



## HELICOPTER OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Rolls-Royce

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African*

### FEATURE

- E-commerce And Sustainable Development Of The African Air Cargo Market
- Structural Problems Behind Nigerian Airlines Short Life Spans

### INTERVIEW

- Rolls-Royce: Supporting African Aviation Today And Building Capability For The Future

### NIGERIA

- Overland Airways Becomes The First Nigerian Airline To Achieve ISO 9001:2015 Certification



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#### DATES

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The Aviation & Allied Business Journal is a bi-monthly publication of the Aviation and Allied Business Publications.

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Once again, the global aviation industry has been caught up in a quagmire not of its own making. The Iran War and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East are bringing travel disruptions, pushing up fuel prices and challenging growth projections for the aviation industry.

Fuel prices, in particular, have more than doubled in many markets across the continent leading to questions about airline survivability, if the conflict continues. Fuel constitutes over 30 per cent of airlines costs, and even more for African airlines; therefore, the rising fuel cost is driving fares higher and inevitably leading to lower passenger numbers.

Even with the ceasefire in place, airlines would prudently wait until a permanent ceasefire before restoring flights on suspended routes. Furthermore, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) projects that the impact of the conflict on jet fuel prices and supply will continue to be felt even in months to come.

This is therefore a period when the African airline industry needs all the support it can get to ensure African airlines do not go under. Even with the famed resilience of the aviation industry, additional charges and cost burdens must not be placed on airlines and passengers at this critical time.

This is rather a time for more support for the African aviation industry. In this regard, finance sits at the core of any aviation development in Africa. Therefore, we applaud the efforts of the Nigerian government to improve the financing ecosystem for the Nigerian Aviation Industry. In addition to its adoption of the Cape Town Convention and its IDERA provisions, the Nigerian government has continued to facilitate interactions between Nigerian airlines and the global financing community. The recently concluded Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition & Investment Summit is one of such avenues and is a very commendable approach. We invite other African countries to follow suit.


The first MRO Summit in Addis Ababa organized by the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) and major airlines in Africa marks a fundamental shift in thinking and collaboration amongst African carriers. We welcome the consensus on retaining MRO value in Africa and the urgent need to reduce dependence on off-continent maintenance.


The report by the Secretary General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) Ms Adefunke Adeyemi that the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) has continued to make meaningful contributions to improve Africa's air connectivity is encouraging. Once again, we call on African governments to support SAATM implementation. SAATM is good for the continent.

In this edition of Aviation & Allied Business Journal, we explore Helicopter Operations In Africa, tracking the trends, challenges and prospects. We also feature an interview with the Senior Vice President, Middle East & Africa at Rolls Royce aircraft engines, Mr. Omar Ali Adib; and an article on why many airlines have failed in Nigeria.

We congratulate Nigeria and the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria as host of the 76th ACI-Africa Regional Conference in Nigeria in September 2026. We hope that the outcome will build on the momentum generated in Luanda for enhanced digitalization of African airports.

Finally, I wish to remind you of the African Air Transport Convention & Expo 2026 being organized by AFCAC in Lome, Togo from June 15- 19, 2026. I hope to see you there.

Thank you. 



CAPT. (DR.) ED BOYO

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# Expansion

## Air Cairo Expands into the Nordic Market with Seven New Nonstop Routes



Source: Air Cairo

Air Cairo is launching seven new routes into the Nordic market

**A**ir Cairo says it is launching "a major expansion into the Nordic market with the introduction of seven new nonstop routes connecting Norway, Sweden and Denmark with Egypt."

According to the airline, beginning winter season 2026, it will "operate direct services from Oslo and Stockholm to Cairo and Hurghada, as well as from Aalborg to Hurghada, creating new travel opportunities between Scandinavia and one of the world's most historically rich and diverse destinations with Copenhagen and Helsinki to follow in a second phase."

Air Cairo confirms that: "Passengers travelling from Oslo, Stockholm and Aalborg will also benefit from seamless onward connections via Cairo and Hurghada to a wide network of domestic destinations across Egypt, in addition to convenient access to key cities in Africa, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the broader Middle East."

"With coordinated schedules and smooth transfer options, Air Cairo "aims to provide travellers from the Nordic region with greater accessibility, flexibility and convenience when travelling to Egypt and beyond." Commercial Vice President, Air Cairo,

Mr. Ahmed Aziz said: "The introduction of these nonstop Nordic routes reflects our long-term commitment to expanding our presence in this important market while offering travellers affordable, reliable and convenient access to Egypt and our wider regional network."

Air Cairo stated that it "continues to support its rapid international growth with a modern fleet of Airbus A320neo aircraft, delivering enhanced comfort, efficiency and reliability." Supported by the Egyptian government, the airline "remains focused on providing competitive fares while maintaining high operational and service standards."

Additionally, "the launch of these routes is expected to further stimulate tourism to Egypt's world-famous cultural sites and Red Sea resorts, while also strengthening business, trade and cultural links between Scandinavia and the wider Middle East and African regions." ▣

# Aviation Training

## TAAG Angola And H2AIR Sign Agreement For TAAG's Internship Programme

**T**AAG-Linhas Aereas de Angola and H2air Serviços Aéreos Lda have signed "a cooperation agreement under the Takeoff with TAAG Internship Programme, reinforcing their shared commitment to advancing technical capacity and nurturing talent within Angola's civil aviation sector."

TAAG Angola says, "the agreement was signed by Nelson de Oliveira, Chief Executive Officer of TAAG, and Carlos Alberto Godinho Gomes, General Director of H2AIR, marking another strategic step in strengthening collaboration between the aviation

industry and specialised training institutions, with a focus on operational excellence."

According to TAAG, "through this partnership, H2AIR will have access to internship placements in the programme's second edition, targeting trainees in Aircraft Maintenance, Aeronautical Engineering, and Flight Operations, critical areas for ensuring safe and efficient air transport operations. The programme is expected to host 80 interns, including 65 from national institutions and 15 from international institutions, further

underscoring the commitment to developing highly skilled professionals and promoting youth employability."

According to the Chief People and Legal Officer, TAAG Angola Airlines, Neide Teixeira, "Take off with TAAG programme is designed by TAAG Angola Airlines to respond to the National Development Plan and the Government Long Term Strategic Plan 2050 requirements for improvement of education for new generation adaptability in contributing to the ongoing diversification of the national economy." ▣



# Longevity

## Ethiopian Airlines Celebrates 80TH Anniversary And 65 Years Of Partnership With Nigeria



Ethiopian Airlines has been serving Africa and the rest of the world for 80 years

Source: Ethiopian Airlines

Ethiopian Airlines has celebrated its 80th anniversary highlighting its history from a single flight destination to a network of 144 destinations and the partnership with Nigeria which has spanned over 65 years.

Celebrating the historic milestone, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mr. Mesfin Tasew announced the beginning of the airline's 80th year service anniversary celebrations at a press conference held at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel. The press conference is the first official event of the series of events that the airline will hold to commemorate the historic milestone.

Ethiopian Airlines began "operation with five Douglas C-47 aircraft back in April 1946 with a scheduled service to Cairo via Asmara. From operating the Douglas C-47, Convair 240, and DC-6B in its early days, Ethiopian has established itself as a technology leader, pioneering in the continent with ultra-modern aircraft operation."

Mr. Tasew said: "We are honored to reach the 80 years mark serving our continent and the rest of the world. Keeping our Pan-African identity, we have bridged gaps, linked nations, and connected economies for eight decades. Our achievements are built by hard work, commitment, and partnerships. This is not a milestone just for the management and staff, it is also a remarkable moment for our stakeholders, partners, and our esteemed customers."

The airline remarked that "over its eight decades of operation, Ethiopian has established itself as a technology leader, introducing cutting-edge aircraft to the African continent. Ethiopian is currently the leading airline in Africa in number of aircraft, destinations served, revenue, In Nigeria, Mrs. Firihewot Mekonnen, General Manager, Ethiopian Airlines Nigeria said: "Today, Ethiopian Airlines is more than just an airline it is a proud symbol of resilience, ambition, and success. As we like to say, we are 80 years young because our passion, our drive, and our commitment to excellence remain as strong and vibrant as they were on the day of our very first

flight. While we celebrate how far we have come, we are even more inspired by how far we will go."

Mrs. Mekonnen stated that "Lagos, Nigeria has been an important part of our story since 1960, and we are especially delighted and truly grateful to celebrate our 80th anniversary here in this vibrant and beautiful city, surrounded by all of you. Ethiopian Airlines has been proudly flying to Nigeria since 1960 marking 65 years of continuous service having begun operations just a month after Nigeria's independence."

"Since then, through every season through growth and challenge, through change and progress we have never stopped flying. That enduring connection is a testament to the strength of our partnership and the deep bond we share with the people of Nigeria. Nigeria is not just a destination in our network it is a valued partner in our journey, a place rich in culture, energy, and opportunity, and a community that has embraced us for decades." Mrs. Mekonnen added. ■

# Interline Agreement

## Kenya Airways And CemAir Sign Interline Agreement



Passengers of both KQ and CemAir will benefit from seamless connections on both airlines

**K**enya's national carrier, Kenya Airways (KQ) has announced the signing of a strategic interline agreement with South African regional airline, CemAir. Kenya Airways says, "this partnership will significantly expand the airline's network by enabling seamless connections via Johannesburg (JNB) and Cape Town (CPT), further strengthening connectivity across key markets in Africa."

According to Kenya Airways, "under this agreement, KQ customers will now have access to Cemair's network on key routes from Johannesburg to ten domestic destinations including;

Bloemfontein, Hoedspruit and Kimberley within South Africa, as well as 4 regional points such as Maun, Victoria Falls, and Harare." Similarly, "CemAir customers will benefit from seamless connections onto Kenya Airways flights to 15 destinations across Africa, including major hubs such as Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, Entebbe, Accra, and Abidjan. This will allow them to enjoy single-ticket itineraries and coordinated connections, creating a smoother travel experience across multiple African markets."

Ag. Group Managing Director & CEO, Kenya Airways, Captain George Kamal said it is partnering with CemAir "to

further expand our network and offer our customers more seamless travel options across the continent. This collaboration reflects our continued commitment to connecting Africa's people, cultures, and markets, while creating opportunities that support the growth and prosperity of the regions we serve."

Chief Executive Officer, CemAir, Miles van der Molen said: "We are delighted to be upgrading our longstanding relationship with Kenya Airways to a strategic partnership. Our combined networks and strengths create a solid foundation for future growth and connectivity across the continent and beyond, and we look forward to deepening this collaboration for the benefit of our customers."

Kenya Airways noted that it currently "operates three daily flights to Johannesburg and 9 weekly flights to Cape Town from Nairobi, providing strong feed into the expanded network opportunity enabled by this partnership. This collaboration aligns with Kenya Airways' ongoing strategy to grow its network through partnerships that deliver greater connectivity and value for passengers across the continent and beyond." ▣

## New Service

### TAAG Angola Operates Scheduled Flights To Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

**T**AAG Angola Airlines has operated "its first commercial passenger flight to Abidjan, in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, reinforcing its commitment to expanding its network of destinations and promoting regional connectivity."

TAAG says, "the new route to Abidjan will operate as a regular service with three weekly frequencies."

TAAG noted that "the services will

primarily be operated by the Airbus A220-300 aircraft, which has a capacity of 137 passengers and offers high standards of efficiency, comfort and performance, well-suited to regional operations in Africa."

The airline said the new service is part of its "expansion strategy, focusing on strengthening its presence in key African markets and on consolidating Angola, and António Agostinho Neto International Airport (AIAAN) in

particular, as a leading hub for regional connections and links from Africa to other continents."

"The route between Angola and Côte d'Ivoire has been structured around a multi-point connectivity model, enabling TAAG to capture passenger traffic in Abidjan and facilitate connections to the company's various destinations in Africa, South America and Europe via AIAAN." TAAG added. ▣



# Recognition

## South African Airports Shine At 2026 Skytrax World Airport Awards

South African airports, Cape Town International Airport, O.R. Tambo International Airport, King Shaka International Airport, Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport, King Phalo Airport and Bram Fischer International Airport have been recognised at the 2026 Skytrax World Airport Award for their exceptional performances.

