actually use digital content today, and what airlines, regulators and schools can do to turn that behaviour into a strategic human-capital advantage.

From "extra help" to core study tool

Globally, computer-based training (CBT) and e-learning have become standard for pilot ground school and recurrent training. European and international providers now market fully digital ATPL theory, maintenance CBT and online type-rating modules for major fleets (AeroCBT, 2025; Padpilot, 2025).

Africa has not stood still:

- The East African School of Aviation in Nairobi now runs e-learning modules where students attend classes remotely via internet platforms (East African School of Aviation, 2025).

- South African platforms like AeroCBT and PilotExams offer online CPL/ATPL ground school and mock exams aligned with SACAA syllabi (AeroCBT, 2025).

- In Zimbabwe, Drone University delivers fully online drone ground school accessible via smartphone, tablet or desktop (Drone University, 2025).
- South African providers such as MSFA advertise "e-learning for the aviation industry" and online CBT for all pilot licence levels (MSFA, 2020). SIMAERO, with a major training centre in South Africa, operates a learning management system delivering online type-rating theory and specialised modules like low-visibility and upset recovery training (SIMAERO, 2020).

At the same time, research from outside Africa shows that tablet-based EFBs and CBT can be highly effective learning tools. Studies on EFB usability and tablet use in flight training report benefits in information access, planning efficiency and user preference compared with paper-only methods (Lolchoki, 2018; Schwartzentruber, 2017).

In my own work as a YouTube aviation creator, I see the African side of that story: Nigerian, Kenyan, Ghanaian and South African student pilots regularly message to say they watched:

- A multi-engine safety explainer on Dwaynes Aviation before their ME checkride,
  - A performance/weight-and-balance breakdown on Fairchild Aviation before sitting ground school exams,
  - Or a route-economics and fleet-choices video while writing a university project on African airline strategy.
- For many of them, the smartphone is not an add-on. It is their primary classroom.

## How African Pilots Actually Use Smartphones To Learn

From comments, emails, and direct feedback, a pattern has emerged in how African students and young pilots use digital content:

### Pre-Entry And "Dream Phase"

Before they ever apply to a flight school, many teenagers and undergraduates:


- Discover aviation through YouTube explainers-airline economics, accident breakdowns, "day in the life of a FO" videos.
- Use these videos to convince parents that aviation is a serious, structured career rather than a vague dream.
- Learn the language of aviation (IFR, Vmc, ETOPS, MEL, EASA vs FAA, etc.) long before first contact with an ATO.

In Nigeria and across West Africa, this is amplified by rising smartphone access and youth demographics-Nigeria's large cohort of digital natives increasingly access education and entertainment via mobile devices (GSMA, 2024a; KT Press, 2023).

### Ground School And Exam Prep

Once enrolled, African student pilots typically use a stack of tools:

- Formal ground school at local ATOs or online schools like Bayelsa Pilot Academy (which markets itself as Nigeria's



Globally, computer-based training (CBT) and e-learning have become standard for pilot ground school and recurrent training. European and international providers now market fully digital ATPL theory, maintenance CBT and online type-rating modules for major fleets.

leading online PPL ground school) (Bayelsa Pilot Academy, 2025).

- CBT platforms and question banks - AeroCBT, PilotExams and similar tools for syllabus-aligned CPL/ATPL prep and mock exams (AeroCBT, 2025).
- YouTube technical channels - to re-explain topics they found abstract in class (e.g. multi-engine performance, high-altitude operations, human factors, GNSS approaches).
- WhatsApp and Telegram groups - for sharing notes, screenshots, exam tips, and links to specific videos or CBT modules.

Here, creators like my channels sit alongside formal providers. Many African students will watch a 15-minute accident analysis or systems explainer the night before a test or simulator session because the smartphone is already in their hand, and data is cheaper than buying new textbooks.

### Type Ratings And Airline Entry

At the airline-training stage, the shift to digital is even more pronounced:

- African and global airlines now routinely use LMS platforms and online CBT for type-rating theory, followed by FFS sessions (SIMAERO, 2020).
- Laptop and tablet-based EFB apps (e.g., ForeFlight, Garmin Pilot or local tools) are used for flight planning and briefing, with research showing that ab-initio pilots can efficiently learn and prefer these tools when designed well (Lolchoki, 2018; Schwartzentruber, 2017).

