

AIRPORT OPERATIONS

Airport Operations

The "Integrating Airport Operations (IAO)" project, led by Brussels Airport (Belgium) and supported by the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) programme with funding from the European Commission, has successfully modernised airport operations across Europe.

Launched in 2018, the project brought together 14 partners from 8 European countries, with a combined investment of EUR 90 million (USD 98 million), half of which was co-funded by the European Commission.

Key achievements include optimising airport operations through the Initial Airport Operations Plan (iAOP), enhancing passenger experiences by reducing delays, improving cross-border collaboration, and enabling better data sharing for proactive decision-making. Twelve airports and two Air Navigation Service Providers implemented these innovations, contributing to more efficient air traffic management (ATM) and resource use across Europe.

As the lead partner, Brussels Airport coordinated efforts to synchronise operational management and demonstrated the value of collaboration and digitalisation for seamless airport operations. The project also laid the foundation for future initiatives like BEACON and EXOPAN, which build upon the IAO's successes to further propel digitalisation. #1233.OPS1

Milan Bergamo Airport (Italy) is expanding its route network with new destinations and increased services this winter. On 15 December, Air Arabia Maroc introduced a twice-weekly service to Fes, Morocco, providing additional connectivity to North Africa. HiSky launched flights to Oradea, Romania, on 17 December, further strengthening the airport's position as Italy's main gateway to Romania, now connected to seven destinations in the country. Norwegian will begin weekly flights to Harstad/Narvik, Norway, on 23 December, opening access to northern Norway and the Lofoten Islands. Flydubai has also increased frequencies on its Milan Bergamo–Dubai route, operating up to ten weekly flights from 16 December through mid-January to accommodate higher seasonal demand. The additional flights offer seamless onward connections to destinations including the Maldives and Zanzibar through partnerships with Emirates.

Milan Bergamo Airport, managed by SACBO S.p.A., continues to expand its network, supporting passenger demand and regional connectivity while reinforcing its role as a major airport in Northern Italy. #1233.OPS2

The Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has approved the Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport in Ado Ekiti (Ekiti State, Nigeria) for non-scheduled flight operations, starting on 15 December 2024. The six-month approval, valid until 15 June 2025, permits private jets and chartered flights to operate between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. under Visual Flight Rules. Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, called the approval a significant milestone, highlighting the airport's role in boosting the state's accessibility and socioeconomic growth.

The temporary permit allows the NCAA to validate pending findings from recent inspections while the state government addresses outstanding compliance issues. Essential services such as Air Traffic Management, Rescue and Fire Fighting, Aviation Security, and Meteorological support are being put in place to ensure smooth operations.

The Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport, located in the state capital of Ado Ekiti, is designed to drive economic transformation by improving connectivity and facilitating agro-allied cargo exports. The project forms part of Ekiti State's broader strategy to boost trade, attract investment, and enhance

regional development. Initially focused on non-scheduled operations, the airport aims to secure full commercial flight approval as compliance measures are completed. #1233.OPS3

Istanbul Airport (TurkeyTürkiye) will commence simultaneous takeoff and landing operations on three runways starting 17 April 2025 to enhance efficiency and reduce delays, according to Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu. The airport, which handled 76 million passengers in 2023 and aims to reach 81 million by the end of 2024, is undergoing an expansion to include six runways by 2028, further boosting air traffic operations. Officially opened in October 2018, the airport has been fully operational since April 2019. #1233.OPS4

Delhi Airport (Delhi, India) has become the first in the country to connect to 150 destinations, marking a significant milestone with the launch of Thai AirAsia X's direct flights to Bangkok-Don Mueang. This new route, operated with Airbus A330 aircraft, begins with twice-weekly flights, increasing to four times weekly by mid-January 2025.

Over the years, Delhi Airport has added over 20 exclusive international destinations, including Phnom Penh, Bali Denpasar, Calgary, Montreal, Washington Dulles, and Tokyo Haneda. It now handles 88% of India's long-haul destinations and 56% of the country's long-haul weekly flights. Nearly 42% of long-haul passengers from India choose Delhi as their gateway.