According to Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), "With multiple airports across its network receiving top honours and rankings, these accolades reaffirm ACSA's commitment to delivering world-class airport infrastructure, operational excellence, and an outstanding passenger experience."

According to ACSA, the airports were awarded in the following categories: Cape Town International Airport - Best Airport in Africa for 11 consecutive years, Best Airport Staff and Cleanest Airport.

O.R. Tambo International Airport - 2nd Best Airport in Africa, with Intercontinental O.R. Tambo airport hotel ranked among the Top 5 Airport Hotels in Africa.



Cape Town International Airport has been awarded the best airport in Africa for 11 consecutive years

King Shaka International Airport - 4th Best Airport in Africa, 2nd Best Regional Airport, and Top 10 globally (5-10 million passengers).

Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport - 4th Best Regional Airport.  
King Phalo Airport - 6th Best Regional Airport.  
Bram Fischer International Airport - 5th Best Regional Airport.

Acting Group Executive, Operations Management, ACSA, Ms. Fani Mphaphuli said: "These prestigious recognitions

from the Skytrax World Airport Awards are a powerful affirmation of the dedication, resilience, and professionalism of our employees, partners, and stakeholders across the country. We are immensely proud of our people, who consistently go above and beyond to deliver safe, efficient, and seamless travel experiences to millions of passengers. These awards not only celebrate excellence but also inspire us to continue raising the bar as we position South Africa as a leading aviation hub on the African continent." □

# Name Change

## Ghana Kotoka International Airport Renamed Accra International Airport

Ghana's Ministry of Transport has confirmed that "the Government of Ghana has officially reverted the name of Kotoka International Airport to its original name, Accra International Airport."

According to the Ministry, "the facility was originally known as Accra International Airport before its redesignation. The government has considered it appropriate to restore the airport to its former and internationally recognised name."

The statement noted that "this change will not affect airport operations, safety standards, or international travel arrangements." Notably, the Ministry confirms that "within the records of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the airport code has remained "ACC"."

Ghana's Minister for Transport, Honourable Joseph Bukari Nikpe said the decision was informed by historical records and consultations.

He noted that "the facility was originally a British Royal Air Force base during the

Second World War and was handed over to civilian administration in 1956.

Ghana's first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, subsequently developed it into a passenger terminal and named it Accra International Airport."

Hon. Nikpe also emphasized that significant rehabilitation and upgrade works were ongoing at the airport and indicated that "the process of the reverting the name would be implemented systematically alongside these infrastructure improvements to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness." □

# Cooperation

## Egypt And Libyan CAAs Sign MoU To Enhance Integration In Airspace Management

**E**gypt Civil Aviation Authority has signed an MoU with Libyan Civil Aviation Authority that "represents a strategic step towards a more efficient air connectivity and the promotion of regional integration." Egypt CAA says Egypt's Minister of Civil Aviation, "Dr. Sameh Al-Hefni, received, at the Ministry's General Office, Dr. Mohamed Abdel Salam Shleibek, Head of the Civil Aviation Authority in the State of Libya, and his accompanying delegation, to discuss ways to develop joint cooperation in the civil aviation sector."

Egypt CAA reports that during the meeting, Dr. Al-Hefni "affirmed the Ministry's keenness to provide all aspects of technical support and institutional coordination to the Libyan brothers, in order to enhance the depth of brotherly relations between the two countries, and support integration in the fields of air safety, security and airspace management."

According to Egypt CAA the memorandum "was signed on behalf of the Egyptian side by Sameh Fawzy, head of the Civil Aviation Authority, while Dr. Mohamed Abdel Salam Shalebek, head of the Civil Aviation Authority in the State of Libya, signed on the Libyan side." Egypt CAA said: "The MoU aims to enhance coordination and integration in the management and operation of the Egyptian and Libyan airspaces, in order to achieve the highest levels of safety and operational efficiency in accordance with international standards. It also includes organizing training programs, building the capacities of technical and administrative cadres, and providing technical support in all areas of the Civil Aviation Authority."

"The MoU also includes providing the necessary technical expertise to restructure and develop Libyan airspace, apply the latest air navigation technologies, as well as coordinate the management of air traffic flows to ensure

the optimal use of the airspace of the two countries." Egypt CAA added.

Dr. Sameh Al-Hefni said: "The MoU represents an important step towards enhancing regional integration in airspace management, and applying the highest standards of air safety, which reflects the joint vision of the two countries to develop the civil aviation system according to an institutional approach based on efficiency and sustainability."

Al-Hefni added that "under this MoU, air connectivity will be supported, and flight time and operating costs will be reduced, in order to achieve a positive economic return and enhance the competitiveness of the two airfields at the regional and international levels, stressing that the Ministry will continue to expand the scope of strategic partnerships with brotherly countries to serve the interests of the air transport industry in the region." ▣

# Bilateral Agreement

## Nigeria And Cameroon Sign Bilateral Aviation Safety And Rescue Agreement

**N**igeria's Honourable Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, SAN, CON, led a high-level Nigerian delegation to Yaoundé, Cameroon and joined his Cameroonian counterpart, the Minister of Transport, Jean Ernest NgalNgalé Bibehe, to officially sign the Bilateral Agreement on Technical Aeronautical Search and Rescue Operations.

According to Keyamo, "this pivotal pact between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon enhances airspace safety by enabling faster, more coordinated responses to aviation emergencies across our shared borders." The Minister, Festus Keyamo SAN was accompanied by the Director General,

Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA,) Capt. Chris Najomo; the Managing Director, Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Engr. Umar Ahmed Farouk; and key directors from the Ministry, to ensure a unified approach to implementation. Keyamo stated that "the strategic partnership fully aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritises: Institutional strengthening, Regional cooperation, Economic revitalisation, and Protection of lives and property in the aviation sector." The Minister reiterated that "by



L-R: Barr. Festus Keyamo and Mr. Jean Ernest NgalNgalé Bibehe with the signed agreement

formalising these protocols, Nigeria reaffirms its leadership in fostering a safer, more integrated, and resilient aviation ecosystem throughout West and Central Africa." ▣



# Fleet Expansion

## United Airlines To Add Over 250 Planes In Next Two Years

United Airlines says it “expects to take delivery of more than 250 new aircraft by April 2028 – the most by any airline in a two-year period – to further modernize its fleet, add new aircraft variants, create a new experience for transcontinental travelers and introduce new onboard products for every customer, reinforcing United’s position as a leading premium airline.”

United says it is adding widebody experiences to its new, narrowbody aircraft: the new “Coastliner” Airbus A321 subfleet and A321XLR are United’s first narrowbodies with the Elevated interior and feature a new, all-aisle access lie-flat seat in United Polaris with a patented design that offers more elbow and shoulder room and lower suite walls that protect privacy while maintaining an open feel in the cabin. United has 100 of these new airplanes coming into its fleet, and they’ll replace 40 older, less efficient Boeing 757s.

United added that “The Coastliner will have a specially designed livery and fly exclusively between United’s west coast hubs in San Francisco and Los Angeles and Newark/New York and will introduce the United Polaris cabin experience to domestic travelers.” For the CRJ450, “a reimagined and redesigned version of the CRJ200”, United says that this will be one of its “most premium regional jets, boasting a spacious United First cabin with a large luggage closet instead of overhead bins, creating an open, luxurious environment unlike any other commercial regional aircraft.”

Also, United says the “new 787-9 with the Elevated interior will fly internationally starting on April 22” noting that these planes will include its “new United Polaris Studio: lie-flat, all-aisle-access seats that are 25% larger than standard United Polaris seats and include privacy doors\*, amongst other amenities.”



United Airlines A321 Coastliner




United Airlines Coastliner Elevated

United Airlines noted that this “announcement expands on the successful and ambitious ‘United Next’ growth strategy announced in 2021.” Since that time, United has “added 22 Boeing 787 Dreamliners, 237 Boeing 737 MAX and 67 Airbus A321neos, completed 70% of its plan to retrofit its mainline, narrow-body fleet, replaced more than 100 regional jets with larger mainline aircraft; increased premium seats per North American departure by 40% and hired more than 60,000 people.”

United CEO, Scott Kirby said: “For more than a decade, we’ve invested billions of dollars in our product, service, and technology as part of our plan to be the best brand loyal airline in the world, and the result is that more and more customers are choosing to fly us every day.”

United Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Andrew Nocella said: “These new planes and products not only complement our fleet and network plans, but they also give our customers more premium amenity and seat choices”

According to United Airlines, the new airplanes joining its fleet “between now and April of 2028 include: 47 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners with the Elevated interior (33 will be configured with additional premium seats), 40 Airbus A321neo Coastliners out of 50 total on order, 28 Airbus A321XLR out of 50 total on order, 119 Boeing 737 MAX and 18 Airbus A321neos.”

United Airlines currently operates trans-atlantic flights to Accra, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Lagos. 

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# Helicopter Operations In Africa: Trends, Challenges And Prospects



Mr. Aurelien Blanc, Rotortrade's Executive Director and APAC, Middle East, and Africa Head of Region's

**H**elicopters have come to stay as indispensable tools in aviation's contribution to emergency response, emergency medical services, law enforcement, and business travel, amongst other uses. It has found more uses in Africa's perennially burgeoning extractive industry, oil and gas operations and other hard to reach environments. We review in this article the 2024/2025 Africa Helicopter Market Analysis by leading helicopter trading company Rotortrade.

Rotortrade in their market analysis notes that though Africa's helicopter market is amongst the "smallest in terms of operational fleet size" it sees "growth potential in some nations like Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya"



Helicopter activity in Africa is concentrated in a series of core markets noting that "South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya form the hub of regional activity"

## Trends

Rotortrade identifies local content trends in the oil and gas sector which influences operations of International Oil companies. In Nigeria for instance government regulation is driving the participation of local companies in the oil and gas sector. The Report notes other trends: "Localization trends in the oil and gas industry, the gradual shift away from Russian-manufactured helicopters for humanitarian flights, and the increased receptivity to second-hand Western aircraft all point in the direction of a change in procurement patterns as well as operational strategy." The Report notes that though the problems are considerable-from infrastructure limitations in terms of maintenance to budget constraints, the possibilities for well-organized, long-term solutions are also considerable.

## Regional Drivers

Helicopter activity in Africa is concentrated in a series of core markets noting that "South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya form the hub of regional activity." Nevertheless, each market has their own peculiar challenges. "South Africa boasts the most advanced infrastructure and a mix of civil and parapublic utilization that is reasonably well balanced. Nigeria is seeing a fundamental change in the oil and gas industry with a drive for localization that is creating fresh demand for rotary assets. Kenya, on the other hand, is an East African logistics center but is subject to an uncertain fiscal and regulatory environment", says the report.

Aurelien Blanc, Rotortrade's Executive Director and APAC, Middle East, and Africa Head of Region's advice on the African market is: "You have to be here; you have to invest the time. You can't do it from the outside and impose your way of doing business. There's an African way. "

In Nigeria, the trend is internalization of support for offshore production. As international oil companies' hand over operational control to local companies, the ensuing capacity gap will need helicopters to bridge, adds the report.



Source: Airbus  
Ghana Ministry of Defence Airbus H175

### Fleet Composition

In terms of fleet, the report notes that Africa's current operational helicopter fleet reflects both the established legacy platforms it is based on and the limitations of the continent's infrastructure. It says "The African fleet favors older aircraft, especially in turbine platforms that are utilized in utility, law enforcement, and offshore support. The Bell 412 and other established types are still in favor because they're easy to fly and there's extensive maintenance experience, even though they're no longer state-of-the-art."

Another helicopter of note in Africa is the Robinson. According to Blanc "The Robinson rules the piston class, with main use in pilot training schools and initial private ownership. Although of lesser capital cost, these aircraft are restricted in their African operational use by payload, range, and maintenance considerations."