Young African FOs tell me they continue to use long-form YouTube accident documentaries and technical channels as de facto recurrent training: watching breakdowns of icing events, unstable approaches or fuel-planning mistakes during roster downtime.

### What Is Changing In The Quality Of Learning?

Digital content is changing pilot learning in three main ways.



## From Static To Interactive

Traditional ground school relies on one-to-many lectures and static textbooks. CBT and digital resources add:

- Animations, interactive diagrams and quizzes, which providers like Padpilot and aviation CBT platforms argue improve engagement and retention (AeroCBT, 2025; Padpilot, 2025).
- Built-in testing and progress tracking, letting schools and airlines monitor learning in real time (Flightech Maintenance Training, 2025).
- For African students who may be studying while working or commuting, self-paced modules on a smartphone or tablet are more realistic than attending every physical class.

## From Single-Source To "Multi-Layer" Knowledge

Previously, the ATO and its instructors were the source of truth. Now a typical African student pilot triangulates between:

- The ATO instructor,
- Question banks and CBT,
- YouTube accident analyses and route explainers,
- Forums and chat groups.

This multi-layer system can deepen understanding when used wisely (e.g., watching a Vmc roll-over animation after classroom theory), but it can also introduce confusion when low-quality or sensationalist videos contradict official manuals.

## From Passive To "Pull-Based" Learning

Digital content allows pilots to pull exactly what they need:

- A DA42 engine-out tutorial before a simulator session;
- An EFB flight-planning video before using the app in real life;
- An accident breakdown focused on CFIT in African terrain ahead of a new route.
- Studies on tablet and EFB use show that pilots value speed of access, searchability and up-to-date information, which in turn can improve situational awareness (Lolchoki, 2018; Schwartzentruber, 2017).

The same logic applies to well-designed educational videos and micro-lessons.

### Risks:

There are real risks if African aviation simply "outsources" informal learning to whatever appears in a YouTube search result.

## Sensationalism vs Safety Culture

Accident videos that over-dramatise crashes or focus on blame rather than systems thinking can distort young pilots' risk perception and undermine just-culture principles.

## Regulatory Misalignment

Global content may be based on FAA/EASA assumptions that do not fully match NCAA, SACAA or KCAA rules, or African infrastructure realities.

## Uneven Quality Control

While some channels (including my own) base episodes on official reports and flight-test data, others rely on hearsay or secondary sources. Students rarely have a built-in "quality filter".

## Digital Divide

GSMA data shows that despite growth, Sub-Saharan Africa still has a large mobile internet usage gap due to cost and digital skills (GSMA, 2024b). If airlines and regulators assume "everyone is online", they may inadvertently exclude talented youth from less connected regions.

## What African Aviation Should Do Next

The key business question is: how do we turn this organic digital behaviour into a structured advantage for African aviation?

### Recognise Digital Learning As Part Of The Official Pipeline

Authorities and industry bodies should:

- Acknowledge that smartphone-based learning is now part of the real training environment, not a side hobby.
- Encourage ATOs to map what their students are watching and using, and to integrate or critique that content inside formal syllabi.

### Build Africa-Specific Digital Ecosystems

There is a clear opportunity to develop:

- NCAA-aligned online ground schools (as Bayelsa Pilot Academy is attempting at PPL level) with clear quality benchmarks (Bayelsa Pilot Academy, 2025).
- Regional CBT and micro-learning modules for African weather, terrain, infrastructure and procedures, delivered via LMS and mobile apps (SIMAERO, 2020).
- Partnerships between African airlines, local ATOs and serious digital creators (including channels like mine) to co-produce Africa-centric technical series-for example on multi-crew cooperation in low-infrastructure environments, or safety culture in young airlines.

### Set Standards And Curate Content

Regulators and training departments do not need to "approve YouTube", but they can:

- Publish guidance on evaluating online aviation content-what to look for in terms of data sources, references and tone.
- Curate lists of recommended channels, apps and CBT providers that align with official procedures and local reality.
- Explicitly address EFB and tablet use in training policies, drawing on existing international research and guidance (Lolchoki, 2018; Schwartzentruber, 2017).

