

IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Cairo, Egypt
19-21 May 2026

PROGRAM

Host Airline



STAR ALLIANCE



IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Day 1 – Tuesday, 19 May

Location: InterContinental Citystars Cairo by IHG

Conference theme: [People at the Core. AI at the Edge: Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI](#)

Opening Plenary

08:00 – 09:00 **REGISTRATION OPEN**
WELCOME COFFEE
Networking in Exhibition area

09:00 – 09:15 **IGHC Opening Plenary – Welcome to all delegates**
Cultural Show

09:15 – 09:20 **Keynote Address**

- **Capt. Ahmed Adel**, Chairman of Egyptair Holding Company

09:20 – 09:40 **Aviation Outlook: Passenger Insights & Economic Trends**

- **Nick Careen**, Senior Vice-president Operations, Safety and Security, IATA

09:40 – 09:55 **Ground Operations: Honoring Our Journey, Inspiring What's Ahead**

- **Monika Mejstrikova**, Director, Ground Operations, IATA

09:55 – 10:00 **Keynote Address**

- **Dr. Sameh Al-Hafni**, Minister of Civil Aviation of Egypt

10:00 – 10:45 **Executive Panel Discussions**
Ground Operations at a Crossroads: Strategic Priorities for the Next Decade
Ground operations are facing unprecedented pressures, from rapid traffic growth to rising customer expectations and escalating operational complexity. In this CEO/COO level dialogue, airlines' leaders will share their challenges and strategic choices that shape the future of ground operations, including workforce transformation and use of AI, airport capacity constraints, safety culture evolution, digital modernization, and the relationship with their ground handling partners.

Moderator: **Nick Careen**, Senior Vice-president Operations, Safety and Security, IATA

Speakers:

- **Capt. George Kamal**, Group Managing Director & CEO, Kenya Airways
- **Khaled Atwa**, Chairman of Egyptair Ground Handling
- **Rethah AL-Mousawi**, Vice President, Ground Operations and Cargo, Jazeera Airways

10:45 – 11:30 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

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Opening Plenary

11:30 – 12:15 **Navigating the New EU Ground Handling Framework**

Join this session to hear about the upcoming EU Ground Handling Regulation, which entered into force on 27 March 2025 and becomes fully applicable by March 2028 after a three-year transition period. Experts will walk participants through the new safety, training, and operational requirements, and share how competent authorities across Europe are gearing up for this major regulatory shift. Participants will gain clarity on expectations, timelines, and compliance pathways as the industry adapts to the new framework.

Moderator: **Iva Pluhackova**, Head of Operations and Standards, IATA

Speakers:

- **Adina Szönyi**, Ground handling expert, Air Operations and Aerodromes Department, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

12:15 – 13:15 **LUNCH BREAK**

Networking in Exhibition area

13:15 – 14:00 **The Next Generation of Baggage: Connecting the Industry through BIX & BCS**

Baggage operations are entering a new era, powered by cleaner data, modern messaging, and cross industry collaboration. This session highlights how BIX (Baggage Information Exchange) and the IATA BCS (Baggage Community System) vision are laying the foundation for smarter baggage handling; from simplified system integration and resilient communication to predictive analytics and improved passenger transparency. Hear how each stakeholder, from airlines to airports and handlers, can accelerate innovation and deliver a more reliable baggage experience.

Moderator: **Getnet Taye**, Senior Manager Global Baggage Operations, IATA

Speakers:

- **Timos Korosis**, Airports Product Manager, Aegean Airlines
- **Niueni (Weni) Tugaga**, Senior Airports Delivery & Performance Specialist, Air New Zealand

14:00 – 14:45 **Can Technology Boost Delivery of Ground Handling Training Standards (AHM 1110)?**

As ground operations grow more complex, the industry needs greater precision, competency, and adaptability. This session examines how emerging technologies - from microlearning and AI-driven content to VR and digital training platforms - are reshaping ground handling training. Bringing together airlines, ground handlers, and tech partners, it highlights how human expertise enhanced by intelligent tools can strengthen safety, improve compliance, and future-proof workforce skills.