Delhi Airport has also seen a 100% increase in transfer passengers over the last decade, enabling seamless connections for four million domestic travellers annually to international destinations. The growing introduction of wide-body aircraft by Indian carriers is further positioning Delhi as a super-connector hub for long-haul travel, cementing its role as a leading aviation hub in South Asia. #1233.OPS5

Hong Kong International Airport is projected to boost its handling capacity by 50% by 2035, reaching 120 million passengers and 10 million tons of cargo annually, according to Financial Secretary Paul Chan. The airport, currently connected to 200 global destinations, is expected to return to pre-pandemic passenger levels by the end of 2024. This expansion aligns with efforts to revive Hong Kong's reputation following economic and tourism setbacks caused by protests and strict pandemic measures.

The third runway, operational since 28 November 2024, will not increase flight capacity immediately, as the city's aviation sector continues to recover gradually. #1233.OPS6

Ground Handling

Menzies Aviation has reached a significant milestone, expanding its operations to 300 airports across six continents. The latest addition to its network is Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL) in Malaysia, a key Southeast Asian hub that handled 47.2 million passengers, 980,040 tonnes of cargo, and 819,026 aircraft movements in 2023.

Group CEO Philipp Joeinig highlighted the importance of this expansion in enhancing access to Menzies' trusted aviation services worldwide. Executive Chairman Hassan El-Houry credited the achievement to the dedication of employees, airline customers, and airport partners. #1233.OPS7

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) of Vietnam has finalised investor selections for ground service projects at Long Thanh International Airport, aiming to meet the operating schedule by 31 December 2025. The Saigon Ground Services Joint Stock Company and Hanoi Ground Services Joint Stock Company consortium won the bid for maintenance and repair services. Vietnam Airlines

Engineering Company (VAECO) secured the contract for aircraft maintenance services, leveraging its extensive repair facilities and certification as an independent maintenance organisation. Vietnam Air Catering Services Company (VINACS) was chosen for in-flight meal services.

The Civil Aviation Administration of Vietnam emphasised the urgency of completing investor selection for these services, including aircraft sanitation, ground vehicle maintenance, and catering, to address delays and ensure timely project execution. #1233.OPS8

Accessibility & Customer Experience

Cork Airport has partnered with Crohn's & Colitis Ireland (CCI) to improve the travel experience for passengers with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), becoming the first airport in Ireland to take this step. The initiative includes specialist training for security staff to assist passengers with IBD, focusing on handling medical supplies and fostering effective, respectful communication.

Key measures include offering private search facilities for passengers with stoma bags, accepting "No Wait" cards in multiple languages for quick access to facilities, and ensuring medication can be carried without hindrance. Guidance on managing travel-related challenges, such as locating toilets or storing medication, is also part of the programme.

Amy Kelly, COO of CCI, praised Cork Airport's swift response and dedication to improving accessibility, emphasising the importance of treating all passengers with dignity and respect. This collaboration aims to make air travel less stressful for passengers living with bowel conditions. #1233.OPS9

San Francisco International Airport (California, United states) has opened its first Sensory Room, designed for neurodivergent travellers and their families. Located post-security in Harvey Milk Terminal 1, the facility is open daily from 5:00 AM to 11:00 PM and features three key areas: an interactive Activity Area with analogue and digital options, a Calming/Soothing Area for relaxation, and a life-size Cabin Experience that replicates a full-scale aircraft interior to help travellers acclimate to flying. The room, developed in collaboration with UCSF Children's Hospital and The Arc San Francisco, aims to reduce travel stress and make air travel more accessible.

This new amenity reflects SFO's commitment to creating an inclusive, user-friendly experience for all passengers. #1233.OPS10

Zayed International Airport in Abu Dhabi now offers a sensory space to support passengers with sensory sensitivities. Located near Gate D43 in the departures area, the facility includes two interactive rooms with calming features like light displays, bubble tubes, and soft furnishings. Open 24/7, the space provides a quiet, engaging environment for passengers at no cost.

This initiative builds on the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower programme introduced by Abu Dhabi Airports and Etihad Airways in September. The programme discreetly supports passengers with conditions such as autism or anxiety by enabling staff to provide appropriate assistance.

