



# Airport Slots, the WASG, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

IATA regularly receives questions about airport slots and the WASG. This document does not have the intention to replace the WASG itself but to explain the WASG in accessible language and provides IATA's answers to some of the most common questions from regulators, policymakers, airlines, airports, media representatives, and other stakeholders.

The document is divided into sections covering airport slot policy, coordination processes, monitoring and compliance, governance and transparency, and environmental considerations.

## [Overview](#)

Airport slots are a proven mechanism for managing capacity at airports where infrastructure cannot meet demand. Pre-assigned arrival and departure slots are required to ensure efficient operations and the optimal use of capacity, helping to prevent congestion and operational disruption.

Slot allocation should be carried out by an independent slot coordinator in a neutral, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner. This provides airlines with the certainty needed to plan reliable schedules, and allows consumers to benefit from choice, connectivity, and access to destinations, in a predictable way.

Airport capacity constraints continue to grow worldwide. In 2026, 395 airports are subject to airport coordination, including 216 fully slot coordinated airports. Today, around 43% of passengers globally depart from a slot coordinated airport.

## [Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines \(WASG\) and Worldwide Airport Slot Board](#)

While airlines continue to call for more airport capacity to meet growing demand, infrastructure expansion is unlikely to keep pace with demand. Making the best use of available capacity is critical and requires industry cooperation between airlines, airports, and slot coordinators.

The Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG) are jointly developed by airlines, airports, and slot coordinators through the [Worldwide Airport Slot Board](#) (WASB), a joint forum of airports, airlines and slot coordinators/facilitators to address slot-related matters such as the development and approval of amendments to the WASG on identifying ways to improve the slot allocation system and processes and suggesting areas for policy development.

The WASG provides a global framework for allocating and managing slots each season. For the full benefits of airport coordination to be realized, the WASG must be applied consistently and in full at congested airports.

The WASG is designed to deliver the following key objectives, as agreed by all three stakeholder groups:

1. To facilitate consumer choice of air services, improve global connectivity, and enhance competition at congested airports for passengers and cargo.
2. To provide consumers with convenient schedules that meet demand, are consistent from one season to the next, and are reliable in terms of their operability.
3. To ensure that slots are allocated at congested airports in an open, fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner by a slot coordinator acting independently.



4. To realize the full capacity potential of the airport infrastructure and to promote regular reviews of such capacity and demand that enable effectual capacity declarations for slot allocation on a seasonal basis.
5. To balance airport access opportunities for existing and new airlines.
6. To provide flexibility for industry to respond to regulatory and changing market conditions, as well as changing consumer demand.
7. To minimize congestion and delays.

The decision to implement airport coordination should rest with the regulatory authority responsible, based on thorough demand and capacity analysis and consultation with airlines and other stakeholders.

For more information on the WASG and slots, visit [www.iata.org/slots](http://www.iata.org/slots)

For more information on the WASG Governance please visit <https://www.iata.org/en/programs/ops-infra/slots/airport-slot-governance/>



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# Understanding Airport Slots and the WASG

## 1. What Are Airport Slots and Why Do They Exist?

### What is the purpose of the Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG)?

The WASG provides a single set of standards for managing flights at airports where demand is close to or exceeds available airport capacity.

The Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG) are the foundation of the global slot coordination process. The WASG is jointly published by IATA, Airports Council International (ACI) and the Worldwide Airport Coordinators Group (WWACG). Thanks to continual update and revision, the WASG represents the globally accepted best practice and ensures that slots at coordinated airports are neutrally and fairly allocated to airlines using consistent policies, principles, and processes.

They help the coordinator allocate slots in a fair, transparent, and consistent way around the world.

The main objective of the WASG is to ensure make the most efficient declaration, allocation and use of available airport capacity (WASG 1.2.1). By helping match airline schedules with the airport's available infrastructure, the WASG supports efficient operations, reduces congestion, and helps deliver reliable services and greater choice for passengers.

Further information:

- [IATA Airlines, Slots Special Supplement](#)

### Why are airport slots necessary at some airports but not others?

Airport slots are only needed where demand for flights is greater than the airport's available capacity. At many airports, airlines can schedule flights freely because there is enough runway, terminal, and apron capacity to accommodate demand. These are referred to as Level 1 airports.

At busier airports, the available infrastructure may not always be able to meet demand, but voluntary schedule changes by airlines are sufficient to address the issue. These are referred to as Level 2 airports, where schedules are facilitated but not slot coordinated.