Source - Bell  
Bell Textron Bell 407GX to join South Africa's Transmission Company

In January 2026, Airbus Helicopters announced it "has been awarded a contract by the Ministry of Defence of Ghana for two H175Ms, one ACH175 and one ACH160. The H175Ms will be used as multi-mission helicopters for transport, search and rescue, emergency medical services and disaster relief. The ACH175 and ACH160 will be operated for transport" In March 2026, Airbus also announced that "Bristow Group Inc. has officially received the first two of five Airbus H160 medium-twin helicopters leased from Milestone Aviation Group" for their Nigerian operations. Airbus said: "With three more H160s scheduled for delivery to complete the five-aircraft agreement, Bristow is positioned to operate one of the most modern and capable fleets in Africa, supporting mission-critical services for the energy industry."

### Government & Humanitarian Demand

The report posits: "A significant trend in the past few years has been the move away from Russian-built platforms by large humanitarian agencies. The conflict in Ukraine has witnessed agencies like the UN and World Food Program acquire or contract more Western aircraft. However, the transition has been slowed by cuts in U.S. funding, which have decelerated fleet replacement initiatives and kept the reliance higher on older Western platforms like the Bell 412."

Identifying government VIP and military missions as "increasingly big purchasers of used aircraft", the report added that "Several countries, for instance, recently acquired several Airbus and Leonardo for transport and security purposes. These kinds of purchases frequently are funded through government-supported credit facilities or letter-of-credit payment terms." Blanc argued that "Government and VIP transport is likely more resilient than the civilian market in most African nations."

### Challenges In the African Helicopter Sector Maintenance

Over time, helicopter operations in Africa have been hampered by maintenance issues. Some of these include infrastructure difficulties, financial limitations related to availability of capital to finance maintenance. The Report notes: "One of the most important structural bottlenecks in Africa is the absence of dependable maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) infrastructure. Aircraft are often grounded for weeks at a time because of a lack of spare parts or qualified technicians." Blanc adds that "Getting the helicopter in is one thing - keeping it in the air is a far greater challenge."



## Regulation

Blanc says regulatory hurdles also influence the shaping of the market. Foreign operators in the majority of nations must go into partnership agreements with national carriers or majority-shareholding agreements, which make operations more complex. The uncertain import taxes on helicopters in Kenya, such as re-imposition of luxury taxes, has had a direct impact on fleet modernization cycles and acquisition.

## Finance

Regarding finance, the Rotortrade Report says "Western lessors and banks perceive Africa as high-risk. South African banks finance some local transactions, but outside of South Africa, there is not much financing available. Some operators are looking to project finance structures, particularly in Nigeria, where escrow arrangements linked to oil company revenues are gaining popularity."

## Strategic Development & Local Presence

In Blanc's opinion, ground presence is not a choice - it's a strategic imperative. Absent proximity to the client base, familiarity with local procurement traditions, and in-country technical support, there will be no productive business conducted in Africa.

For Rotortrade, plans exist to establish new offices in Johannesburg, Casablanca, and Nairobi. These offices would ultimately offer MRO services, a customer interface, and inventory pooling to minimize logistics issues and enhance response time.

"Leonardo for example has operated successfully in Africa because they have had the same individuals on the ground within the continent for decades. They are Italian, yet they are African in how they conduct business," added Blanc.

Over the long term, formal turnkey solutions - i.e., sales of aircraft and maintenance and limited operational support - are viewed as the way to build relationships and achieve long-term fleet modernization.

## Sustainability Outlook

Blanc believes sustainability is not yet the market driver in Africa. Governments and operators, he says, are less concerned with environmental performance than with aircraft cost, serviceability, and mission fit. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is essentially unavailable, and there is little interest in eVTOL or other low-emission platforms because of infrastructure and risk aversion. He says: "There's little to no discussion about sustainability. They're interested in if the helicopter is able to fly and remain in flight."



**For Rotortrade, plans exist to establish new offices in Johannesburg, Casablanca, and Nairobi. These offices would ultimately offer MRO services, a customer interface, and inventory pooling to minimize logistics issues and enhance response time.**

Nevertheless, he argues that "upcoming ESG standards by multinational purchasers or development banks actually influence procurement choices, especially of aircraft utilized in donor-funded flights or foreign contracts which helps the fleet modernization drive.

## Prospects

The report projects that despite its issues, Africa's helicopter market is set for consistent, regional growth. A number of structural indicators are looking up:

- Government acceptance of pre-owned aircraft for VIP and security missions is increasing.
  - Localization of Nigerian and other oil and gas activities is generating repeat helicopter orders.
  - Fleet aging is compelling numerous operators to plan for replacements, frequently with second-hand imports
- New business is anticipated from several nations in North and East Africa mainly for medical and emergency use. In South Africa, the market remains mature and competitive but promising. In West Africa and notably Nigeria, demand is expanding but is reliant on effective financing options and stable after-sales service mainly in the Oil & Gas segment.

## Conclusion

The report concludes that "Africa's helicopter market is characterized more by nuance than by size. Growth is not linear, but a function of regulatory streamlining, financing ingenuity, and an operator's appetite for the unknown. For operators willing to invest in local infrastructure, slice through bureaucracy, and manage scattered demand, Africa presents a true long-tail opportunity. "

Further, it says "In an economy where presence and patience beat product or price alone, success will not be a one-time sale, but in building long-term relationships founded on trust." □

# Departure

## South African Airways GCEO, Prof. John Lamola Resigns

**S**outhern Africa's national carrier, South African Airways (SAA) has announced that "following a Board meeting, the Minister of Transport, Ms. Barbara Creecy, in her capacity as shareholder representative, together with the Board of South African Airways (SAA), has accepted the resignation of Group Chief Executive Officer, Professor John Lamola, with effect from the end of April 2026."

SAA says, "the Minister and the Board extend their sincere appreciation to Professor Lamola for his dedicated and distinguished service to the national flag carrier. He has led SAA during a defining period in its history, having first joined the organisation in July 2021 as a Non-Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board, before assuming the role of GCEO in May 2022."

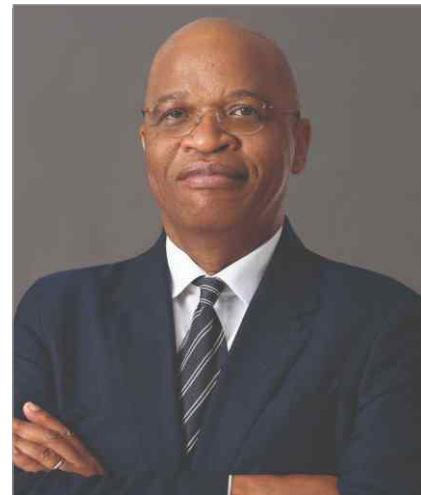
According to South African Airways, "Professor Lamola took on the leadership of SAA at a critical juncture, as the airline emerged from business

rescue and navigated the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under his stewardship, SAA implemented a disciplined and focused rebuilding strategy, restoring operations and re-establishing its position within a highly competitive global aviation market."

"Supported by a committed and resilient workforce, the airline expanded its fleet from five to 19 aircraft and grew its route network from six to 17 destinations. This included the reintroduction of key international routes such as São Paulo, Brazil, and Perth, Australia, alongside the strengthening of its domestic footprint." SAA added.

SAA said: "The Board has appointed Mr. Matshela Seshibe, the Chief Executive Officer of SAA's subsidiary company, Air Chefs, as the Acting GCEO. The process to recruit the permanent GCEO will commence shortly."

South African Airways concluded that "the Board and executive management



Prof. John Lamola, Outgoing CEO, SAA

remain firmly committed to ensuring leadership continuity and maintaining operational stability. Like many global airlines, SAA continues to contend with external pressures, including rising aviation fuel costs linked to geopolitical developments in the Middle East, which are impacting the broader industry." ▣

# Codeshare Agreement

## KQ And JetBlue Sign Agreement To Enhance Africa-North America Connectivity

**K**enya Airways and JetBlue have signed "a unilateral codeshare agreement that will enhance connectivity between East Africa and North America, offering customers greater choice and seamless travel options across an expanded network." Kenya Airways says under the agreement, it will "place its flight code on JetBlue-operated services from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and other U.S. cities. These include Los Angeles, Orlando, Chicago, Phoenix, San Francisco, Raleigh-Durham, West Palm Beach, San Juan, Fort Lauderdale, and Atlanta."

According to Kenya Airways, "the partnership enables customers to travel on a single ticket with seamless

connections through the respective hubs in Nairobi and New York (JFK). This expanded scope provides smoother transfers, greater convenience and improved access to key destinations across the United States and East Africa."

"The agreement, launched earlier this month, opens new travel opportunities for diaspora communities, expatriates, the diplomatic corps, leisure travellers and business passengers. It will also provide enhanced options for travel agents, tour operators and online travel agencies seeking broader connectivity solutions for their customers." Kenya Airways added.

Ag. Group Managing Director and Chief

Executive Officer, Kenya Airways, Captain George Kamal, said: "This codeshare agreement with JetBlue represents a significant step forward in advancing our global growth strategy through meaningful and strategic partnerships. By expanding our network through New York, we are providing our customers with more choice and seamless access to key destinations across the United States."

Vice President of Network Planning and Airline Partnerships, JetBlue, Dave Jehn said: "This unilateral codeshare agreement with Kenya Airways strengthens JetBlue's global connectivity and reinforces our strategy of building thoughtful partnerships. We're proud to collaborate with Kenya Airways to better connect customers to East Africa and beyond." ▣

# SAATM

## Africa Records 124 New Routes over The Past Three Years



Ms. Adefunke Adeyemi, Secretary General, AFCAC

The Secretary General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), Ms. Adefunke Adeyemi says “Africa has recorded 124 new routes over the past three years.” She stated this in a presentation at the Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition & Investment Summit held in Lagos.

Ms. Adeyemi, while emphasizing the achievements of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), stated that

amongst these 124 new routes in Africa, “22 of them operating on the 5th Freedom basis” while stating that 5th Freedom allows Africans to be able to travel within African countries on the same ticket, emphasizing that its importance is that it helps the airlines to build up traffic overtime while enhancing easy movements.

Amongst other achievements of SAATM, Ms. Adeyemi highlighted that the new routes recorded in Africa has seen “113 million passengers over the past three years which has contributed 75 million (USD) to Africa’s GDP and contributed 8.1 million jobs.”

Despite these gains, she admitted that growth remains modest relative to Africa’s size and potential. “This is a lot in terms of progress, but in terms of the scale and scope of Africa, some may say it is just a drop in the ocean”, she said, calling for stronger partnerships to accelerate progress.

Questioning why air travel despite its importance, remains inaccessible to many Africans, including Nigeria with its large

populace, Adeyemi argued that aviation should be viewed as a strategic sector stating that “aviation is not a luxury, aviation is not for the elite.”

She acknowledged ongoing efforts within Nigeria and across the continent to transform the aviation landscape, citing regional cooperation among African countries. She revealed that several nations are working together to accelerate and not just the implementation of the Single market but also to domesticate within them. In her words, this simply means: “going from Lagos to Freetown very soon will be like going from Lagos to Abuja.”

Ms. Adeyemi said: “The cost of aviation in Africa is higher than anywhere in the world,” urging stakeholders to work together to make air travel more affordable and accessible.

In closing, Adeyemi called for sustained collaboration across the continent, expressing her high hopes about the future of African aviation. She likened its growth to gradual development, noting that with continued effort, the sector would unlock significant opportunities for the continent. ▣

# New Flights

## Seychelles CAA Approves Air Tanzania To Start Direct Flights

The Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) has officially “granted regulatory approval to Air Tanzania, marking another milestone in Seychelles’ air connectivity.”

Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority says, “the approval letter was formally handed over by the Chief Executive Officer of SCAA, Garry Albert, to the Honorary Consul of Seychelles to Tanzania, Maryvonne Pool, during a short ceremony held at the SCAA Head Office, D’Offay Building, Providence.” Seychelles CAA stated that “following

this approval, Air Tanzania is set to commence scheduled direct flights between Julius Nyerere International Airport and Seychelles International Airport, operating three times weekly. The service is expected to begin on 1 April 2026, further strengthening air links between Tanzania and Seychelles.”