### Use Analytics To Inform Human-Capital Policy

Digital platforms offer rich data:

- Which topics young African viewers watch most (e.g., engine-out procedures, unstable approaches, airline economics);



A flying simulation of pilot in training

- Which countries and cities generate the highest aviation-education engagement;
- What age groups and languages dominate.
- Aggregated and anonymised, this data can help ministries, authorities and airlines forecast where the next generation of pilots and aviation managers is coming from and what knowledge gaps they have.

### Conclusion:

Africa's pilot classroom now fits in a pocket. In African pilot training, the story is no longer "classroom vs smartphone". It is classroom + LMS + CBT + YouTube + EFB, all interacting in the same human mind.

For Nigeria and the wider continent, this shift is happening regardless of whether policymakers acknowledge it. The strategic choice is whether to:

- Let digital content evolve as an unregulated, hit-or-miss parallel universe, or
- Treat it as a powerful amplifier of Africa's aviation human-capital agenda, shaping, partnering and curating it with intent.

From my side, producing documentaries and technical explainers on Dwaynes Aviation and Fairchild Aviation, I see every day that African youth are not short of interest, intelligence or ambition. What they need is direction, credibility and structured pathways—from classroom to smartphone to simulator to cockpit.

If regulators, airlines, schools and serious digital creators work together, we can turn that rectangular piece of glass in a student's hand from "distraction" into one of the most effective pilot-training tools Africa has ever had.

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# The Hidden Cost Of Blocked Funds

By Thomas Reynaert



Thomas Reynaert, Senior Vice President, External Affairs, IATA

Imagine running a business where you sell your products in certain markets but access to your revenue was not guaranteed. Would you keep operating there? For many airlines, this isn't hypothetical - it's a reality. Despite selling tickets and providing services, millions of dollars in airline revenue remain trapped in countries for extended periods of time. In aviation, this problem is known as blocked funds, and it's a serious threat to global connectivity and economic growth.

Blocked funds are revenues earned by international airlines in local currencies that cannot be repatriated in US dollars due to government-imposed restrictions or foreign exchange shortages. Why does this happen?

Airlines have a unique business structure. They earn revenue in many countries, but most of their major costs—aircraft, maintenance, and people—are centralized at their home base and are paid in US dollars.

To make this system work, when countries sign air services agreements, they also agree that airlines should be able to

repatriate the funds earned from sales in those countries back to their base. That ensures airlines can pay their bills and keep operations running safely and reliably.

But countries do not always abide by what they have agreed. Sometimes they place restrictions on currency leaving their borders or limit access to foreign exchange. That puts airlines in a very difficult position: it's hard to sustain operations if you can't use the revenues you've earned to pay the bills.

As of October 2025, airlines had a staggering USD \$1.2 billion in blocked funds globally. Timely repatriation in US dollars is essential for airlines to meet dollar-denominated expenses like leasing, fuel, maintenance, and salaries.

Beyond the immediate cash flow impact, these restrictions carry hidden costs that compound the problem.

## Connectivity Risk Premium

When funds remain trapped, airlines are exposed to currency depreciation. If a local currency loses 20% of its value during the delay, the airline suffers a direct financial loss when converting back to dollars. At the same time, carriers often borrow to cover operational expenses while waiting for blocked funds to be released, and rising interest rates can add hundreds of thousands in unplanned costs. Or there could be opportunity cost: capital tied up in blocked funds cannot be invested in fleet upgrades, route expansion, or sustainability initiatives, slowing growth and competitiveness.

This is what we can call the 'connectivity risk premium'. Airlines must factor this risk into their network and financial planning, which often leads to reduced flight frequencies, higher fares, or even the suspension of routes altogether. In effect, blocked funds make a country more expensive and less attractive to serve.

Nigeria is a case in point. At one stage, blocked funds hit \$850 million. Economy tickets soared into the thousands of dollars, limiting access both to and from Nigeria. Some airlines suspended flights to Nigeria while others reduced frequencies or restricted ticket sales.

## Economic Trade-offs

For countries with limited foreign exchange, deciding how to allocate hard currency is a tough economic policy choice. Every dollar matters. Should reserves go toward importing fuel and medicine—essentials for daily life—or toward clearing

Source: Rwandair



African Airlines are also victims of trapped funds



**When funds remain trapped, airlines are exposed to currency depreciation. If a local currency loses 20% of its value during the delay, the airline suffers a direct financial loss when converting back to dollars.**

blocked airline funds to maintain vital connectivity, tourism, and trade? These are not easy decisions. Yet blocking airline funds comes at a steep price. Over time, these restrictions ripple through the economy, affecting jobs, investment, and growth.