Finally, slot coordination is introduced only when demand cannot be managed through normal scheduling processes and additional capacity cannot be provided in the short term. These airports are referred to as Level 3, and only these Level 3 airports have slots.

Under the WASG, airports are assessed to determine whether formal coordination is needed and at what level the airport will be declared.

Further information:

- [Coordinated Airports](#)

### Who allocates slots, and how is neutrality ensured?

At coordinated (Level 3) airports, slots are allocated by an independent slot coordinator. The WASG requires coordinators to operate in a neutral, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner, ensuring that slots are allocated fairly and based on consistent global standards. This importantly extends also to access among business types – for example, cargo carriers should not be treated differently from passenger.



Further information:

- [Airport Coordination Transparency](#)
- [Equal Slot Rights for Air Cargo](#)
- [Coordinator Independence and Governance Models](#)

## 2. Access, Fairness, and Competition

### Does the WASG favor incumbent airlines over new entrants?

No. The WASG balances continuity and schedule stability through historic precedence with opportunities for new entry and growth through priority access to the slot pool. (WASG 1.2.1(e)).

To support competition, the WASG includes specific measures that give new entrants access to available slots at congested airports. When slots become available, new entrants are given priority for at least 50% of those slots, helping them start and grow services at airports where demand exceeds available capacity (WASG 8.3.3 and 8.3.4).

The WASG combines these access provisions with a stable system of historic rights. This enables airlines that operate their allocated slots in line with the 80% use requirement can retain them from one season to the next, helping provide reliable and consistent services for passengers, for airlines, airports and other relevant stakeholders (WASG 8.3.2). This approach benefits both established and new airlines. For new entrants, historic rights ensure that they can keep the slots allocated to them under their priority rights, providing the security needed to build sustainable services and provide passengers and shippers with greater choice while ensuring airport capacity is used efficiently.

### Why are slots not allocated through auctions or peak pricing?

The WASG does not support auctioning or pricing mechanisms for the initial allocation of airport slots. Instead, it provides a globally agreed system designed to allocate limited airport capacity in a fair, transparent and nondiscriminatory way.

The WASG has been developed and refined over many years through collaboration between airlines, airports, coordinators, and governments. Experience has shown that alternative approaches can increase costs and create uncertainty without addressing the underlying issue of insufficient airport capacity. Expanding airport infrastructure remains the most effective long-term solution for reducing congestion and meeting growing demand for air travel.

Further information:

- [Airport Slot Allocation: Arguments Against Auctions](#)

### What about secondary trading, isn't that a form of auction?

No. Secondary trading is different from an auction.

Under the WASG, airport slots are initially allocated free of charge by an independent coordinator using globally agreed rules. Secondary trading, where permitted by local laws and regulations, takes place only after slots have been allocated. It allows airlines to transfer or exchange slots between themselves in limited circumstances.

Secondary trading occurs only at a small number of highly congested airports where obtaining new slots can be particularly difficult. It provides some flexibility for airlines but does not replace the coordinated allocation



process set out in the WASG. For most airlines, the primary way to obtain slots remains through the normal allocation process managed by the independent coordinator.

### 3. Historic Rights and the 80/20 Rule

#### What is historic precedence and how does the 80/20 “use it or lose it” rule work?

Historic precedence allows an airline to retain a series of airport slots in the following equivalent season if that series is operated at least 80% of the time during the season for which it was allocated. If the 80% threshold is not met, the slot series may be returned to the pool for reallocation.

The 80/20 rule is a measure of slot utilisation that promotes the efficient use of scarce airport capacity. It helps deliver utilization rates of more than 95% at the world's most congested airports while ensuring that under-used capacity can be reassigned. As this shows, the built-in 20% flexibility margin does not mean that one in five flights will routinely be cancelled. Rather, the rule provides airlines with a limited flexibility across their slot portfolio to manage operational disruptions and changes in demand while still maintaining very high levels of airport capacity utilisation.

The rule also provides airlines with the schedule certainty needed to plan, invest in appropriate resources, and sell services up 18 months in advance, supporting consumer confidence and long-term network development. Removing or significantly reducing this flexibility would reduce predictability, encourage inefficient operations, and undermine planning without improving overall capacity outcomes.

#### What about situations out of the airline’s control? Do they fall within 20%?

No. The WASG provides for Justified Non-Utilization of Slots (JNUS) when an airline is unable to operate a flight because of unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances outside its control.

