The airline industry’s revenue is projected to reach USD 996 billion in 2024, marking a 10% year-on-year (YoY) growth rate and reaching the highest nominal value in aviation history—just shy of the evocative threshold of USD 1 trillion. The primary driver of revenue growth will be an increase in traffic, although any gains in passenger yields are expected to be offset by a decline in cargo yields. As a result, overall revenue per available tonne kilometer (ATK) should remain flat compared to 2023.

In 2024, traffic growth is anticipated to decelerate after two years of vigorous recovery from pandemic lows. Alongside stabilizing passenger yields, this should lead to a 14% YoY increase in passenger revenues.

Cargo revenue is expected to fall by 13% YoY in 2024. However, this represents an improvement over the 33% drop observed in 2023. The projected 5% YoY rebound in cargo tonne kilometers (CTK) will be partially offset by a deeper reduction in air cargo yields. This would be the third consecutive year of lower yields, though they will likely still exceed the 2017 – 2019 average yields by 18%.

Despite the industry’s stellar performance, the accumulated revenue gap between 2020 and 2022 (assuming flat revenue during this period) amounted to USD 880 billion. This is nearly four times the additional revenue generated between 2023 and 2024, compared to the 2019 baseline.