The longer funds remain trapped, the greater the damage to confidence. International airlines and investors see blocked funds as a warning sign of financial instability. Currency controls, while sometimes necessary during crises, can tarnish a country's reputation and strain relationships with global institutions, making recovery harder and slower.

Protecting hard currency may offer short-term relief, but the long-term costs—lost competitiveness, weakened investor trust, and strained diplomacy—often outweigh the immediate gains.

It is worth remembering that aviation is not just about moving people from point A to point B. It is a powerful economic engine. It connects markets, drives trade and tourism, and supports millions of jobs worldwide. Every dollar spent on air transport multiplies across the economy. In 2023, aviation supported 86.5 million jobs globally and contributed USD 4.1 trillion to GDP—3.9% of the world's total. It also carried 33% of global trade by value, moving goods worth USD 8 trillion.


## Resolving the Blocked Funds Conundrum

The good news is that solutions exist. With political will, open dialogue, and a commitment to transparency, governments can resolve blocked fund challenges in ways that support economic and aviation growth.

Prioritizing aviation in foreign exchange allocation is the first step toward clearing blocked funds. From there, authorities can streamline administrative processes and eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that slow repatriation. Enforcing the provisions of bilateral air service agreements within regulatory frameworks is equally critical to remove ambiguity and ensure compliance.

Alongside advocacy for full clearance of blocked funds, we also help airlines manage short-term pressures. This includes negotiating with commercial banks for competitive foreign exchange rates and identifying opportunities to use local currency for local expenses—such as airport fees, air traffic control charges, ground handling, and catering.

Experience shows that with the right approach, blocked funds can be released without destabilizing local economies. Nigeria offers a clear example: through constructive engagement and phased repatriation, the backlog was successfully cleared.

IATA continues to work closely with governments, central banks, and airline partners to resolve currency repatriation challenges on behalf of our members. Our message is simple: unblocking funds is not just about improving cash flow. It is about safeguarding connectivity, protecting livelihoods, and unlocking economic potential. Together, we can ensure aviation continues to deliver prosperity for all. 

# Maintenance

## IATA Renews Engine Maintenance Agreement with CFM International



MRO Services provided by CFM International

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced the "renewal of an agreement with CFM International (CFM) through February 2033, supporting increased competition in the market for maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services for engines manufactured by CFM, a 50/50 partnership between GE Aerospace and Safran Aircraft Engines."

IATA's Director General, Willie Walsh said: "Airlines have long struggled with

the aftermarket business practices of manufacturers, which have limited competition and resulted in high costs for airlines. These pressures have become even more acute as limited maintenance capacity and aerospace supply chain constraints have driven up costs and grounded aircraft. A recent IATA study estimated that these challenges added \$5.7 billion to engine leasing and maintenance costs for airlines in 2025."

"The renewal of this agreement is well-

timed. While not a panacea, the practical and pro-competitive aftermarket practices that this agreement obligates are essential for a healthy industry in the long-term. Critically, if used to its full potential, this agreement will also provide much-needed short-term cost and capacity relief for airlines as they work to meet customer demand amid ongoing aerospace supply chain failures. CFM should be commended for taking the lead with this important reform and other manufacturers must take notice and step up." Walsh added.

President and CEO of CFM International, Gaël Méheust said: "The extension of the agreement between CFM and IATA reaffirms our commitment to a competitive open aftermarket for CFM products. Our growing MRO ecosystem includes dozens of third parties that overhaul, repair, and maintain our engines, resulting in lower cost of ownership and maximum choice for our airline customers. Despite the challenges of recent years-particularly those related to supply chain constraints-CFM places customers at the heart of its DNA. In 2026, we are committed to renewing and strengthening our efforts to ensure our customers' complete satisfaction with our products and support." □

# New Orders

## Delta Air Lines Orders 31 Airbus Widebody Aircraft

Aircraft manufacturer, Airbus has confirmed that Delta Air Lines has "placed a firm order for 31 latest generation aircraft including 16 A330-900s and 15 A350-900s." The aircraft manufacturer says "once delivered, Delta's widebody fleet will have grown to 55 A330neo and 79 A350s."