“In accordance with its mandate, SCAA conducted a thorough evaluation of the airline’s application, ensuring full compliance with applicable international aviation standards relating to safety, security, and operational readiness. This approval reflects the Authority’s continued role in safeguarding the integrity of

Seychelles’ airspace while enabling the responsible expansion of air services.” SCAA added.

Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority CEO, Garry Albert said: “The introduction of Air Tanzania’s direct service is another addition to our network, particularly in strengthening connectivity within the African region. It also supports broader national efforts to diversify tourism markets and deepen regional integration.” SCAA noted that “the new route is expected to improve accessibility between the two destinations, creating additional opportunities for tourism growth, business travel, and trade.” ▣

# Appointment

## Willie Walsh Appointed as Chief Executive Officer IndiGO

The Board of InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo) has appointed “Mr. William Walsh as the Chief Executive Officer, subject to Regulatory approvals.” According to IndiGo, “Mr. Walsh’s tenure at IATA comes to a close on the 31st of July, 2026, and he is expected to join no later than on the 3rd of August, 2026.”

Welcoming Mr. Walsh, Mr. Vikram Singh Mehta, IndiGo’s Chairman said, “I am thrilled that Willie will be at helm of IndiGo. He is an exceptional global aviation leader with a stellar track record of outstanding leadership across several airlines. His experience in managing large scale airline operations and navigating complex market dynamics make him ideally suited to strengthen and lead IndiGo for continued growth in an ever evolving and competitive international aviation environment.”

Rahul Bhatia, Managing Director of IndiGo added, “As we enter a new phase of transformation and growth, I am delighted to welcome Willie to IndiGo.

He is an iconic and accomplished aviation leader and brings a rare combination of global perspective, operational expertise of having built strong customer-focused airlines, deep industry experience and a values driven leadership, making him exceptionally suited to lead IndiGo at this pivotal cusp of growth.”

Mr. Walsh is currently the Director General of IATA (International Air Transport Association) and was formerly CEO of British Airways and IAG (International Airlines Group, a holding company which owns Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia, Level and Vueling).”

Mr. Walsh is widely considered as one of the most successful, respected, influential and long-lasting leaders in modern aviation history. He is admired for his pragmatic and resolute management, effective complex restructuring, and successful mergers and acquisitions.



Mr. Willie Walsh, IATA DG and newly appointed IndiGO CEO

In his new role as CEO, IndiGo confirms that Mr. Walsh will “be responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the airline with a focus on transformational initiatives to strengthen the operational performance, advance the Company’s network and commercial strategy while enhancing customer experience.” Mr. Walsh said, “I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead IndiGo. ■

# Membership

## ITA Airways Joins Star Alliance

Star Alliance officially welcomed ITA Airways as its newest member, marking the completion of the Italian carrier’s integration into the world’s largest airline alliance.

ITA Airways marked its entry into the Alliance during a ceremony held at the Piazza di Spagna Lounge, Rome Fiumicino Airport Terminal 3. The ceremony was presided over by ITA Airways Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Joerg Eberhart, Star Alliance Chief Executive Officer Theo Panagiotoulis, and Lufthansa Group Chief Commercial Officer Dieter Vranckx, in the presence of media and institutional guests. Celebrating the milestone, Star Alliance

Chief Executive Officer Theo Panagiotoulis said: “On behalf of our members, I am delighted to welcome ITA Airways as the 26th member of Star Alliance. This is the result of a focused and collaborative integration effort.”

Joerg Eberhart, CEO and General Manager of ITA Airways, said: “By becoming part of the world’s largest and most established global airline network, we significantly expand our international reach while offering our passengers a more seamless, consistent and high quality travel experience.”

ITA Airways’ induction into the Alliance has been mentored by the Lufthansa

Group, and expert teams across the group airlines have facilitated an intense integration programme over the last several months.

Dieter Vranckx, Chief Commercial Officer of Lufthansa Group, said: “The Star Alliance membership is only possible thanks to the strong commitment and close collaboration of dedicated teams at ITA Airways, Lufthansa Group and Star Alliance.”

With the addition of ITA Airways, Star Alliance now comprises 26 member airlines, offering more than 17,500 daily flights across a global network spanning over 190 countries. ■

# Rolls-Royce: Supporting African Aviation Today And Building Capability For The Future

*Mr. Omar Ali Adib, Senior Vice President, Middle East And Africa at Rolls-Royce, a seasoned aerospace executive, in this exclusive interview with Aviation & Allied Business Journal discussed issues on the demand for aircraft engine in Africa, supply chain issues, Sustainable Aviation Fuel, skilled workforce shortage in the African aviation industry and Rolls-Royce's footprint in the African aviation market, amongst other topics.*

**Q** : Can you share insight on Rolls-Royce's footprint in the African aviation market? **A** : Rolls-Royce has been supporting aviation in Africa for decades, working alongside airlines on the continent since the earliest generations of jet aircraft entered service. Over that time, we have developed a deep understanding of the operating environment across Africa - from high-cycle regional routes to long-haul intercontinental operations - and the importance of reliability, durability and consistent support in often complex conditions.

Today, Rolls-Royce powers a broad cross-section of Africa's commercial fleet, from widebody aircraft such as the Airbus A330neo, A350 and Boeing 787, through to regional aircraft including Embraer platforms. We support more than 35 airline customers across Africa, with hundreds of aircraft powered by our engines in service, backed by our global services network and long-term agreements such as TotalCare®.

This long-standing presence, combined with our focus on performance, service and partnership, means we are not only supporting Africa's aviation growth today, but helping to build the resilience and capability of the sector for the future.

**Q**: From an engine manufacturer's perspective, what is your projection for the African market in terms of aircraft engine demand?

**A**: Africa has a relatively small fleet and a fragmented route network with low passenger volumes; however, we believe the region will be one of the fastest-growing aviation markets globally, a view shared by our airframe partners. Over the next 20 years, we believe the market will require between 1,200 and 1,460 new aircraft. With route expansions and strong replacement cycles supporting an ever more connected Africa, we expect the majority of growth to be dominated by the narrow-body class of aircraft, with roughly one-fifth of demand dedicated to widebody, including freighters, that are imperative for long-haul routes.



Mr. Omar Ali Adib, Senior Vice President, Rolls-Royce, Middle East & Africa



Africa has a relatively small fleet and a fragmented route network with low passenger volumes; however, we believe the region will be one of the fastest-growing aviation markets globally, a view shared by our airframe partners.



Many of the technologies being proven through UltraFan - including advanced materials and a new geared architecture - can also be transferred into future production engines.



**Q: IATA recently reported that airframe production is outpacing engine production, which has resulted in newly completed airframes being parked until engines are available. Why is this so? And how is Rolls-Royce working to alleviate the shortage of engines and overcome supply chain issues?**

**A:** Supply chain disruption is an industry-wide challenge. Aircraft production has many dependencies, including engine supply.

We've already introduced measures that allow us to respond more quickly to these issues, such as integrating our Procurement and Supplier Management teams, sharing our own raw material stocks to tackle shortages, and hiring people to work in supplier organisations; one of our most impacted suppliers currently has almost 50 Rolls-Royce supply chain staff dedicated to driving their recovery. This has resulted in increased supplier output and improved availability of parts across our Trent engine programmes.

**Q: Without new engines, are we not setting backwards ambitions for sustainable aviation?**

**A:** No. Fuel efficiency is the most effective and quickest way of being more sustainable because it is an immediate reduction in emissions. To this end, we are continuously improving the durability and efficiency of our engines in service, and this is one of the many reasons why our customers choose us. For example, we recently introduced Enhanced Performance (EP) upgrades on the Trent XWB-84, delivering further gains in fuel efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, along with improved durability. These upgrades across the Trent family of engines are available not only on new engines but can be introduced into the existing fleet, ensuring customers benefit immediately.

Our current Trent engines are around 15% more efficient than the first generation, and we expect to deliver around 80% improvements in durability across the fleet in the coming years. This matters because extended "time on wing" means engines stay in service longer before requiring



maintenance, reducing the need for replacement parts, lowering resource consumption and improving overall lifecycle efficiency - an often overlooked but critical aspect of sustainable aviation.

At the same time, Rolls-Royce company continues to develop the UltraFan, our next-generation engine architecture designed to deliver around 25% greater fuel efficiency compared with the first Trent engines. Many of the technologies being proven through UltraFan - including advanced materials and a new geared architecture - can also be transferred into future production engines.

Plus, all Rolls-Royce engines are certified to operate on 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). This means airlines can immediately reduce lifecycle emissions without waiting for entirely new aircraft or engine programmes.





In short, sustainable aviation is not dependent on a single step change. It is being delivered through continuous improvement of engines in service, next-generation technologies such as UltraFan, and the adoption of sustainable fuels—all of which Rolls-Royce is advancing in parallel.

**Q: Many African airlines (Egyptair, Air Algérie, Air Côte d'Ivoire) have taken deliveries of aircraft powered by Rolls-Royce engines, this is in addition to the existing Embraer 145/135 operators. What support do you offer these operators, considering the weak MRO infrastructure on the continent?**

**A:** Rolls-Royce supports African operators through its global maintenance and services network, with many engines operating under TotalCare®, our long-term service agreement that provides predictable maintenance, access to spare parts and engines, and continuous engine health monitoring throughout the engine's life.

Through digital diagnostics and coordinated maintenance planning, we can identify potential issues early and help our African customers maximise aircraft availability. For smaller or growing operators, we offer SelectCare, a flexible suite of service options that allows airlines to choose the level of maintenance support that best suits their operational needs and scale.

This support is underpinned by Rolls-Royce's expanding global MRO network, including the development of a new Trent engine MRO facility with Turkish Technic in Istanbul to support the Trent engines powering aircraft such as the Airbus A350 and A330neo.

Together with our wider network of Rolls-Royce and approved partner facilities, this ensures airlines - wherever they operate - have access to reliable, world-class engine maintenance and support.

**Q: Global shortage of skilled aviation technicians is a major challenge for the industry. IATA specifically reported a shortage of skilled manpower in engine manufacturing. What measures are you taking to ensure adequate manpower for the work at Rolls Royce?**

**A:** The aviation industry is experiencing strong global growth, and, like many advanced engineering sectors, ours requires a steady pipeline of highly skilled technicians and engineers. Rolls-Royce addresses this through long-established apprenticeship programmes, graduate training schemes and partnerships with universities and technical institutes, helping to develop the next generation of aerospace specialists.

We also invest in training and upskilling our existing workforce, ensuring employees continue to develop the skills needed to support modern and future engine programmes and our global services network. Today, around 20,000 people work across Rolls-Royce's Civil Aerospace business worldwide, spanning engineering, manufacturing and services. This global team supports




**Rolls-Royce supports African operators through its global maintenance and services network, with many engines operating under TotalCare®, our long-term service agreement that provides predictable maintenance, access to spare parts and engines, and continuous engine health monitoring throughout the engine's life.**

airlines and partners across the full lifecycle of our engines—from design and production to long-term maintenance and operational support.

**Q: How are you leveraging technologies such as AI to improve the manufacturing and performance of your engines?**

**A:** Rolls-Royce has long used advanced data and digital technologies to improve the performance and reliability of its engines. Through our Engine Health Monitoring capability, engines in service continuously transmit operational data that is analysed using advanced analytics and AI-enabled tools, enabling our teams to identify trends, anticipate maintenance needs and help airlines maximise aircraft availability.

We are also transforming how inspections are carried out through technologies such as the Intelligent Borescope, which uses AI-enabled image analysis to automate and standardise inspections. Working closely with airlines such as EgyptAir, we have trained maintenance inspectors to become experts in advanced digital borescope equipment, reducing reliance on manual processes and enabling faster, more consistent assessments. By building a detailed, data-driven understanding of each individual engine—its condition, operating history and prior inspections—maintenance decisions can be based on actual need rather than fixed intervals. This reduces downtime while strengthening reliability. AI-enabled automation can cut inspection data processing time by up to 95%, significantly improving efficiency and time on wing.