Where JNUS applies, the affected slot may be treated as though it had been operated for the purpose of slot utilization. This helps ensure the airlines are not unfairly disadvantaged by events such as severe weather, airspace closures, government restrictions, or other major disruptions beyond their control. For example, ATC industrial action that results in airspace restrictions, capacity reductions, or traffic flow restrictions and thereby causes the cancellation of a flight may be considered as JNUS, provided the impact on the airline’s operations can be demonstrated. The Worldwide Airport Coordinators Group (WWACG) has published guidance explaining the application of [JNUS](#), which IATA endorses. IATA also publishes guidance on specific industry disruptions that may justify JNUS.

Further information is available at [this site](#).

#### How does one prove that non-operation was beyond an airline’s reasonable control?

Airlines should provide objective evidence showing why they were unable to operate as planned. This may include official notices from governments, airports, air navigation service providers, manufacturers, suppliers, or other relevant parties. Care should be taken to balance the evidentiary burden on airlines, particularly where an event is widespread and publicly well-known.

The airline should explain how the event affected its operations and demonstrate that the circumstances were unforeseeable, unavoidable, and could not reasonably have been mitigated despite taking appropriate steps to do so.



The assessment of each case will depend on the specific facts and evidence available. IATA publishes [JNUS Evaluation and Industry Guidance](#) papers on particular issues and disruptions to help support a consistent approach.

Further information:

- [JNUS – Planning for the unexpected](#)
- [Justified Non-Utilization of Slots Eligibility](#)
- [WWACG Interpretation of Justified Non-Utilisation of Slots](#)

## Does on-time performance impact the 80/20?

No. Under the WASG, historic precedence is determined by slot utilization, not on-time performance (OTP). For the purposes of the 80/20 rule, the key question is whether the allocated slot series was operated sufficiently to qualify for historic precedence. OTP is a separate operational performance measure that reflects the difference between scheduled and actual operating times. It does not determine whether a slot has been properly utilized or whether historic rights should be retained.

Poor OTP may indicate operational issues that warrant further review, but it does not, by itself, establish slot misuse or affect the slot utilization calculation. A flight can have poor OTP and still count towards slot utilization, just as a flight can achieve high OTP but fail to meet the required utilization threshold if it is cancelled.

Where repeated schedule deviations raise concerns, these should be addressed through the slot monitoring process. Slot monitoring provides a structured framework for coordinators to assess patterns of slot use, investigate potential misuse, engage with airlines, and consider the airline's reply and any operational circumstances before reaching any conclusions. Only after appropriate investigation and due process should enforcement measures be considered.

OTP can therefore be used as operational information to support monitoring and trend analysis, but it must not be used as a direct determinant of historic eligibility, as a proxy for slot utilization, or as justification for the withdrawal of historic rights.

Further information:

- [Slot Utilization, Monitoring and On-Time Performance guidance.](#)
- [Cost to airlines of delays](#)

## What safeguards exist within the WASG to prevent airlines retaining slots they no longer intend to operate?

The WASG does not permit airlines to hold slots without a legitimate intention to use them. Airlines are required to return slots they do not intend to operate, swap, transfer, or use in a shared operation as soon as possible, and no later than the Series Return Deadline, so that the capacity can be made available to others.

These requirements are reinforced through the 80/20 utilization rule, ongoing slot monitoring, and enforcement provisions. Airlines that deliberately fail to return unwanted slots, or engage in slot misuse, risk reduced allocation priority and the loss of historic rights. This combination of utilization requirements, transparency, monitoring, and sanctions provides a strong deterrent to slot hoarding and helps ensure that scarce airport capacity is used efficiently and made available to the airlines best able to serve consumer demand.



## Can reductions in declared airport capacity affect historic slot holdings?

The Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG) recognize that such situations may require adjustments to future slot allocations. However, the Guidelines place strong emphasis on transparency, advance planning, and protecting airlines' historic slot rights wherever possible. Where temporary capacity reductions occur, airports, coordinators, and airlines are encouraged to work together to find solutions that minimize disruption. Historic slots must also be protected, so that they will be reallocated when the capacity returns.

Although this should only be used as a last resort, a reduction in airport capacity, such as from construction work, operational restrictions, or infrastructure constraints, may reduce the number of slots available for allocation.

Further information:

- The Worldwide Airport Slot Board (WASB) published a [guidance paper](#) that provides further information on managing temporary capacity reductions.

## 4. Capacity, Infrastructure and Coordination

### Who is responsible for determining airport capacity?

Airport capacity is determined by the airport managing body or other competent authority through a regular, transparent demand and capacity analysis.