Chief Executive Officer, Delta Air Lines, Ed Bastian said: "As we grow our international footprint and

prepare our fleet to serve expanded long-haul markets, these aircraft will enhance our capabilities and elevate our premium offerings."

Airbus EVP Sales of the Commercial Aircraft Business, Benoît de Saint-Exupéry said: "Delta's renewed confidence in both the A330neo and the A350 is a testament to our enduring partnership and the excellence of the Airbus widebody family performance. These aircraft offer the range, capacity, and premium cabin

experience Delta requires to grow into new markets and connect more of the world."

Airbus pointed out that its A330neo and A350 are powered by the latest generation Rolls-Royce Trent 7000 engines. Adding, "Its latest generation Rolls-Royce engines and use of lightweight materials bring a 25 per cent advantage in fuel burn, operating costs and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions." □

# Appointment

## Deutsche Aircraft Appoints Anastasija Visnakova As CCO

**G**erman aircraft manufacturer, Deutsche Aircraft has appointed Anastasija Visnakova as Chief Commercial Officer (CCO). The aircraft manufacturer says, "in this role, she will oversee the company's global commercial activities, including sales, marketing, communications, customer service and aftermarket."

According to Deutsche Aircraft, "Anastasija has spent more than three years as Vice President Sales and Marketing, where she played a central role in strengthening Deutsche Aircraft's commercial presence, building customer relationships and supporting the successful market introduction of the D328eco." The airline says her appointment "reflects the continued growth of the company as it moves closer to industrialisation and entry into service."

Deutsche confirms that as a member of the Executive Committee, the new CCO will "lead a unified commercial organisation focused on the entire customer journey, from first contact and aircraft acquisition to entry-into-service,

daily operations support and long-term aftermarket care. Concentrating these functions under one leadership role creates clear revenue accountability and ensures a consistent, customer-focused approach across all markets."


Anastasija Visnakova said: "I am honoured to take on the role of Chief Commercial Officer at such an important moment for Deutsche Aircraft. With the D328eco approaching entry into service, our priority is to deliver a seamless customer experience and build strong, lasting partnerships. I look forward to working closely with our teams and our global community of operators as we continue to grow."

Chief Executive Officer, Deutsche Aircraft, Nico Neumann said: "Anastasija's appointment as Chief Commercial Officer is a natural and well-deserved step. She has been instrumental in shaping our commercial strategy and strengthening



Anastasija Visnakova, cco, Deutsche Aircraft

engagement with customers. Aligning sales, marketing, communications, customer service and aftermarket under her leadership reinforces clear ownership of the full commercial and customer cycle as we prepare for our next phase of development."

Deutsche Aircraft says this appointment highlights "Deutsche Aircraft's commitment to building a strong executive team as it prepares for the industrialisation and entry into service of the D328eco." 

# Milestone

## FAAN Recieves ICAO Trainair Plus Gold Membership


**T**he Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has "met the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Trainers Plus requirements, earning the prestigious Gold Member status in a significant milestone for aviation training and capacity development in Nigeria." According to the airport authority, "the certification is a mark of global excellence in aviation training."

In a statement by the Director of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, Henry Agbebiye, "This achievement, valid from

January 1st 2026 to December 31st 2026, is a reflection of FAAN's sustained commitment to excellence, global best practices, and the continuous professional development of aviation personnel."

According to FAAN, "the achievement is a testament of the dedication to human resource development championed by the MD/CE of FAAN, Mrs Olubunmi Kuku. The ICAO Trainers Plus Programme is a globally recognized framework that ensures aviation training organizations meet stringent

international standards for instructor competency, training delivery, and quality assurance."

Additionally, FAAN stated "by attaining Gold Member status, FAAN has demonstrated full compliance with ICAO's rigorous benchmarks, positioning the Authority as a leading aviation training institution not only in Nigeria but across Africa. This recognition further strengthens FAAN's role in promoting safe, efficient, and sustainable airport operations in line with international aviation standards." 



# Agreement

## Air Peace Expands Bilateral Interline Agreement With Emirates



Air Peace and Emirates sign bilateral interline agreement

**N**igerian carrier, Air Peace and Emirates building on their existing partnership has signed "a bilateral interline agreement, expanding air connectivity between Africa, the UAE, and London."