The insights gained from these technologies feed directly back into our design and manufacturing processes, helping us refine components, improve durability and continuously enhance engine performance. In this way, digital technologies and AI are improving both how engines are built and how they perform in service—supporting safer, more efficient and more sustainable aviation. 

# Aircraft Development

## Deutsche Aircraft Advances D328eco Programme With Virtual Engineering

**G**erman aircraft manufacturer, Deutsche Aircraft has advanced "the development of its D328eco regional turboprop by deploying an integrated, model based digital engineering environment built on Dassault Systèmes' 3DEXPERIENCE platform."

Deutsche Aircraft said: "The D328eco, a next generation evolution of the Dornier 328, is being designed for short and medium range operations with upgraded performance, modern avionics and full compatibility with sustainable aviation fuels (SAF)." By incorporating virtual design, simulation and validation early in the programme, Deutsche Aircraft says it "can assess system behaviour, structural loads and cabin configurations before physical manufacturing begins. This approach supports risk reduction, accelerates decision cycles and helps maintain development timelines as the programme progresses toward industrial maturity."


CEO of Deutsche Aircraft, Nico Neumann said: "Establishing a robust



digital engineering platform is vital for the entire lifecycle of the D328eco to fulfill customer expectations. The 3DEXPERIENCE platform facilitates cross-functional collaboration and equips our teams with the solutions necessary to develop, manufacture, and maintain next-generation regional aircraft."

Deutsche Aircraft stated that to further reinforce stakeholder engagement, it is "pushing for more digital innovation using Dassault Systèmes' 3DLive application connected to Apple Vision Pro. The solution enables the user to experience a virtual D328eco model or

a virtual twin within a mixed-realistic environments. Use cases include reviewing cabin layouts, evaluating design options and rehearsing operational procedures, all using real time programme data derived from the actual aircraft's DMU."

The D328eco according to Deutsche Aircraft "has emerged as a strategic asset for African aviation, designed to address the specific demands of its rapidly expanding population and align with the ambitious growth trajectory of this promising market." 

# Helicopter Acquisition

## Seven Bell 407GXis to Join South Africa's Transmission Company


**B**ell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, has confirmed that "the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA) has signed a purchase agreement for seven Bell 407GXis for utility operations, including high voltage powerline maintenance, emergency management and operational support."

Tim Evans, Bell's Managing Director, Middle East and Africa said: "Bell is proud to work with the NTCSA as they expand their utility operations with Bell aircraft. The Bell 407GXi is an ideal

aircraft for utility operators across the region because it's a multi-mission workhorse. The NTCSA is joining hundreds of operators across the world who rely on the platform for critical utility use."

Monde Bala, Chief Executive Officer - NTCSA said: "As we renew and modernise our aviation fleet, their delivery could not be timelier. We are undertaking one of the largest build programmes in our history, constructing more than 14,000 kilometres of high voltage and ultra-

high voltage transmission lines across the country to support new generation capacity. At the same time, maintaining the integrity of our existing transmission grid remains critical. A dependable aviation service is central to this work, and the Bell 407GXi helicopters will play a pivotal role in strengthening our operational capability."

The NTCSA is a key operator of the country's national electricity transmission grid and is responsible for building a sustainable energy future for South Africa and beyond. 

# Artificial Intelligence

## Airbus Brings Digital Technology To Firefighting



Airbus mobilised the trial on the H130, two ATR 72, a Cirrus Sr20 light, four drones and three lorries to collect and process data

Airbus has completed "a unique first-of-its-kind trial in forest firefighting." By linking aircraft, helicopters, drones and ground personnel via communication and data processing systems, the aircraft manufacturer says it has "demonstrated the ability to carry out highly accurate water drops and significantly reduce the time between fire detection and extinguishment."

Airbus said: "The trial mobilised significant resources, including the Airbus H130 FlightLab helicopter, two aircraft, an ATR 72 test aircraft and a Cirrus SR20 light aircraft, four drones including an Airbus Aliaca, and three lorries from the Departmental Fire and Rescue Service of Le Gard (SDIS 30) to collect and process data. To interconnect the entire system, Airbus deployed a local private mobile network bubble in the area, connected to Agnet, the mission-critical communication solution developed by Airbus for security and emergency services." "These tests were carried out by Airbus and its partners at the Garrigues military

camp in Nîmes (France), based on scenarios developed with Departmental Fire and Rescue Services (SDIS) as well as the Entente Valabre, a public body empowered by the French Ministry of the Interior to assess forest firefighting equipment, provide training for personnel in France and abroad, and which is recognised as an international authority." Airbus added.

According to Airbus, "in these scenarios, two drones and the light aircraft captured images of the fire area, including infrared footage, and transmitted them in real time to Airbus servers connected to a command centre aboard a ground vehicle. The images were analysed, geolocated and merged with data, including satellite imagery, taking into account the terrain, wind strength and direction measured by a drone, and the location of firefighters on the ground. Data processing systems using AI produced a comprehensive view of the tactical situation on the ground and in the air, and enabled flight paths and water drop points to be transmitted to the helicopter equipped

with a precision water drop assistance system and to the ATR72, which was simulating a water bomber." Airbus noted that the trial was unveiled for the first time at the major annual Aerial Firefighting Conference & Exhibition, held in Rome, stating further that "this initial trial marks a significant milestone in Airbus's efforts to develop a test environment and a comprehensive ecosystem for combating forest fires." Airbus says, "this range of solutions includes aerial assets such as aircraft including the A400M and its firefighting kit, helicopters equipped with water buckets, reconnaissance drones, and now solutions currently being integrated to interconnect and significantly enhance the efficiency of coordination between ground and air crews, thanks to communication and data processing systems."

These assets contribute to both indirect and direct firefighting missions, in line with Airbus's commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the growing global challenge posed by forest fires. 

# Outstanding Achievement

## Mr. Aaron Munetsi To Receive The AviaDev 2026 Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award

**A**viaDev has announced that "Aaron Munetsi, Chief Executive Officer of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), will receive the AviaDev 2026 Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award for an outstanding contribution to route development and African aviation, recognising nearly four decades of experience in African aviation demonstrating leadership and dedication to advancing aviation connectivity across Africa." AviaDev says, "the prestigious honour celebrates individuals whose careers have had a transformative impact on the development of the continent's aviation industry and is named in honour of the legendary aviation leader Ato Girma Wake."

According to AviaDev, "Munetsi is widely respected for his deep industry knowledge, leadership, and commitment to strengthening connectivity across Africa. He spent more than 20 years with South African Airways (SAA), holding senior leadership roles across Africa and the Middle East. During this time, he led major network expansions, pioneered one of Africa's first commercial airline partnerships between SAA and Nigeria Airways on the Lagos-New York route, and negotiated key intra-African services that strengthened regional integration. His leadership was instrumental in establishing multiple new routes and building successful partnerships, including with Africa World Airlines in Ghana."

"As Chief Executive Officer of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), Aaron has continued to champion the collective interests of airlines in the region. He represents member carriers on regulatory and policy matters, promotes industry collaboration, and works closely with governments and stakeholders to enhance connectivity, sustainability, and competitiveness.

Alongside his operational and strategic achievements, Aaron is a passionate mentor and advocate for youth development, committed to nurturing the next generation of African aviation leaders." AviaDev added.

Aaron Munetsi said: "I am humbled beyond words by this recognition from my peers. It is an honour to receive the Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award. As a strategy-oriented aviation manager, I have prioritized forging robust partnerships and managing stakeholders and principals with maximum care and focus at all times—ensuring their complete satisfaction with our mutual results. Aviation's transformative power to connect people, economies, and opportunities across Africa has driven my work alongside dedicated professionals who share this vision of a progressive, dynamic, African aviation industry. This recognition reflects the collective strategic efforts of our colleagues and partners in championing sustainable connectivity and continental development."

Patron of the award, Ato Girma Wake added: "Aaron Munetsi has dedicated his career to strengthening African aviation through collaboration, policy engagement and industry leadership. His commitment to improving connectivity and supporting airlines across the continent makes him a truly deserving recipient of this year's award."


CEO and Founder of AviaDev, Jon Howell said: "Aaron has been a tireless advocate for African aviation for more than three decades. His ability to bring together airlines, governments and industry stakeholders has helped drive meaningful progress in improving connectivity across the continent. The Advisory Board unanimously agreed that his leadership and dedication make him an extremely worthy



Mr. Aaron Munetsi, CEO Airlines Association of Southern Africa

recipient of the 2026 Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award."

AviaDev stated that "since its inception, the award has recognised many of the most influential figures shaping aviation across Africa. Previous recipients include Mesfin Tasew, Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines (2025), João Pó Jorge (2024), Rodger Foster of Airlink (2023), Sanjeev Gadhia of Astral Aviation (2022), Adefunke Adeyemi, Secretary General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (2021), Raphael Kuuchi, former Special envoy on aero-political affairs at IATA (2019), and Chris Zweigenthal, former CEO of Airlines Association of Southern Africa (2018)."

Additionally, AviaDev says "the award will be presented during AviaDev Africa 2026, where Munetsi will join the stage for a special interview reflecting on his career and discussing the future of aviation connectivity across Africa." 



# E-commerce And Sustainable Development Of The African Air Cargo Market

By: Monday Ukoha



Source: Ethiopian Cargo

Ethiopian Cargo is one of Africa's leading cargo carriers

## Rising Air Cargo Demand

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) in its December 2025 air cargo demand report noted that African air cargo demand grew 10.1% over the same period in 2024. On a full year basis, IATA said African air cargo demand grew by 6% growth in 2025 above the global rate of 3.4%. "African airlines saw 6.0% year-on-year demand growth for air cargo in 2025. Capacity increased by 7.8% year-on-year.

December year-on-year demand increased by 10.1%, the highest of all regions, and capacity increased 9.8%." The Association further noted that this was the sixth consecutive month of growth for the sector in Africa. Africa's air cargo demand has seen an upward trajectory even if the continent continues to punch below its weight.

## Africa's Air Cargo Demand Growth

December 2025	10.1%
November 2025	15.6%
October 2025	16.6%
September 2025	14.7%
August 2025	11.0%
July 2025	9.4%

## E-Commerce Has Huge Prospects in Africa

Globally, air cargo growth has been helped in no small measure by e-commerce. It has been estimated that about 80% of e-commerce is carried as air cargo. Nevertheless, e-

commerce continues to be an area with huge latent growth potential in Africa. One of the after effects of COVID-19 pandemic has been the increasing rate of online purchases across all regions. Helped by increasing internet penetration on the continent, many people on the continent have embraced e-commerce especially in urban centers of the continent.

Whilst Africa still lags behind other regions in e-commerce, there is a general agreement that the e-commerce market in Africa is huge and remains largely untapped.

In their World Air Cargo Forecast 2024-2043, aircraft manufacturer Boeing noted: "Africa imports a diverse array of industrial and manufactured commodities from East Asia. African e-commerce is boosting demand for Asia-sourced consumer products and has huge potential to expand. Today, the African e-commerce market is largely untapped. Although nearly one-fifth of the world's population lives in Africa, the continent accounts for less than half a percent of global e-commerce sales. African e-commerce is expected to grow at double-digit rates in coming years to meet this demand, driving continued air cargo growth."

Sanjeev Gadhia, CEO of Astral Aviation, one of the leading cargo airlines in Africa is reported to have said that though Africa is behind the global trajectory of e-commerce growth, he sees Africa catching up and projects that the first major boom for e-commerce in Africa will be around 2027. In terms of monetary value, some estimates see between USD40 Billion and USD75 Billion market in the short term. African countries at the fore front of e-commerce include South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt.

Anticipating this growth, ET, Africa's largest airline, has established a state-of-the-art e-commerce logistics centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At the unveiling of the facility, ET Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said: "We have implemented high-end technologies in the infrastructure that revolutionize the way goods are transported and delivered in the e-commerce industry in Africa. Through this facility, Ethiopian Airlines paves the way for development of e-commerce services in Ethiopia and the African continent."