These efforts align with broader accessibility initiatives in the UAE, including Dubai International Airport's dedicated lounge for people of determination, which also opened in September. #1233.OPS11

Commercial & Marketing

Lagardère Travel Retail has secured the duty-free retail contract at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (Netherlands), managing over 20 stores across core categories, including perfumes, cosmetics, sunglasses, liquor, tobacco, and confectionery. The agreement includes Lagardère acquiring 70% of the operating company, with Schiphol Group retaining 30%.

The partnership builds on a decade-long collaboration and aligns with Schiphol's plans to redevelop and expand retail spaces, enhancing the travel retail experience with a uniquely Dutch character. The redevelopment will combine and redesign spaces across the airport's piers, boosting their potential. This milestone is part of Schiphol's broader strategy to elevate its retail offering and restore its status as a leading airport. The deal, subject to Dutch competition authority approval, is expected to finalise in the first half of 2025. #1233.OPS12

Lagardère Travel Retail will open eleven new stores at Düsseldorf Airport (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) after winning a Europe-wide tender.

The new stores, set to open in the first quarter of 2026, include eight RELAY outlets, two Discover Germany souvenir shops, and a family-oriented Affenbande store. A unique addition is the RELAY Marché Café, a hybrid concept combining RELAY's travel retail products with premium barista coffee and fresh snacks. This innovative format is tailored specifically for Düsseldorf Airport and features conveniences such as self-checkouts.

This expansion brings Lagardère's total presence at Düsseldorf Airport to 21 locations, including its existing foodservice outlets and tec2go stores. The new stores cater to a variety of passenger needs, offering regional expertise, innovative designs, and exclusive services like a humidior, lottery counter, and Post/DHL services. The concepts are designed to enhance the shopping and dining experience for travellers across both airside and landside areas.

Düsseldorf Airport sees this partnership as a key step in its goal to become one of the leading airports in its category, with a focus on sustainability, regional connection, and exceptional service. Lagardère Travel Retail views this project as a milestone in its strategic growth in Germany, combining local knowledge with international expertise to enrich the travel experience for passengers. #1233.OPS13

Gameway, a gaming lounge company, opened its first location at John F. Kennedy International Airport (New York, United States) in Terminal 8 on 16 December 2024. The lounge will feature console and PC gaming stations, as well as a RetroZone bar offering craft beers. The opening coincides with the holiday travel season and will include speeches from airport and company leaders, along with live video game character appearances.

This launch is part of a USD 125 million investment in Terminal 8 by Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) in partnership with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and American Airlines, aiming to enhance the traveler experience. Gameway, a women- and minority-owned business, plans further expansion, with upcoming locations in JFK Terminal 5, Chicago Midway, Baltimore/Washington, and Detroit Metropolitan airports by 2025. #1233.OPS14

Clear Channel Outdoor (CCO) has secured a ten-year extension of its advertising contract with Wayne County Airport Authority (WCAA) for Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (Michigan, United States). Serving over 31 million passengers annually, the renewed partnership continues a collaboration that began in 2003 and was awarded through a competitive tender process.

The new agreement will see CCO enhance its advertising and sponsorship programme with upgraded digital displays, high-impact printed ads, and experiential activations, including exclusive opportunities near the McNamara Terminal's iconic water feature. The initiative aims to provide brands with innovative ways to connect with Detroit's geographically diverse and upscale passenger base.

CCO's programme will leverage three distinct digital networks and involve local subcontractors Chandler Campbell & Daschle, Bayview Electric, and McConnell Communications. Current major advertisers include Michigan Medicine and Michigan State University, with the updated media solutions set to revolutionise brand engagement and passenger experiences at the airport. #1233.OPS15

Orlando International Airport (Florida, United States) is set to undergo a transformation of its retail and dining areas, with more than 40 new restaurants and shops approved in the first phase of a major renovation project. The new offerings will include local favourites like Stasio's, Smoke & Donuts, and Kelly's Ice Cream, alongside nationally recognized brands. The renovation will span 77,013 m² and focus on creating a Central Florida-inspired pre-flight experience with expanded seating and upgraded interiors. Phase 1 will be operated by multiple concession companies, with work starting mid-2025. This initiative is part of a broader \$65 million investment to modernize Terminals A and B, including updates to flooring, bathrooms, baggage claim, and gate areas, enhancing the travel experience for the nearly 60 million passengers MCO serves annually. #1233.OPS16