According to Emirates, "The agreement offers passengers of both airlines frictionless, single-ticket travel and with through-checked baggage, on select routes, resulting in greater travel comfort and

convenience for customers."

Emirates says, "beyond the 13 cities in Nigeria already available for Emirates passengers on Air Peace's network, the enhanced interline agreement now enables travellers to connect with Banjul in Gambia and Dakar in Senegal, both via Abidjan; and with Freetown in Sierra Leone and Monrovia in Liberia, both via Accra. The additional gateways allow more passengers in Africa to access Emirates world-class product and services, and vast global network."

Emirates' Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer, Adnan Kazim said: "Enhancing our interline partnership with Air Peace allows us to expand our footprint across more of Africa, creating new opportunities for people to fly better with Emirates, while helping international tourists explore more of the region, via Lagos. We remain committed to working with strategic partners such as Air Peace to further strengthen Nigeria's aviation, tourism and trade sectors."

Chief Commercial Officer, Air Peace, Nowel Ngala said: "This interline agreement with Emirates represents a major step in Air Peace's strategic vision to connect Africa more efficiently to global markets. By combining our strong regional presence with Emirates' extensive international network, we are delivering seamless connectivity, improved travel experience, and greater access to key global destinations for African travellers. This partnership further reinforces Air Peace's role as a critical bridge between Africa and the global aviation ecosystem." □

# Evaluation

## NiMet Achieves 82.65% Score in ICPC's 2025 EICS

**T**he Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) has "achieved a score of 82.65% in the 2025 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard (EICS) conducted by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) between 19 May and 20 June 2025."

According to NiMet, "the result, which was recently conveyed to the Agency in a letter dated 29 December 2025, earned the Agency a rating of 'Substantial Compliance' and positioned it 10th out of 344 MDAs assessed nationwide."

In addition, NiMet "ranked 11th out of 356 MDAs on the ACTU Effectiveness Index (AEI) with a score of 82.50%, signifying a 'Very Effective' status for its Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU)."

NiMet says "the EICS evaluation, which was based on key pillars of Management Culture and Structure, Financial Management Systems, Administrative Systems, and the effectiveness of Anti-Corruption and Transparency Units, affirms the strength of the Agency's compliance framework, governance mechanisms and the effectiveness of its operational systems."

NiMet said in the letter signed by the Chairman of the ICPC, Dr. Musa Adamu Aliyu, SAN, "the Agency was commended for the structures and processes it has put in place to promote efficiency and integrity, while its Management was encouraged to sustain the standard achieved to ensure consistency in ratings and continued improvement in service delivery."

NiMet reiterated that it remains "committed to upholding the principles of transparency, accountability, and professionalism in the discharge of its mandate, and will continue to strengthen its institutional processes in line with national integrity standards." □

# Airline Launch

## Keyamo Sets Up Committee For Edo State Airline Launch

**E**do State in South-South Nigeria is set to join the league of states with ownership of their airline. In this regard, Nigeria's Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Barrister Festus Keyamo SAN "received in audience, the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo who paid him a strategic courtesy visit to advance discussions on the immediate activation of indigenous airline for Edo State."

A statement by the Special Adviser on Media and Communications to the Honourable Minister, Tunde Moshood, said "Governor Okpebholo, who was accompanied by key members of his cabinet, stressed the urgency of establishing a homegrown airline to operate from Benin Airport, describing aviation as a critical driver for Edo State's economic revival, investment inflow and job creation."

According to Mr. Moshood, Governor Okpebholo said "the Edo State Government is already exploring several partnership options, including

engagements with South African investors who have pledged to provide aircraft for the take-off of operations. If I have my way, I want this airline to kick off immediately - like tomorrow, even before the election. Edo State needs a strong aviation presence to open up our economy and reposition Benin as a major hub."

The Honourable Minister, Festus Keyamo, SAN described the initiative "as timely and visionary. He revealed that the Ministry has also been engaging potential investors who have shown growing interest in the Benin Airport and its commercial viability."

The Minister recalled "the historical relevance of Benin Airport in Nigeria's aviation ecosystem, noting that it once served as a major confluence point for the old Midwest region during the heyday of the defunct Okada Air. Benin Airport used to be a strong aviation hub during the glory days of Okada Air. There is no reason it cannot reclaim that status. The interest we are seeing today confirms that Benin is ready again."