### Drivers of E-Commerce In Africa

Internet connectivity is the bedrock of digital trade. It follows that for e-commerce to grow in Africa, there needs to be quantum improvement in internet speed, quality and availability. The International Telecommunication Union, in a comparative assessment of internet penetration across regions notes: "Looking at the regions, in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Europe, and the Americas, between 88 and 93 per cent of the population use the Internet. In Asia-Pacific and the Arab States regions, Internet use is at 77 and 70 per cent, respectively, which is in line with the global average. By contrast, the average figure for Internet use for Africa is just 36 per cent." Comparatively, the growing but relatively low internet penetration on the continent portends good opportunity for

e-commerce growth in Africa. The global average was 67%, which implies more opportunities for internet use in Africa and consequently e-commerce adoption.

### Demographics Favour Africa

In addition to the above, an expanding middle-class population, a large youth population - Africa is reputed to have the youngest population of all continents - and the proliferation of local payment options are all poised to propel the rise of e-commerce on the continent.

### How Africa Can Grow Its Cargo And E-Commerce Sectors

#### ■ Expanded Production And Value Addition

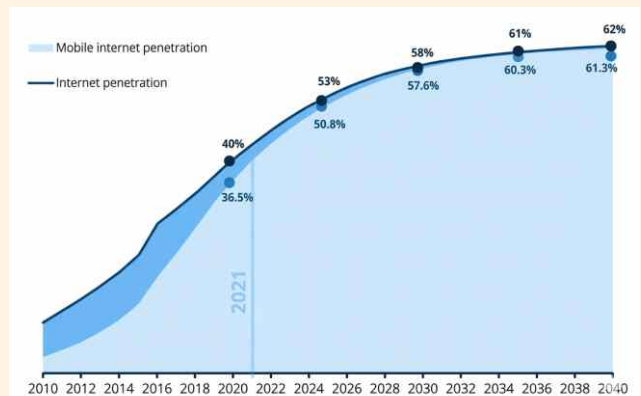
Africa's exports currently still consist mainly of primary and agricultural goods with little or no value addition. Writing in a concept note, the African Economic Research Consortium noted: "Although there has been growth in exports and value over time, there has been a declining African export share in global value chains, pointing to Africa's reduced competitiveness in these sub-sectors." The report notes further that "Africa's significant agricultural and natural resources are being exploited and exported mostly in their raw form, with little or no value added to commodity exports."

### E-commerce Penetration To Reach 40% By 2025



Source: International Trade Administration

### Estimated Mobile Internet & Total Internet Penetration Fate In Africa From 2010-2040



Source: International Trade Administration





To be able to leverage the emerging power of e-commerce and its potential impact for the African air cargo sector, African economies must expand their production base to wholly transform produce or add value to them. Expanding the production base will in turn give considerable scope for intra Africa trade in finished or semi-finished goods. Equally important, whereas import bound demand has driven cargo growth thus far in Africa, the need for the continent to stimulate more air cargo on the domestic markets, especially export cargo is paramount and would lead to more growth of the sector.

### ■ More Intra Africa Trade

Furthermore, for Africa to grow its share of world air cargo, there is a very urgent need for increased intra Africa trade. The current composition of Africa's e-trade needs to be rebalanced: the component of Africa's imports includes electronics, household materials; while the domestic e-commerce more often than not are majorly food and redistribution of imported goods.

### Increasing African Cargo Airlines Capacity

The new e-commerce regime foresees more participation for African cargo airlines in terms of increasing capacity in the market, driving down freight rates, and anticipating emerging requirements for environmental obligations for carbon reduction for their fleet. African cargo airlines have risen to the occasion. In 2018, one of Africa's leading cargo airlines, Nigeria-based Allied Air took delivery of its first Boeing 737-800 converted freighter. The airline noted then that the aircraft "is the youngest 737-800 in the world that has been converted to-date." In 2024, the same airline would add another Boeing 737-800SP to its fleet. Kenya-based Astral Aviation is reported to have an ambition to reduce its carbon footprint by 5% by 2030. ET has also announced lease agreement with AerCap for two (2) Boeing 777 cargo freighters.

### Infrastructure Requirements

Counties across Africa are involved in airport infrastructure improvements. From Cairo to the Cape and Lagos to Addis, Africa is witnessing this shift in airport infrastructure modernization investment. This should continue.

### E-Commerce And Air Cargo Opportunities

E-commerce and air cargo are mutually reinforcing: e-commerce rides on air cargo, and air cargo in return is boosted by e-commerce. For Africa, opportunities exist to further boost the growth of air cargo through an efficient e-commerce subset. Internet penetration is bound to grow as population grows and technologies improve including payment infrastructure to drive more e-commerce. Africa's GDP is equally primed to be one of the fastest growing for the foreseeable future providing an enabling base for participation of more Africans in e-commerce.

In the air cargo market, the continent is experiencing improved connectivity thanks to the implementation of the



**The new e-commerce regime foresees more participation for African cargo airlines in terms of increasing capacity in the market, driving down freight rates, and anticipating emerging requirements for environmental obligations for carbon reduction for their fleet. African cargo airlines have risen to the occasion.**

Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). SAATM is creating, in particular, 5th freedom traffic which connects many thin African markets with passenger and cargo traffic. Equally important is the full stimulative impact of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which, though has not yet been fully brought to bear on the cargo segment, holds the potential to do so.

However, the necessity for Africans to trade more with themselves has never been more compelling. This is a potential growth area for the industry. In addition, African economies must be stimulated to produce, process and add value without which the pool of products available for exchange will remain negligible.

Infrastructure in support of air cargo, improvements in the custom clearing environment and harmonization of regulations will add a further impetus to drive e-commerce and air cargo on the continent. Increased production for export, investing in value addition processes and regulatory harmonisation will also boost the air cargo sector in Africa.

The challenge before Africa is to stimulate its economies in such a way that more young people can participate in trade, commerce and industry. Capital accumulation in this regard is necessary. Equally necessary is intra Africa investment. The Secretary General of AfCFTA, His Excellency Wamkele Mene puts intra Africa investment at just 4%. This also has to change. Cross African investment will scale the needed production to drive more African participation in the cargo ecosystem. Without production, it suffices to say that Africa's share of global air cargo will continue to lag global counterparts. And so also 'the near-empty return leg' syndrome in Africa's air cargo ecosystem.

In all, there is no question that Africa's air cargo and e-commerce are poised for growth but the hard work is to ensure more African products are involved in that exchange to improve the lives of people on the continent. Otherwise, the growth will just be another dataset. ▣

# Why Nigerian Airlines Keep Dying Young

## STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS BEHIND OUR SHORT AIRLINE LIFESPANS

By Oscar Obierefu

**A**t Murtala Muhammed Airport, the ghosts don't live in abandoned hangars. They live in memory tail logos you used to see every day, check-in counters that once carried familiar names, and routes that vanished so abruptly passengers still talk about the "last flight" as if it happened yesterday.

Nigeria's airline industry has a peculiar rhythm: bold launches, quick expansion, then a long season of delays, fleet shrinkage, unpaid salaries, grounded aircraft and finally, silence. The pattern repeats across decades, across business models, across ownership structures. It is tempting to reduce it all to "bad management." Management matters, of course. But the deeper story is structural: a cost base priced in dollars, revenue earned in naira, fuel that behaves like a financial weapon, leasing markets that charge Nigeria a risk premium, a tax and fee architecture that nibbles at every ticket, and a regulatory environment forced to choose between safety enforcement and the economic fragility of operators.

You can see the anatomy of collapse if you know what to look for inside the case histories of Nigeria Airways, Bellview, Air Nigeria (the former Virgin Nigeria), Chanchangi, Arik, Med-View, Aero Contractors, and Dana Air. Different eras, same stresses. The result is an ecosystem where airlines age fast, even when their aircraft do not.

### The "dollar wall": FX mismatch as a slow-motion killer

A Nigerian airline sells most of its seats in naira. But its most unforgiving bills are priced in hard currency: aircraft leases, major maintenance checks abroad, spare parts, training, insurance, and OEM support. When the naira weakens sharply, the airline's cost base jumps overnight without any guarantee that fares can rise quickly enough to catch up.

Nigeria's FX volatility since mid-2023 has been dramatic. One summary of the period notes the naira moved from roughly ₦461/\$ in 2023 to as weak as about ₦1,900/\$ in early 2024 an extreme swing for any sector trying to budget leases and maintenance in dollars. (The Africa Report, 2025). Even when FX exists on paper, access is the real battlefield.



Mr. Oscar Obierefu, Founder Dwayne's Aviation

The global airline industry has documented Nigeria's FX bottlenecks through the "blocked funds" problem revenues trapped in-country because carriers cannot repatriate them. IATA reported Nigeria's blocked airline funds peaked around \$850 million in June 2023, affecting operations, triggering capacity reductions, and even prompting at least one carrier to temporarily stop service; by April 2024, IATA said about 98% had been cleared. (IATA, 2024).

That headline is often discussed in the context of foreign airlines, but the structural lesson applies directly to local carriers: FX scarcity doesn't just raise costs it breaks planning. It turns routine maintenance events into existential crises. If you cannot source dollars predictably, you cannot guarantee aircraft availability, and you cannot protect your schedule meaning you cannot protect your cashflow.

The Central Bank of Nigeria publishes official market rates daily, underscoring how closely businesses must watch FX just to price decisions. (CBN, n.d.).



Air Nigeria (formerly Virgin Nigeria)

### Case study: Air Nigeria collapse inside a stressed environment

Air Nigeria (formerly Virgin Nigeria) shut down in 2012 after a turbulent period that included regulatory grounding and internal disputes; Reuters reporting later described documents and accounts pointing to deep financial weakness and mismanagement at the airline. (Reuters, 2012). The point is not to excuse poor governance. It's to underline the vulnerability: when the macro environment punishes cashflow, weak balance sheets don't get a long runway for recovery.

### Jet A1: the cost line that behaves like a shockwave

In airline economics, fuel is always sensitive. In Nigeria, it can be brutal.

In March 2026, the Airline Operators of Nigeria warned that Jet A1 had risen from about N1,000 per litre to around N1,800 per litre within weeks an 80% jump while also noting fuel can account for roughly 30-35% of operating expenses. (Punch, 2026).

Around the same period, reporting also described Jet A1 pricing far above that in parts of the country (for example, figures in the N2,600-N3,000 range depending on location), reflecting the regional variability and supply turbulence that airlines must absorb. (THISDAY, 2026).

### Why does the fuel line bite so hard here?

Because supply and pricing are tightly linked to FX and import logistics. Analysts and industry reporting have repeatedly highlighted Nigeria's reliance on imported Jet A1 and the way FX volatility amplifies price swings. (Aviation Metric, 2025; The Guardian, 2016).

When local supply improves, the relief is immediate and revealing. In late 2025, reporting described Jet A1 prices easing (around N1,400/litre at the time) as domestic supply from the Dangote refinery began to reduce import pressure and dollar exposure. (Punch, 2025).

That is the story in one sentence: Nigeria's airline survival is tied to whether fuel behaves like a dollar-linked import commodity or a stable domestic utility.

### Case study: Aero Contractors when fuel and maintenance collide

In July 2022, Aero Contractors announced an indefinite suspension of passenger operations, citing the operating environment and fleet maintenance realities. (Premium Times, 2022).

Contemporaneous reporting also linked the airline's distress to spiraling fuel costs and a shrinking, ageing fleet. (THISDAY, 2022).

That combination fuel shock + maintenance downtime is the classic Nigerian airline chokehold. When cashflow tightens, aircraft go AOG (aircraft on ground). When aircraft go AOG, revenue collapses. When revenue collapses, more aircraft go AOG.