Moderator: **Claudius Kuhnert**, Senior Manager Ground Ops Concepts & Strategy, Lufthansa Group

Speakers:

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- **Adam Sider**, Head – Training, Governance Quality and Curriculum, Saudi Ground Services
- **Robert Borocho**, CEO, ETC-PZL Aerospace Industries Sp. z o.o.
- **Enzo Skandella**, VP Commercial – Global Aviation, Draxon GmbH

14:45 – 15:15 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

15:15 – 16:00 **Fuel Supply, Cost Volatility, and Operations Resilience**
This session will examine the operational and commercial impact of fuel supply disruption and rising costs across the aviation value chain. It will focus on maintaining continuity, adapting to constrained supply and volatile fuel logistics, and balancing pressure on margins with effective cooperation. It will also consider potential risks to fuel quality and operational safety, and whether alternative fuels such as SAF can play any interim role.

Moderator: **Dimitri Rybkin**, Senior Manager Audit Methods and Deicing, IATA

Speakers:

- **Javier Agueda Encinas**, Head of Safety, Etihad Airways, IFQP chair
- **Antony Baker**, Assistant Director, SAF, IATA

16:00 – 16:45 **Global Trends and Priorities in Air Cargo: Digitalization & the Growth of eCommerce**
Air cargo continues to evolve at pace, driven by shifting economic conditions, resilient global demand, and the rapid expansion of eCommerce. This session will provide a strategic update on current cargo performance, emerging priorities for the industry, and the operational implications for ground handling. It will also highlight key solutions, digital, operational, and collaborative that can help stakeholders improve efficiency, support growth, and meet the rising expectations of shippers and consumers.

- **Andre Majeres**, Head E-Commerce and Cargo Operations, IATA

17:00 – 19:00 **WELCOME COCKTAIL**
Networking in Exhibition area

IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Day 2 – Wednesday, 20 May

Location: InterContinental Citystars Cairo by IHG

Conference theme: [People at the Core. AI at the Edge: Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI](#)

Plenary

08:00 – 09:00 **REGISTRATION OPEN**
WELCOME COFFEE
Networking in Exhibition area

09:00 – 09:45 **Executive Panel Discussions**
Partnering for Performance: Rethinking the Airline–GHSP Relationship
With ground handling labor shortages, cost pressures, and varying performance levels around the world, the relationship between airlines and ground handling partners is under strain. This session focuses on how to redefine that partnership model through stronger contracting frameworks, shared KPIs, joint safety programs, and better alignment of staffing and training expectations. Ground Handling Service Provider leaders will discuss the path toward high-reliability operations through long-term collaboration.

Moderator: **Massimo Cicetti**, Head of Innovation and Efficiency, IATA

Speakers:

- **Atilla Korkmazoglu**, President Ground Handling & Cargo, Celebi, ASA World Board member
- **Waleed Ali**, VP Commercial, Saudi Ground Services

09:45 – 10:15 **A Personal Journey**
Inside Ground Handling: Reflections from 40+ Years on the Front Line
This one-on-one conversation features a seasoned ground handling leader reflecting on more than four decades in the aviation industry. Through personal stories, industry milestones, and candid insights, the session will dive into the forces that have shaped ground handling, the lessons learned through cycles of growth and disruption, and what leaders must prioritize as the industry enters a new era of operational complexity and performance expectations.

Moderator: **Monika Mejstrikova**, Director, Ground Operations, IATA

Speaker:

- **Mohamed Hanno**, Executive Chairman & CEO of ASE Group, ASA World Board member