A working visit to the Minister by the Governor of Edo State

Mr. Moshood stated "to fast-track the process, the Minister has set up a technical committee and requested the governor to nominate a point person who will work directly with the Director of Air Transport Management at the Ministry for effective coordination, regulatory compliance and operational planning. "This committee will report to me and you on a weekly basis for effective coordination. With proper collaboration, Benin Airport should be fully operational between the first and second quarters of this year," Keyamo assured." □

# Certification

## Nigeria's Airport Authority, FAAN Attains Dual ISO Certifications



FAAN MD receiving the ISO certifications

**T**he Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has "attained two internationally recognised certifications: ISO 9001:2015 (Quality

Management System) and ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management System)." According to the airport authority, "the certifications were awarded by MSECBC, Canada, following a comprehensive and independent audit of FAAN's systems and operations."

Mr. Henry Agbebire Director, Public Affairs and Consumer Protection of FAAN said "This achievement confirms that FAAN's operational processes meet global standards for quality management, environmental responsibility, and continual improvement. It underscores the Authority's commitment to delivering

efficient, safe, and customer-focused airport services, while promoting sustainable environmental practices across all FAAN-managed airports."

According to Agbebire, "the attainment of these certifications further strengthens FAAN's institutional credibility and positions Nigeria's airports to compete more effectively on the global aviation stage."

While commending staff and stakeholders for their support, the Authority said it remains "committed to upholding international best practices and continuously improving service delivery across the Nigerian aviation sector." □

## NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2025

November 30 - December 2, 2025	December 1, 2025	December 2 - 4, 2025
<p>The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) hosted its 57th Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Luanda, Angola. Held under the theme: "Sustainable Skies, Connected Africa". The AGA was attended by 516 delegates from 49 countries. It discussed air connectivity, OEM support to African airlines, sustainability and growth. The AGA created opportunities for networking and business meetings among African airlines, industry partners and service providers.</p>	<p>Nigeria marked a major milestone in its aviation history with the celebration of 100 years of aviation in Nigeria. The Centenary celebration took place at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Center, Abuja held on December 1, 2025, exploring the theme: "The Milestones, Memories and The Future of Nigerian Aviation". The celebration honoured 46 aviation veterans, past heads of government parastatals, and CEOs of airline amongst others were honoured and awarded for their remarkable contributions to Nigeria's aviation sector.</p>	<p>Nigeria marked another major milestone in its aviation history with the successful hosting of its first ever International Air show held from December 2 - 4, 2025, at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja. The event, which attracted over 3,000 attendees and over 60 exhibitors ranging from airlines, aviation equipment manufacturers and stakeholders amongst others revealed that the nation is committed to becoming a major player in the global aviation industry.</p>

### COMING EVENTS

#### 5 - 6 February, 2026

ACI Trinity Forum  
Doha, Qatar  
[www.aci.aero](http://www.aci.aero)

#### 25 - 27 February, 2026

2026 ICAO Air Law Treaty Workshop (Third Edition)  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

#### 10 - 12 March, 2026

IATA World Cargo Symposium  
Lima, Peru  
[www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)

#### 10 - 12 March, 2026

ICAO/AWG Joint Regional Workshop on CTC  
Lima, Peru  
[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

#### 29 - 31 March, 2026

African MRO Conference  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
[www.afraa.org](http://www.afraa.org)

#### 28 March - 3 April, 2026

75th ACI Africa Board & Committee Meetings Regional Conference & Exhibition  
Luanda, Angola  
[www.aciafrica.aero](http://www.aciafrica.aero)

#### 14 - 16 April, 2026

ICAO Global Implementation Support Symposium 2026  
Marrakech, Morocco  
[www.icaogiss2026.com](http://www.icaogiss2026.com)

#### 29 - 30 April, 2026

IATA Focus Africa 2026  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
[www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)

#### 12 - 14 May, 2026

IATA Aviation Energy Forum (AEF)  
Paris, France  
[www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)

#### 19 - 21 May, 2026

38th IATA Ground Handling Conference (IGHC)  
Cairo, Egypt  
[www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)

#### 6-8 June, 2026

IATA 82nd AGA & World Air Transport Summit 2026  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
[www.iata.org](http://www.iata.org)