### Leasing: the expensive bridge Nigeria can't stop crossing

Most Nigerian airlines do not buy aircraft outright. They lease because access to long-term, low-interest aviation finance is limited, and because leasing is often the fastest way to acquire capacity. But leasing in Nigeria comes with special hazards:

- Leases are priced in dollars which ties directly back to FX risk.
  - The market prices Nigeria as high-risk so the premium is embedded in terms, deposits, and enforcement aggressiveness.
  - Repossession is real and it can erase an airline's schedule overnight.
- Some Nigerian lessors and operators have long complained about reputational damage and "blacklisting" dynamics.

As far back as 2018, industry reporting described lessors becoming wary of Nigerian operators and tightening behaviour based on past disputes. (THISDAY, 2018). More recently, the repossession story has moved into clearer legal daylight. In early 2025, a specialist aviation outlet reported a Nigerian court decision allowing repossession and teardown of an Arik Air CRJ1000ER describing it as a landmark of sorts after Nigeria's Cape Town Convention framework. (aviation, 2025).

Separately, lease repossessions have been reported in the domestic market as well, including the repossession of multiple leased aircraft from a newer Nigerian operator, contributing to operational suspension. (NigerianFLIGHTDECK, 2025).

Leasing is not the villain. Leasing is normal in global aviation. The Nigerian problem is that leasing becomes a cliff edge when the other structural pressures fuel and FX make payment continuity unstable.

### Case study: Arik Air debt, intervention, and the shadow of repossession

Arik's trajectory is one of the clearest illustrations of how financial stress, governance, and systemic costs intertwine. AMCON has stated that it took over Arik in February 2017 amid heavy debt burdens and a precarious situation that demanded intervention. (AMCON, 2023; Punch, 2017).

Later reporting also described how the airline's challenges included unpaid obligations-such as insurance and debts owed to aviation agencies factors that carry direct safety and regulatory implications. (Arise News, 2025).

This is what structural fragility looks like: when an airline begins owing regulators and struggling with insurance, the story is no longer just "commercial." It has crossed into the safety domain, where regulators have fewer choices.

Taxes, charges, and the "fees inside the fare" problem  
Passengers often believe the full ticket price goes to the airline. It doesn't.

IATA's economic brief on aviation taxation explains that "Ticket Taxes, Fees and Charges" are typically added to ticket cost but do not form part of airline revenue-yet they impact affordability and demand. The brief even references Nigeria's Ticket Sales Charge as an example of a percentage-based levy. (IATA, 2025).

In Nigeria, the debate is not whether the state should fund aviation infrastructure. The debate is whether the architecture has become a maze: too many charges, too many agencies, too much friction especially for domestic airlines selling to a price-sensitive market.

In 2023, IATA publicly lamented multiple taxation in Nigeria, arguing that the burden of taxes and charges is stifling operations. (The Guardian, 2023).

By 2026, domestic commentary described passengers paying "no fewer than 54" separate charges, fees, and taxes across major agencies, with an array of levies tied to NCAA, NAMA, FAAN, and the revenue system. (THISDAY, 2026).

Then came the new tax regime debate: industry and government tugging over whether VAT and customs duties should apply to aircraft, spares, and tickets. A 2025 report described airline operator warnings that re-imposing duties and VAT on aircraft and spares (and VAT on tickets) would sharply raise costs, compress demand, and risk rapid operational failures if applied without mitigation. (Punch, 2025).

Here is the operational logic:

- Add charges → fares rise.
- Fares rise → demand softens (in a market where air travel already serves a small slice of the population).
- Demand softens → load factors weaken → cashflow weakens.
- Cashflow weakens → maintenance and lease continuity are threatened.
- That threat pulls the regulator and lessor into the story. And the airline starts dying young.

Regulation: safety enforcement meets fragile economics  
Regulation is not the reason airlines fail. But regulation often marks the moment failure becomes public.

When an airline is financially distressed, operational integrity becomes harder to maintain: spares are deferred, training is postponed, aircraft sit AOG, schedules become erratic, and customer refunds become a liability pile. Regulators are then forced to act not to punish, but to prevent risk from maturing into an accident.

In July 2022, NCAA suspended Dana Air's Air Transport Licence and AOC, citing its statutory powers under the Civil Aviation Act and relevant Nig.CARs provisions. (NCAA, 2022).

Contemporaneous reporting also tied the action to the airline failing a financial audit illustrating that Nigerian oversight is not only about technical compliance but also about the financial capacity to sustain safe operations. (Punch, 2022).

This is where the Nigerian structure becomes unforgiving: the regulator becomes the final firewall in a system that often allows airlines to run thin until they cannot.

### Case study: Bellview; when the ability to sell collapses

Bellview ceased operations in the late 2000s. Among the pressure points reported at the time was the airline's suspension from IATA's Billing and Settlement Plan, affecting ticketing and settlement an example of how financial and distribution systems can effectively turn off the tap that keeps an airline alive. (Daily Trust, 2009).



Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, Nigeria

When an airline loses the ability to sell smoothly and refund credibly, trust collapses and trust is oxygen in passenger aviation.

### The Nigerian airline death spiral, step by step Across these cases, you can map a repeated sequence:

- Cost shock hits (FX devaluation, Jet A1 spike, new levies, insurance premium jump).
- Airline raises fares but demand resists, and competition punishes.
- Cashflow tightens maintenance events get delayed, aircraft go AOG.
- Fleet shrinks schedule reliability collapses, refunds grow, brand trust decays.
- Lessors and suppliers tighten terms repossession threats increase; MRO requires payment up front.
- Regulator intervenes through audits, suspensions, or safety reviews.
- Operations stop and the airline becomes another memory.

Med View's 2019 operational suspension, linked in reporting to aircraft being away for maintenance, shows how quickly a fleet-limited airline can run out of runway when maintenance is external, expensive, and slow to fund. (BusinessDay, 2019; Premium Times, 2019).

Nigeria Airways' liquidation approved by government in 2003 shows the oldest version of the same story: debt, decline, and a state decision to stop injecting funds. (AllAfrica, 2003).

Different decades. Same structural physics.

### So what keeps an airline alive longer in Nigeria?

The uncomfortable truth is that Nigeria doesn't just need "better airline managers."

It needs structural shock absorbers systems that stop routine volatility from becoming terminal.

### Treat aviation FX as a safety input, not a luxury

IATA's blocked funds story proves policy changes can unclog systems quickly when prioritized. (IATA, 2024).

A credible local framework would prioritize FX access for safety-critical importspares, maintenance, insurance so operators aren't forced into risky deferrals.

### Stabilize Jet A1 through transparent supply, competition, and domestic production.

The difference between import driven pricing and improving local supply has already been visible in Nigerian fuel reporting. (Punch, 2025; Punch, 2026).

### Reduce Nigeria's leasing risk premium by strengthening confidence in enforcement and contract clarity.

Repossession disputes and uncertainty raise costs. Better certainty lowers the risk premium meaning cheaper leases, more reliable fleet planning, and fewer sudden groundings. (ch-aviation, 2025; Chambers, 2025).

### Rationalize taxes and charges into a system passengers can understand and airlines can survive.

Even if charges remain, transparency and consolidation matter. IATA's framework on ticket taxes and charges underscores that these add to price without adding to airline revenue so the design must be careful to avoid choking demand. (IATA, 2025).

The local debate around dozens of separate charges makes the case that simplification is not cosmetic; it is economic survival. (THISDAY, 2026).

### Make financial health oversight proactive, not post-crisis

Dana's suspension highlights that, regulators already look at financial resilience as part of safety assurance. (NCAA, 2022; Punch, 2022).

The next step is earlier warning systems: standardized financial fitness monitoring that triggers intervention before AOG cascades become unavoidable.

### The real headline

Nigeria's airlines "die young" not because flying is impossible here, but because the system makes longevity expensive. In a market where FX can swing violently, fuel can jump 80% in weeks, leases are priced in dollars and enforced with

sharp tools, taxes and charges multiply inside the fare, and regulators must eventually choose safety over sympathy airlines need more than ambition. They need shock absorbers.

Until those structural issues are addressed, Nigerian aviation will keep producing the same heartbreaking story: new livery, fresh slogans, hopeful route maps... and a familiar ending. ▣

**References:** Kindly visit [www.aviationbusinessjournal.aero](http://www.aviationbusinessjournal.aero) for all references and citations

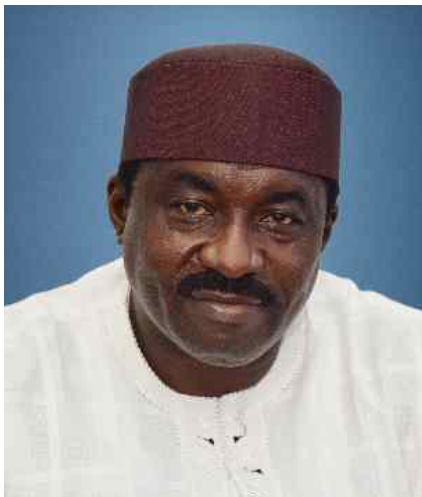
Oscar Obierefu began his flying career in a Diamond DA40, an aircraft that turned a lifelong fascination with aviation into a commitment to the real thing. He is currently training toward his Commercial licence in a Sling 2 and holds a B.Eng and MSc in Mechanical Engineering, a background that shapes everything he writes and produces about aircraft.

Oscar runs the aviation YouTube channel Dwayne's Aviation, where he produces documentary-style content covering aircraft design, military aviation history and the engineering decisions that sit behind cockpit-level outcomes.

He serves as an ambassador for the Diamond Flying Club. Inspired by growing up in Nigeria, Oscar advocates for more accessible aviation through Jet-A1 diesel solutions and he serves as an ambassador for the Diamond Flying Club.

# New Operators

## Nigeria CAA Issues AOCs To Binani Air Global Services And Enugu Air



Capt. Chris Najomo, DG, NCAA

**T**he Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has issued Air Operator Certificate (AOC) to Binani Air Global Services and Enugu Air to commence scheduled flight operations.

Speaking at the presentation for Binani Air Global Services, the Director-General of Civil Aviation

(DGCA), Capt. Chris Najomo commended "the resilience and determination of the airline, describing the certification as a historic milestone and significant breakthrough with the emergence of a female-led airline in a sector long dominated by men."

Capt. Najomo also applauded "the airline's owner, Sen. Aishatu Binani Dahiru and the management team for their persistence throughout the rigorous certification process, stressing their determination and consistency in addressing every requirement and obstacle until the certification was finally achieved."

Sen. Binani expressed gratitude to "the NCAA for its guidance and professionalism throughout the process, describing the journey as both challenging and rewarding." For Enugu Air, the Director-General, Civil Aviation (DGCA), Capt. Chris Najomo described

"the development as another milestone, noting that the Authority has been working to make the process more efficient while ensuring operators meet all required benchmarks."

Capt. Najomo also urged "the airline to continue to ensure compliance with safety and operational standards." Representative of Enugu Air, Capt. Tolu Ita described the certification as "a dream come true, expressing gratitude to the NCAA for its guidance and oversight throughout the painstaking process." The DGCA noted that "obtaining the AOC marks only the beginning of a more demanding phase, advising the airline's management to prioritize proper planning, professionalism, and continuous adherence to safety and operational standards as there is no room for shortcuts in the industry."

Before obtaining its AOC, Enugu Air was operating with the AOC of Xejet. ▣



# Aircraft Acquisition

## Nigeria's Aviation Minister Highlights Three Pillars of Aircraft Acquisition At NAAIS

**N**igeria's Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo SAN has stated that "aircraft acquisition sits at the intersection of these three pillars of capital, confidence and capacity." The Honourable Minister stated this is in his keynote address at the Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS) held in Lagos, Nigeria.

Keyamo said: "Without modern and fuel-efficient fleets, Nigerian airlines cannot compete sustainably. Without financing certainty, they cannot scale. Without institutional confidence, global lessors and lenders will remain cautious; without local maintenance capacity, asset productivity suffers. Without skilled people, growth cannot be sustained."

The Honourable Minister said Nigeria is shifting focus from treating aircraft acquisition as a routine transaction to a broader economic strategy. He stated that "we are here not merely to discuss aircraft acquisition as a transactional issue, but to unlock something far more strategic and far more consequential: capital, confidence, and capacity, the three pillars upon which any globally competitive aviation industry must stand."