10:15 – 11:00 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

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Plenary

- 11:00 - 11:45** **The Human Element: Why Ground Ops Success Depends on People**
This session explores the critical human-factor elements that influence safety and operational reliability in ground handling. Speakers will examine how fatigue, workload, communication, on time performance, and environmental pressures shape frontline decisions and what practical interventions can strengthen performance and reduce risk.
- Moderator:** **Gurdeep Singh**, Senior Manager Ground Operations Safety and Standards, IATA
Speaker:
- **Derrick Zimmerman**, Vice President Safety & Training, AGI
 - **Mohamed Abbas**, Deputy CEO, Egyptian Aviation Services
 - **Ali Hasan**, Manager Ground Safety, Gulf Air
 - **Dirk Scott**, Senior Vice President Operational Aviation Advisory, Marsh
- 11:45 - 12:30** **Unseen, Unsafe: Managing Undeclared Lithium Batteries in Passenger Baggage**
This session examines the growing safety threat posed by undeclared lithium batteries carried in checked or cabin baggage. Experts will discuss recent incident trends, challenges in passenger awareness, detection limitations, and the operational risks these batteries create for ground handlers, baggage systems, and flight operations.
- Moderator:** **Andre Majeres**, Head E-Commerce and Cargo Operations, IATA
Speakers:
- **Adrian Kong**, Manager Safety, Quality and Risk, Airport Operations and Transport Services, Emirates
 - **Paul Cheng**, Executive Director – Operations, Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminals Limited
 - **Aglanbek Sarmukanov**, Senior Manager Safety Compliance Ground Operations, Air Astana
- 12:30 – 12:35** **ASAM Ground Handling ISAGO Certificate Delivery**
- 12:35 – 13:30** **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area
- 13:30 – 14:15** **Testing Electronic Bag Tags: Are We Ready for Digital Labeling?**
Electronic bag tags are emerging as a key enabler of faster, more seamless baggage processing, but widespread adoption requires rigorous operational testing. This session explores the latest trials across airlines and airports, examining performance, interoperability, durability, and passenger acceptance. Experts will discuss technical challenges, integration with BRS/BHS systems, regulatory considerations, and what it will take to scale EBTs globally.
- Moderator:** **Getnet Taye**, Senior Manager, Global Baggage Operations, IATA
Speakers:
- **Ina Eldøy**, CEO, BagID

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- **Jasper Quak**, CEO BagTag
- **Timos Korosis**, Airports Product Manager, Aegean Airlines
- **Shabir Girach**, Managing Director, Shabtec

14:15 – 15:00 **Will AI Replace Ground Operations Staff? Myth, Reality, and What Comes Next**

As AI accelerates across the aviation ecosystem, bold claims suggest it could one day replace roles on the ramp and in the terminal. This session separates hype from reality. Experts will explore which tasks can be automated, which require human judgment, and how airlines and GHSPs can responsibly integrate AI to improve performance without compromising safety or workforce sustainability. The conversation focuses on building a future where people and AI work together to create safer, more efficient ground operations.

Moderator: **Dimitri Rybkin**, Senior Manager Audit Methods and Deicing, IATA

Speakers:

- **Javier Vidal**, CEO of Moonware
- **Ryan Abram**, COO Global Airport Operations, dnata
- **Alexandr Neboga**, Vice President Ground Services, Air Astana
- **Lucy Mak**, Head of Global Airports, Cathay Pacific Airways

15:00 – 15:45 **COFFEE BREAK** Networking in Exhibition area

15:45 – 15:55 **GSE Ground Damage Risk Reduction Program – Award Ceremony**

15:55 – 16:45 **Smarter, Safer, Faster: Automation's Impact on Ground Operations**

Automation is rapidly reshaping ground operations, delivering measurable improvements in safety, operational stability, and efficiency. This session explores the progress made in recent years from automated GSE and digital turnarounds to risk detection and how these technologies reduce human exposure to hazards while improving consistency and performance. Leaders will also discuss what automation means for the workforce: shifting skillsets, new career pathways, and the opportunities created when people are empowered by technology rather than replaced by it.

Moderator: **Sunny Bhatt**, Senior Manager GSE Management & Ramp Automation, IATA

Speakers:

- **Masayoshi Hosoya**, Executive at Dynamic Map Platform Co., Ltd.
- **Manuel Wehner**, Manager Autonomous Airport Operations, Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML
- **Kellen Schroeter**, CEO of Pattern Labs
- **Tom (Tomoyuki) Kikuchi**, Head of Innovation for Ground Handling, All Nippon Airways Co. LTD

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16:45 – 17:00 **Digital & Green Ground Operations in Action**

Xinjiang Airport Group is scaling autonomous and energy-efficient ground equipment to address safety risks, labor shortages, and operational inefficiencies. With 28 innovation projects, including 46 baggage robots, the airport achieved 81% staff reduction, near-zero misrouting, and a 25% drop in damage rates. Autonomous vehicles, electric ground fleets, and APU-off operations are driving 24/7, zero-emission performance, showcasing a successful shift toward smarter, greener ground handling. Join this session to learn how they did it.