#### 8 - 12 June, 2026

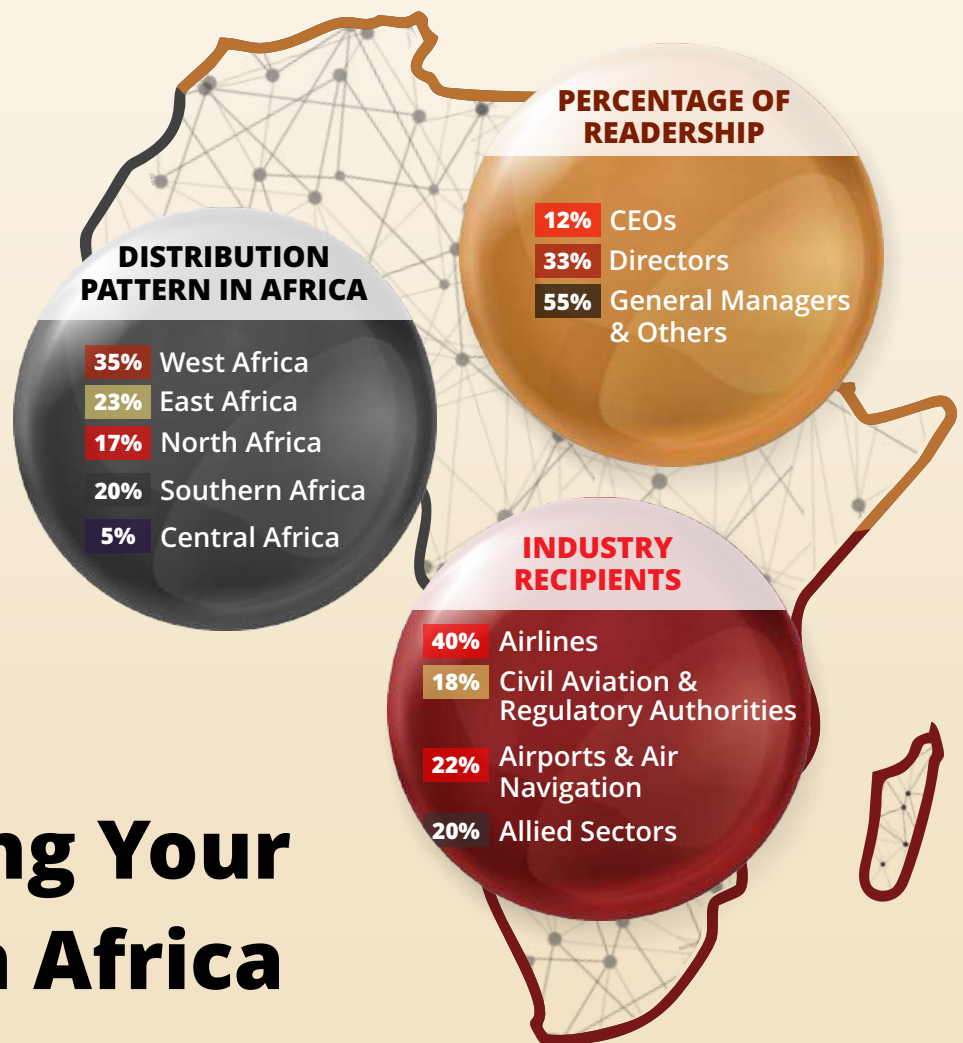
AFCAC Air Transport Convention and Expo  
Lome, Togo  
[www.afcac.org](http://www.afcac.org)

#### Air Cargo Market in Detail - Full Year 2025

DECEMBER 2025 (% YEAR-ON-YEAR)	WORLD SHARE <sup>1</sup>	CTK	ACTK	CLF(%-PT) <sup>2</sup>	CLF(LEVEL) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total Market</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>
Africa	2.1%	6.0%	7.8%	-0.7%	42.9%
Asia Pacific	35.9%	8.4%	7.4%	0.5%	47.6%
Europe	21.4%	2.9%	3.1%	-0.1%	53.4%
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.9%	2.3%	4.5%	-0.8%	36.0%
Middle East	13.2%	0.3%	4.5%	-1.9%	45.1%
North America	24.5%	-1.3%	-1.1%	-0.1%	40.2%

1) % of industry CTks in 2024 2) Year-on-year change in load factor 3) Load Factor Level

Source: IATA



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