This assessment should consider all relevant airport constraints, including runways, terminals, gates, apron space, and airspace limitations. The resulting coordination parameters (the limits used to determine how many flights can be accommodated at the airport) should reflect what the airport can realistically deliver.

Under the WASG, capacity assessments and coordination parameters should be reviewed regularly and discussed with airline stakeholders in accordance with the WASG Calendar of Coordination Activities.

### Why are robust airport capacity declarations important? How should airport capacity declarations be developed and reviewed?

Airport slot coordination cannot create capacity; it can only allocate the capacity that an airport declares as available. For this reason, robust, realistic, and regularly reviewed capacity declarations (the assessment of how many flights an airport can safely and efficiently accommodate) are essential to ensure the best use of existing infrastructure, particularly where major expansion projects are not planned in the short term.

Capacity declarations form the foundation of the slot system. To remain effective, they should be regularly reviewed to reflect changes in infrastructure, airline operations, aircraft types, operational resilience, and actual airport performance. Effective coordination therefore depends on continuous review of both capacity and deliverability, (whether the declared capacity can realistically be achieved in day-to-day operations), alongside longer-term planning for additional infrastructure where needed.

IATA supports more consistent and transparent reviews of capacity declarations to ensure that all available and operationally deliverable capacity is realized. While airlines continuously adjust schedules in response to consumer demand, capacity reviews at some airports remain infrequent or lack sufficient transparency. In some cases, airports may not have a formal capacity declaration, a robust assessment of deliverability, or clear stakeholder consultation process, which can limit the efficient use of available capacity.



## How should the Calendar of Coordination Activities be applied?

The Calendar of Coordination Activities provides a globally recognized timetable that airlines, airports, and coordinators must follow to support a predictable, transparent, and non-discriminatory coordination process.

The Calendar is a critical component of the global slot system because it provides a common planning framework for airports, coordinators, and airlines worldwide. By aligning key coordination milestones across jurisdictions, it gives airlines greater certainty when developing schedules at both ends of a route and helps support the efficient planning of wider airline networks.

Adherence to the calendar enables airlines to plan schedules in a timely manner, supports the efficient use of scarce airport capacity, and helps maintain connectivity across global air transport networks. Failure by any party to meet the agreed milestones can create planning inefficiencies, reduced coordination effectiveness, and result in less stable schedules for passengers.

The Calendar also helps ensure that all participants have access to the same information and opportunities at the appropriate stage of the coordination process, supporting fairness and transparency.

Neither the Worldwide Airport Slot Board nor IATA sponsors third-party, print versions of the Calendar. Users should always refer to the official online version of the Calendar, available at the link below.

Further information:

- [Calendar of Coordination Activities](#)

## 5. Slot Monitoring

### How does slot monitoring work in practice?

Slot monitoring is a continuous process carried out by the coordinator to ensure that operations at Level 3 (coordinated) airports are conducted broadly in accordance with the slots that have been allocated. It helps support the fair, transparent, and efficient use of scarce airport capacity.

The WASG provides for both pre-operation and post-operation monitoring, using data provided by airports and airlines. Where concerns are identified, coordinators are expected to engage with the airline and review the airline's reply and the relevant operational circumstances before considering any enforcement action.

It is important to distinguish slot monitoring from the 80/20 usage rule and the assessment of Justified Non-Use of Slots (JNUS). The 80/20 rule determines whether a slot series qualifies for historic precedence in a future season, whereas slot monitoring examines how slots are being used in practice.

As a result, an airline may retain historic rights by meeting the 80/20 threshold, but in exceptional cases could still face action if the slot monitoring process identifies intentional slot misuse.

### What constitutes slot misuse?

Slot misuse refers to situations where slots are held or operated in a way that, over time, demonstrates repeated or systematic intentional deviation from the allocated slots without justification. This includes operating without an allocated slot, operating at significantly different times or in materially different ways without coordinator agreement, intentionally holding or requesting slots without a genuine intention to operate them; seeking to influence slot allocation outcomes or restrict access to capacity for other operators through the inappropriate use of slots; and operating during restricted periods without an appropriate slot.



The WASG recognizes normal operational variability, including minor delays, recovery actions, and day-to-day operational adjustments, which do not constitute slot misuse. Slot monitoring is therefore based on data-driven analysis, supported by dialogue between the coordinator and the airline, and focuses on persistent patterns of behavior that may adversely affect the efficient, fair, and transparent allocation of airport capacity.

