

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 – 09:10	IGHC Opening Plenary – Welcome to all delegates Cultural Show
09:10 – 09:30	Keynote Address <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minister of Civil Aviation of Egypt• Chairman of Egyptair Holding Company• Chairman of Egyptair Ground Handling
09:30 – 09:45	Aviation Outlook: Passenger Insights & Economic Trends <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Vice-president Operations, Safety and Security, IATA
09:45 – 10:00	Ground Operations: Honoring Our Journey, Inspiring What's Ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Ground Operations, IATA
10:00 – 10:45	Executive Panel Discussions Ground Operations at a Crossroads: Strategic Priorities for the Next Decade <p>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.</p>
10:45 – 11:30	COFFEE BREAK Networking in Exhibition area

#IGHC

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



IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Opening Plenary

- 11:30 – 12:30** **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.
- 12:30 – 13:30** **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area
- 13:30 – 14:15** **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.
- 14:15 – 15:00** **Advancing Safety Performance with Competency-Based, Data-Technology-Powered Training**
This session focuses on how competency-based and technology-enabled training can drive safer operations, greater efficiency, and measurable financial impact. As the industry prepares for new regulatory requirements, experts will discuss why now is the right moment to elevate training as a strategic performance tool and how modern solutions can accelerate upskilling across ground operations.
- 15:00 - 15:45** **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area
- 15:45 – 16:30** **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.

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA
GROUND
HANDLING
CONFERENCE

Opening Plenary

- 16:30 – 17:00** **Plenary**
Session placeholder
- 17:00 – 19:00** **WELCOME COCKTAIL**
Networking in Exhibition area

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



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.

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.

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

The conference will run across two parallel tracks.

11:00-12:30

**BAGGAGE
OPERATIONS**
Track
Sessions 1&2

**GROUND
OPERATIONS**
Track
Sessions 1&2

12:30 – 13:30 **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA
GROUND
HANDLING
CONFERENCE

Plenary

13:30 – 15:00

BAGGAGE OPERATIONS
Track
Sessions 3&4

GROUND OPERATIONS
Track
Sessions 3&4

15:00 – 15:45

COFFEE BREAK
Networking in Exhibition area

15:45 – 17:15

BAGGAGE OPERATIONS
Track
Sessions 5&6

GROUND OPERATIONS
Track
Sessions 5&6

19:00 – late

NETWORKING DINNER
Kindly sponsored by Egyptair

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 **Executive Panel Discussions**
Airports' Role in Ground Operations: Priorities, Partnerships, and Investment
This session brings together senior airport executives to explore how airports can play a more proactive, strategic role in shaping ground operations. Discussion will focus on aligning priorities with airlines and ground handlers, coordinating investments in infrastructure and technology, and creating an operating environment that supports safe, efficient, and scalable ground handling airport operations.

09:45 – 10:30 **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.

10:30 – 11:15 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

11:15 – 11:45 **Transforming Ground Handling Finance: Real-World Impact of SIS Adoption**
As more airlines and ground handlers transition to the IATA Simplified Invoicing & Settlement (SIS) process under the SGHA, the industry is seeing concrete gains in accuracy, transparency, and cost efficiency. In this session, industry speakers will share their firsthand experience implementing SIS, including measurable benefits, challenges along the way, and lessons learned.

11:45-12:15 **Plenary**
Session placeholder

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA
GROUND
HANDLING
CONFERENCE

Closing Plenary

12:15 – 12:30 **Closing Remarks**

Next Destination
IGHC 2027 Announcement

12:30 – 13:30 **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Day 2 – Wednesday, 20 May

Baggage Operations Track

- 11:00 – 11:45** **Session 1 - Beyond the Barcode: What's Holding Back Real-Time 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.
- 11:45 – 12:30** **Session 2 - From Check-In to Claim: What Biometrics Can Do for Baggage Operations**
This session looks at how biometric verification can increase security, reduce manual errors, and support more efficient baggage handling. Industry leaders will discuss early use cases, infrastructure requirements, and how biometric processes can enhance trust, transparency, and reliability across the baggage journey.
- 12:30 – 13:30** **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area
- 13:30 – 14:15** **Session 3 - 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.
- 14:15 – 15:00** **Session 4 - Automation & Robotics in Baggage: What's Real, What's Next**
Automation is rapidly reshaping baggage handling, from autonomous tugs and robotic sortation to AI driven allocation and routing. But what is truly operational today and what remains industry hype? This session brings together innovators and operations leaders to examine real-world deployments, measurable performance gains, and the technological and financial hurdles still ahead. The discussion also explores how automation transforms staffing models, required skill sets, and long-term cost structures across airlines, airports, and ground handlers.
- 15:00 – 15:45** **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

Baggage Operations Track

15:45 – 16:30 **Session 5 – 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.

16:30 – 17:15 **Session 6 - 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.

19:00 - late **NETWORKING DINNER**
Kindly sponsored by Egyptair

Day 2 – Wednesday, 20 May

Ground Operations Track

11:00 – 11:45

Session 1 – Enabling Safe Access: PRM Service Excellence and Lithium Battery Safety on the Ramp

Airlines and handlers are increasingly managing a greater number of PRMs and mobility devices, many powered by lithium batteries. This session focuses on how ground operations can ensure accessibility while maintaining strict safety standards. Leaders will discuss correct mobility-aid handling, regulatory requirements, lithium battery risk controls, and the tools and training needed to support teams in high-risk situations.

11:45 – 12:30

Session 2 – 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.

12:30 – 13:30

LUNCH BREAK

Networking in Exhibition area

13:30 – 14:15

Session 3 - 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 AI-supported 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.

14:15 – 15:00

Session 4 - Electric Aircraft Turnaround: What It Takes

This session will explore how airports and ground service providers are transitioning to fully electric aircraft turnarounds as part of the industry's decarbonization strategy. Experts will discuss the operational, infrastructure, and commercial considerations involved in implementing electric GSE at scale, including charging systems, power management, safety, and performance in real-world conditions. Case studies will highlight successful deployments, lessons learned, and the collaborative approach required between airlines, airports, OEMs, and handlers.

IATA
GROUND
HANDLING
CONFERENCE

Ground Operations Track

15:00 – 15:45

COFFEE BREAK

Networking in Exhibition area

15:45 – 16:30

Session 5 – One Industry, Many Practices: Why Variations Persist and How to Close the Gap

Global industry standards have long existed, yet ground operations continue to show variations in how procedures are interpreted and executed. This session examines the root causes of these inconsistencies and highlights what the industry can do to drive uniformity. Participants will gain insights into realistic steps for reducing variability and improving global operational consistency.

16:30 – 17:15

Session 6 – Placeholder

19:00 - late

NETWORKING DINNER

Kindly sponsored by Egyptair

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA
GROUND
HANDLING
CONFERENCE

Pre- and Post-Conference Meetings and Workshops

Sunday, 17 May

09:00 – 17:00 **Ground Operations WG (GOG) industry meeting**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Charter of Professional Auditors training**
By invitation only

Monday, 18 May

09:00 – 15:00 **Ground Operations WG (GOG) industry meeting**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Baggage WG, Strategy Sub-group (BSSG) industry meeting**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Charter of Professional Auditors training**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Leveraging Data Sharing in Ground Operations**
Workshop – open to all

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

Thursday, 21 May

13:30 – 17:00 **ISAGO Regulatory workshop**
By invitation only

#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI



IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

With many thanks to all our
sponsors and exhibitors

Host airline



Gold Sponsor



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Exhibitors



Hospitality Suites



#IGHC

People at the Core. AI at the Edge:
Adapting Ground Operations in an Era of AI