- **Tianweihua Wang**, General Manager, Tianyi Aviation Ground Services Branch, Xinjiang Airport Group

18:00 – late

GALA DINNER

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IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Day 3 – Thursday, 21 May

Location: InterContinental Citystars Cairo by IHG

Conference theme: [People at the Core. AI at the Edge: Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI](#)

Closing Plenary

08:00 – 09:00 **REGISTRATION OPEN**
WELCOME COFFEE
Networking in Exhibition area

09:00 – 09:45 **Beyond the Barcode: What's Holding Back Baggage Tracking?**
Using fresh survey insights, this session explores the current state of baggage tracking across airlines and airports and why real-time visibility is still not the norm. The discussion will address the barriers (technical, operational, and commercial) that limit progress, and highlight the investments, data standards, and partnerships required to deliver a fully transparent baggage journey.

Moderator: **Mohammad Almansour**, Senior Manager Ground Operations & Stakeholder Engagement for MENA, IATA

Speakers:

- **Hossam Kandeel**, Senior Manager Baggage Operations, Qatar Airways
- **Ali Abdelhamid**, BHS Operations Manager, Cairo Airport

09:45 – 10:15 **SGHA 2028: The Next Generation Agreement**
The new version of the SGHA introduces a completely re-designed structure. The SGHA 2028 update brings a new structure, that better reflects today's operational and commercial realities and finally aligns with how the industry uses the agreement. This fast-paced session highlights the biggest changes, the logic behind them, and what airlines and handlers need to prepare for as the new agreement reshapes future contracting and performance management.

Moderator: **Iva Pluhackova**, Head of Operations and Standards, IATA

Speakers:

- **Christina Markou**, Purchasing Manager, Aegean Airlines
- **Maha Kelani**, Contracts and Agreements, Egyptair Airlines

10:15 – 11:00 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

11:00 – 11:20 **One Industry, Many Practices: Closing the Gap Through Data**
Despite well-established global standards, variations in how ground operations are interpreted and executed continue to persist across the industry. Drawing on data collected by IATA from both airlines and Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs), this session provides a unique, fact-based view of where we stand as industry.

- **Gurdeep Singh**, Senior Manager Ground Operations Safety and Standards, IATA

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Closing Plenary

11:20 – 11:40 **Implementation of Digital Twin Platform**

Xi'An Airport Ground Handling has developed a Digital Twin platform to enhance real-time operational visibility, identify safety risks, optimize resources, and simulate performance under different scenarios such as severe weather. The results speak for themselves: 45% reduction in safety errors, 8-minute improvement in turnaround time, CNY 5 million annual labor cost savings. This session will showcase how digital innovation delivers tangible improvements.

- **Yue Liliang**, General Manager, Aviation Ground Handling (Xi'an) Co., Ltd., China West Airport Group

11:40 – 12:30 **Connecting the Baggage Chain: BRS, BHS, and Self-Service Bag Drop**

As airports modernize their baggage processes, the effective alignment of BRS, BHS, and self-service kiosks becomes critical. This session examines how these systems work together, what limits end-to-end visibility and how automation and data integration can accelerate speed, reliability, and passenger convenience.

Moderator: Massimo Cicetti, Head of Innovation and Efficiency, IATA

Speakers:

- **Ivan Jakovljević**, Senior Vice President Operations, Ink Innovation
- **Nicole Hogg**, Baggage Portfolio Director, SITA
- **Shabbir Girach**, Managing Director, Shabstec Limited

12:30 – 12:40 **Closing Remarks**

Next Destination

IGHC 2027 Announcement

12:40 – 14:00 **LUNCH BREAK**

Networking in Exhibition area

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Pre- and Post-Conference Meetings and Workshops

Sunday, 17 May

09:00 – 17:00 **Ground Operations WG (GOG) industry meeting (Room: Al Gawhara, Level 1)**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Charter of Professional Auditors training (Room: Al Hambra 2, Level -2)**
By invitation only

Monday, 18 May

09:00 – 15:00 **Ground Operations WG (GOG) industry meeting (Room: Al Gawhara, Level 1)**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Charter of Professional Auditors training (Room: Al Hambra 2, Level -2)**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Operational portal (Room: Citadel, Level 1)**
Workshop

17:00 – 18:30 **Ground Handling Partners Networking Cocktail**
Open to all IATA GHPs

Thursday, 21 May

13:30 – 17:00 **Workshop with Regulators (Room : Al Manial, LEVEL -3)**
By invitation only

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