## Why is the timely return of unused slots important?

Timely slot returns help ensure that scarce capacity is made available for reallocation and use by other airlines. Once an airline determines that a slot will not be used, it should return it as soon as reasonably as possible so that capacity can be made available to others.

Even at relatively short notice, returned slots may be used by another airline, helping maximize the use of available airport capacity and providing additional opportunities for air services.

The WASG therefore encourages the prompt return of unused slots. Repeated late returns may affect an airline's allocation priority in future seasons and, in some circumstances, may be subject to further review by the coordinator.

## How should air traffic control restrictions be considered?

Air traffic control (ATC) restrictions, including airspace capacity limits and air traffic flow management measures (actions used to regulate traffic flows and maintain safe operations), are recognized as operational factors that may affect an airline's ability to comply with allocated slots.

Where these constraints are clearly attributable to ATC actions and are outside the airline's reasonable control, they should be considered as such when assessing slot compliance.

For example, ATC industrial action that results in airspace restrictions, capacity reductions, or traffic flow restrictions may be considered an external operational constraint, that one they can have little influence over, provided the impact on the airline's operations can be demonstrated.

## How are aircraft substitutions treated?

Aircraft substitutions occur when an airline operates a different aircraft type from the one originally planned. This may happen for legitimate operational reasons, such as maintenance requirements, operational disruptions, fleet availability, or changes in passenger demand.

Aircraft substitutions do not automatically constitute slot misuse. Coordinators assess such changes in context, considering the airline's intent, the frequency of the substitutions, and whether they have a material impact on coordinated slot parameters (the operational limits used to manage airport capacity, such as runway, terminal, gate, or aircraft parking availability).

This approach allows airlines the flexibility needed to manage day-to-day operations while helping ensure that coordinated airport capacity continues to be used efficiently and fairly.

## Does the coordinator need to investigate every flight?

No. The WASG envisions an efficient and proportionate monitoring process, with coordinators focusing their resources on the most significant and meaningful cases of potential slot misuse, supported by data analysis. Requesting detailed information from airlines regarding every five-minute deviation is not consistent with the intent of the WASG and would impose an unnecessary burden on both coordinators and airlines, with limited practical benefit.



Instead, slot monitoring should focus on identifying patterns of repeated or systematic behavior that may indicate potential misuse and warrant further review.

Further information:

- The use of data in slot monitoring is discussed at WASG Annex 12.9 (available on IATA's [WASG site](#)).

## When is enforcement action appropriate?

Enforcement action is considered only after concerns have been identified, the airline has been engaged, and reasonable opportunities have been provided to address the issue.

Under the WASG, enforcement is intended for situations where slot misuse is found to be intentional or repeated. Before reaching that stage, coordinators are expected to review the relevant facts, consider any operational circumstances, and engage in dialogue with the airline.

The WASG promotes a graduated and proportionate approach, meaning that any action taken should reflect the nature and severity of the issue and should be supported by appropriate evidence and due process.

## Are financial or administrative penalties compatible with WASG principles?

The WASG recognizes that national laws or regulations may provide for financial or administrative penalties in cases of serious slot misuse.

Where penalties are applied, they should be effective, proportionate, and supported by appropriate evidence. They should also be applied only after due process, including engagement with the airline and an opportunity to understand and respond to the concerns that have been identified.

The WASG places primary emphasis on transparency, dialogue, and corrective action. Penalties, where available under national law, are generally intended as a measure of last resort for serious or repeated misuse.

## 6. Transparency, Governance, and Oversight

### What information should coordinators make available to ensure transparency?

Once the capacity is formally declared by the competent Authority, Coordinators should make available the airport capacity declaration, the applicable coordination parameters, slot allocation outcomes, remaining availability, outstanding slot requests, and information explaining why requests could not be accommodated.

In terms of compliance, a list of airlines returning series of slots after the Series Deadline (the deadline for returning slots before the start of a season) should be published.

Transparency is also required through the publication of Local Rules, Coordination Committee agendas and minute reports, and the Slot Performance Committee – while not including specific airline details to protect confidentiality and competitively sensitive information.

This level of transparency supports coordination predictability, credibility, and trust in the system.



Further information:

- The publication of data by coordinators is discussed at WASG Annex 12.10 (available on IATA's [WASG site](#).)

## What level of service should stakeholders expect from coordinators?

The WASG sets expectations for timely acknowledgement of submissions and requests, consistent application of procedures, and effective communication supported by structured dialogue.