The Minister highlighted that access to affordable aircraft financing has long constrained Nigerian airlines, limiting fleet renewal and route expansion. He stressed that the current administration now considers the issue a national priority. He noted that "for decades, access to affordable and dependable aircraft financing has remained one of the most



Delegates at the maiden edition of the Nigeria Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS)

significant constraints for Nigerian operators. It has limited fleet renewal, constrained route development, weakened competitiveness, and increased operating costs."

And to address the issue of financing, the Federal Government of Nigeria has strengthened its implementation of the Cape Town Convention and introduced policies such as the Irrevocable De-Registration and Export Request Authorisation (IDERA) which is aimed at improving aircraft leasing processes and reducing operational costs.

On infrastructure and capacity development, the Minister pointed to ongoing investments in airport modernisation, investments and development of local maintenance facilities, fleet modernisation, and partnerships for training aviation personnel to close the gap between Nigeria's aviation potential and its realised aviation capacity.

Reaffirming Nigeria's readiness for global partnerships, Keyamo called on investors, lessors, and development partners to support the country's aviation goals. He stressed that "Nigeria is ready. We have strengthened our compliance architecture. We have improved creditor assurance. We have

demonstrated progress on revenue repatriation. We are supporting local MRO development. We are investing in digital and institutional reform. We are pursuing cargo modernisation. And we are doing so in one of Africa's most consequential aviation markets."

The Minister added that "what we seek now is partnership; partnership that unlocks affordable aircraft financing; partnership that supports fleet renewal and expansion; partnership that strengthens maintenance, training and technical capability; partnership that helps Nigeria become not just a market for aviation, but a platform for aviation growth across Africa."

Keyamo concluded that "Nigeria stands today at the threshold of a new aviation era, an era in which capital is more confident, institutions are more credible, and capacity is being deliberately built. Let us seize this moment together. Let us unlock the full potential of Nigeria's aviation industry. Let us build an ecosystem that is investable, competitive, sustainable and globally relevant."

The summit brought together key stakeholders, including financiers, aircraft manufacturers, and airline operators, to explore pathways for sustainable growth and fleet expansion in Nigeria's aviation sector. ◻

# Milestone

## Overland Airways Becomes The First Nigerian Airline To Achieve ISO 9001:2015 Certification

Nigeria's leading domestic airline, Overland Airways has achieved its ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) certification, marking a significant milestone in the airline's continued commitment to operational excellence, safety, and customer satisfaction.

The certificate was formally presented at a ceremony held at the airline's Head Office. Dignitaries present at the certificate presentation are Overland Airways Managing Director, Capt. Edward Boyo; the Executive Director, Mrs. Aduke Atiba; the Chief Administrative Officer and ISO Champion, Mrs. Aanu Benson; Managing Director, NECA's Global, Mr. Noruwa Edokpolo; Auditor, Miss. Ibukun Ajala, and Mr. Williams Onwuka of Fine Spectra Consult. The certificate presentation was led by Mr. Noruwa Edokpolo, alongside Miss Ibukun Ajala.

According to Overland Airways, "the certification follows months of rigorous audits and scrutiny conducted in line with international best practices established by the International

Organization for Standardization." Mrs. Benson highlighted that "the achievement reflects the airline's dedication to embedding quality into every aspect of its operations", while Mr. Williams Onwuka commended "the airline for its discipline and commitment throughout the certification process."

Capt. Edward Boyo emphasised the strategic importance of the certification: "This is a valuable, powerful certification that will guide us going forward. For us, it is more than a principle, it is a way of life", he said.

Overland Airways added that this "milestone complements the airline's existing 11 years IOSA certification and membership of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) reinforcing Overland Airways'



L-R: Managing Director, NECA's Global, Mr. Noruwa Edokpolo; Executive Director, Overland Airways, Mrs. Aduke Atiba; Chief ISO Champion, Mrs. Aanu Benson; and the Accountable Executive, Overland Airways, Capt. Edward Boyo

adherence to globally recognized safety and quality benchmarks.

Together, these certifications position the airline as a leader in delivering reliable, safe, and customer-focused air transport services in Nigeria and across the region with the reintroduction of Ibadan, Warri and Minna routes." □

# New Route

## ValueJet Launches Lagos-Accra-Lagos Operations

ValueJet has launched operations for Lagos-Accra-Lagos flights. The airline says, "the flights will be operated daily departing from the new terminal at Murtala Muhammed International Airport for Accra, Ghana."

According to ValueJet, "this expansion follows the successful launch of its first international service to Banjul, The Gambia, and includes additional regional hubs such as Cotonou and Malabo." ValueJet's Managing Director, Capt.

Omololu Majekodunmi emphasised that "the Accra route is central to the airline's goal of facilitating seamless, affordable connectivity along the West African coast."

The airline noted that it "recently added CRJ-1000 aircraft to its fleet specifically to bolster these regional and domestic operations."

Capt. Majekodunmi said: "With this new route, we aim to enhance connectivity between Nigeria and Ghana, fostering tourism, trade, and tighter economic and cultural ties."

Capt. Majekodunmi further stated that the airline is hopeful that the "Accra-Lagos-Accra service will make a seamless connection between Nigeria and Ghana an exciting possibility, as well as boost the economy of the two countries in unimaginable ways. We are proud to play a part in bridging distances and fostering closer economic ties between the people and businesses of Nigeria, Ghana, and beyond, and opening new opportunities for trade and tourism." □

## MARCH - APRIL, 2026

March 29 - 31, 2026	March 28 - April 3, 2026	April 1 - 2, 2026
<p>AFRAA in partnership with the founding African Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) providers - Ethiopian MRO, EgyptAir Maintenance &amp; Engineering, Kenya Airways MRO, and South African Airways Technical, supported by many other aviation stakeholders launched the 1st African MRO Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.</p> <p>The event explored the theme "Building Africa's Sustainable MRO Ecosystem."</p>	<p>ACI Africa hosted its 75th ACI Africa Board &amp; Committee Meetings Regional Conference &amp; Exhibition held at Luanda, Angola under the theme "Stronger Airports, Stronger Africa". The Conference highlighted the vital role that airports play as engines of connectivity, growth, and transformation across our continent. The gathering brought together airport leaders, regulators, policymakers, investors, and industry partners to share insights and explore practical strategies to strengthen airport infrastructure.</p>	<p>The Nigeria Aircraft Acquisition &amp; Investment Summit (NAAIS) was held at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos with the theme, "Unlocking Capital, Confidence, &amp; Capacity in Nigerian Aviation". The event gathered several delegates including airline owners, MRO providers, aircraft manufacturers, aviation financiers, OEMs, regulators, and technology providers. The event featured high-impact dialogues, structured deal-makings amongst others that accelerated conversations on aircraft acquisitions in Nigeria's aviation industry.</p>

## COMING EVENTS

### 14 - 16 April, 2026

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

### 17 - 19 May, 2026

14th AFRAA Aviation Stakeholders Convention  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
[www.afraa.org](http://www.afraa.org)

### 19 - 20 May, 2026

3rd African Aviation Safety & Operations Summit  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
[www.afraa.org](http://www.afraa.org)

### 19 - 21 May, 2026

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

### 2 - 4 June, 2026

ICAO Aviation Climate Week, 2026  
ICAO HQ, Montreal, Canada  
[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

### 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)

### 15 - 16 September, 2026

ACI Africa Regional Committees, Conference & Exhibition  
Abuja, Nigeria  
[www.aci-africa.aero](http://www.aci-africa.aero)

### 5 - 9 October, 2026

ICAO Air Navigation World (ANW) 2026 - Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM)  
ICAO HQ, Montreal, Canada  
[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

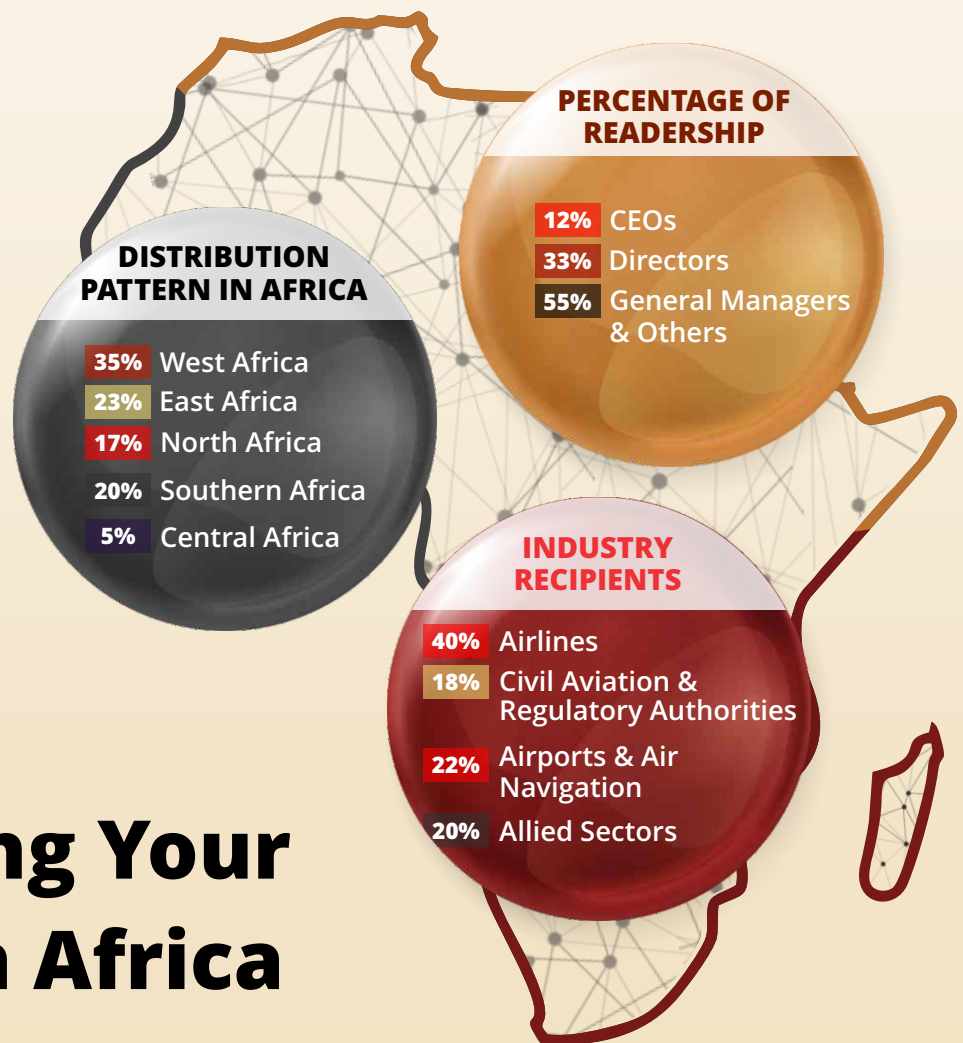
### 15 - 17 November, 2026

58th AFRAA Annual General Assembly (AGA)  
Libreville, Gabon  
[www.afraa.org](http://www.afraa.org)

### Air Passenger Market in Detail

FEBRUARY 2026 (% YEAR-ON-YEAR)	WORLD SHARE <sup>1</sup>	RPK	ASK	PLF(%-PT) <sup>2</sup>	PLF(LEVEL) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total Market</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>81.4%</b>
Africa	2.2%	11.9%	13.1%	-0.8	75.0%
Asia Pacific	34.5%	9.1%	9.0%	0.1	85.5%
Europe	26.6%	4.9%	4.3%	0.4	76.9%
Latin America and the Caribbean	5.4%	9.2%	6.2%	2.3	84.0%
Middle East	9.5%	0.8%	3.9%	-2.5	79.5%
North America	21.8%	2.8%	1.1%	1.3	80.3%

1) % of industry RPK in 2025 2) Year-on-year change in load factor 3) Load Factor Level  
Source: IATA



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