

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**

- **Capt Ahmed Adel**, Chairman of Egyptair Holding Company
- **Dr. Sameh Elhefny**, Minister of Civil Aviation of Egypt

09:30 – 09:45 **Aviation Outlook: Passenger Insights & Economic Trends**

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

09:45 – 10:00 **Ground Operations: Honoring Our Journey, Inspiring What's Ahead**

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

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 Ahmed Adel**, Chairman of Egyptair Holding Company

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

IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

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 – 14:30 **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

14:30 – 15:15 **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. Participants will gain practical insights into regulatory alignment, operational realities, technology deployment, and global implementation, showcasing how people and technology together are redefining training excellence.

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Opening Plenary

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

Speakers:

- **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

15:15 – 16:00 **COFFEE BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

16:00 – 16:45 **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

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

Speakers:

- **Khaled Atwa**, Chairman of Egyptair Ground Handling
- **Atilla Korkmazoglu**, President Ground Handling & Cargo, Celebi, ASA World Board member
- **Mohammad A. Mazi**, CEO of Saudi Ground Services, ASA World member

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 Chairmand & CEO of ASE Group, ASA World Board member

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

IATA GROUND HANDLING CONFERENCE

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.
- 11:45-12:30** **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.
- 12:30 – 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 and Innovation, IATA
Speaker:
- **Ina Eldøy**, CEO, BagID AS
- 14:15 – 15:00** **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
Speaker:
- **Hossam Kandeel**, Senior Manager Baggage Operations, Qatar Airways
 - **Ayman Bukhari**, Senior Representative, Ground Operations, Saudia Airlines

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Plenary

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

15:45 – 16:30 **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

Speakers:

- **Masayoshi Hosoya**, Executive at Dynamic Map Platform Co., Ltd.
- **Manuel Wehner**, Manager Autonomous Airport Operations, Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistic IML
- **Kellen Schroeter**, CEO of Pattern Labs

16:30 – 17:15 **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

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.

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

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 – 11:45 **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 industry can do to drive uniformity. Participants will gain insights into realistic steps for reducing variability and improving global operational consistency.

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Closing Plenary

- 11:45– 12:15** **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.
- 12:15-12:55** **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 Ground Operations Innovation and Efficiency, IATA
Speakers:
- **Ivan Jakovljević**, Senior Vice President, Ink Innovation
- 12:55 – 13:00** **Closing Remarks**
- Next Destination**
IGHC 2027 Announcement
- 13:00 – 14:00** **LUNCH BREAK**
Networking in Exhibition area

IATA
GROUND
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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 **Charter of Professional Auditors training**
By invitation only

09:00 – 17:00 **Operational portal**
Workshop

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

Thursday, 21 May

13:30 – 17:00 **Workshop with Regulators**
By invitation only

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