The coordinator should also be functionally and financially independent from interested parties, meaning that no airline, airport, or other stakeholder should be able to improperly influence allocation decisions. This helps ensure that slots are allocated in a neutral, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner, as explained further in WASG Annex 12.6 (available on IATA's [WASG site](#).)

Further information:

- [WASG Annex 12.6: Independence of Coordinator](#)

## What role do Coordination Committees and Slot Performance Committees play?

Coordination Committees and Slot Performance Committees provide structured forums for consultation, transparency, and oversight of capacity, slot allocation, and slot monitoring processes.

These committees bring together airlines, airports, coordinators, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss issues affecting the coordination process, including capacity declarations, local coordination procedures, and slot performance. They help ensure that stakeholders have an opportunity to review information, raise concerns, and contribute to the ongoing development of coordination practices.

While these committees play an important advisory and oversight role, they do not make individual slot allocation decisions. Responsibility for allocating slots remains with the independent coordinator, acting in accordance with the WASG.

Further information:

- [Slot Performance Committees](#)
- [Terms of Reference for CC/SPC](#)

## How are local rules and exceptional circumstances handled?

The WASG provides flexibility to address local regulatory requirements and exceptional circumstances, such as temporary capacity reductions, infrastructure constraints, major events, or other operational disruptions. However, any local rules or temporary measures should remain consistent with WASG principles, including transparency, neutrality, non-discrimination, and the efficient allocation of airport capacity.

To maintain confidence in the process, proposed local measures should be:

- Clearly designed to be necessary and proportionate to address a specific circumstance or concern;
- Consistent with existing regulation and the WASG;
- Developed through timely consultation with the Coordination Committee (including an extraordinary meeting if necessary) in advance of their application;



- Designed to preserve coordinator independence; and
- Subject to periodic review.

## 7. Environment, Sustainability, and Policy Interaction

### Should the slot system be used to promote less-polluting flights (so-called “green slots”)?

Proposals for “green slots” generally involve allocating airport slots based on an airline’s environmental performance, such as the more fuel-efficient aircraft. While well intended, applying environmental criteria to slot allocation is complex and could affect the efficient and consistent use of scarce airport capacity.

The primary purpose of slot coordination is to manage airport capacity in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner. The slot system is designed to determine when flights can operate, rather than to serve as an environmental policy instrument.

The aviation industry has identified Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), improved air traffic management, operational efficiencies, and new aircraft technology as key measures for reducing emissions. The slot system supports these efforts by helping make efficient use of airport capacity, reducing congestion-related delays, and allowing airlines to match aircraft and capacity to passenger demand.

The Worldwide Airport Slot Board has also noted that applying environmental conditions directly to slot allocation could create unintended consequences, including reduced connectivity and inconsistency across a global system that relies on common standards (see link below). The existing slot framework already contributes to environmental objectives by promoting efficient operations and the effective use of available capacity.

In addition, where governments are considering environmental or noise-related measures, ICAO’s internationally agreed Balanced Approach provides a framework for assessing all available mitigation options before introducing capacity restrictions. This helps ensure that environmental objectives are pursued in a proportionate manner while maintaining connectivity and the benefits delivered by efficient airport operations.

Further information:

- [WASB Position: Environment and Slots](#)
- [Quota Count Schemes – Guiding Principles](#)

## 8. Legal Status and Ongoing Governance

### Is the WASG legally binding, and how does it interact with national regulations?

The WASG is a globally recognized industry best practice document rather than a legal instrument. Many governments and regulatory authorities reference or incorporate the WASG into national laws or regulations, and the vast majority of congested airports operate a system that is consistent with the WASG.

Where national laws or regulations apply, they take precedence. However, the WASG is widely recognized as the global standard for airport slot coordination and schedule facilitation, providing a common framework that helps support consistent scheduling and coordination across international air transport.



This global consistency is important because airlines, airports, and coordinators operate across international networks. Using common principles and processes helps support efficient planning, connectivity, and the reliable operation of air services worldwide.

Further information:

- IATA Airlines: [Slot regulations must be globally aligned](#)

## Is the WASG still fit for purpose given today's market conditions?

Yes. The WASG is a living document, jointly maintained by airports, airlines, and coordinators through the Worldwide Airport Slot Board (WASB).

It is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect operational, regulatory, and market developments. This collaborative process helps ensure that the WASG continues to provide a globally harmonized framework for managing scarce airport capacity while adapting to changes in the aviation industry.

Its continued use by airports, airlines, coordinators, and regulators around the world reflects its role as the globally recognized standard for airport slot coordination.

Further information:

- [Slot Reform – White Paper](#)