SSP Group and its Indian joint-venture partner, K Hospitality Corp, have announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO) of Travel Food Services (TFS) in India. TFS, a major player in airport quick service restaurants (QSRs) and lounges across India, manages a mix of its own brands and international franchises, including locations at Bengaluru International Airport. The IPO is scheduled for Spring 2025, subject to regulatory approval.

SSP and K Hospitality Corp, acting as promoters, aim to capitalise on the rapid growth of India's travel market. SSP, which acquired a 49% stake in TFS in 2016 for USD 73.9 million, plans to increase its ownership to 50.01% before the IPO. Following the listing, TFS will remain consolidated in SSP's financial results. The Kapur Family Trust, associated with K Hospitality Corp, will serve as the selling shareholder. The IPO is intended to support TFS' growth strategy and highlight its market value. A Draft Red Herring Prospectus has been filed with Indian stock exchanges and regulatory bodies, with documents soon available on relevant platforms. SSP emphasised India's strategic importance, aligning the IPO with its focus on high-growth markets offering long-term returns. TFS noted the benefits of its partnership with SSP and its commitment to leveraging global expertise to drive future growth. #1233.OPS17

Dubai Duty Free (DDF) is on track to exceed USD 2 billion in sales for 2024, having already achieved USD 1.94 billion by the end of November. November alone recorded USD 205.67 million in sales, marking it the fifth-highest month in the retailer's history. The year's highest daily sales of USD 8.46 million occurred on 30 November, with 29 November close behind at USD 8.24 million. Perfumes led sales, reaching USD 362 million, a 10% increase over 2023, followed by liquor (USD 258.37 million), tobacco (USD 200.52 million, up 8%), gold (USD 194.57 million, up 2%), and electronics (USD 134 million).

On 20 December, DDF celebrated its 41st anniversary with record-breaking daily sales of AED 59.99 million (USD 16.4 million), an 11% increase year-on-year. The event, featuring a 25% discount on a wide range of products, has become a key attraction since its introduction in 2003. Perfumes led the anniversary day's sales at AED 15.3 million (USD 4.2 million), followed by wines and spirits (AED 6.5 million/USD 1.8 million) and cosmetics (AED 6.2 million/USD 1.7 million). Precious jewellery and confectionery posted the highest growth rates at 66.8% and 56.4%, respectively, while ticket sales for the Millennium Millionaire prize draw reached AED 5.5 million (USD 1.5 million).

DDF Managing Director Ramesh Cidambi attributed the year's success to strategic sales efforts despite challenges such as boutique refurbishments and a decline in luxury fashion sales. He commended the team for managing 94,000 transactions during the anniversary day and emphasized the role of advanced planning for the festive season. With a strong December performance anticipated, DDF is poised to close 2024 with record-breaking results, cementing its position as a global leader in airport retail.

#1233.OPS18

Chinese tourists are increasingly seeking premium and extended travel experiences, with Japan emerging as one of the top destinations, alongside Singapore and Thailand, due to favourable exchange rates and diverse offerings. According to the China Outbound Travel Sentiment Survey conducted by China Trading Desk (CTD), international travel among Chinese tourists is rebounding strongly, with 128 million outbound travellers expected in 2024 and projections reaching 200 million by 2028.

The survey reveals key trends, including a preference for longer trips of 5–15 days (chosen by over 80% of respondents) and a decline in shorter holidays. Gen Z travellers stand out for their spontaneity, with nearly half planning holidays within two weeks of departure. This group favours travel for local cuisine, social experiences, and shopping for luxury goods, influenced by discounts and lower prices. Alcohol consumption trends indicate Chinese consumers are increasingly health-conscious, favouring lighter options like beer (80%) and wine (55%) over spirits. Price, quality, and brand reputation are the primary factors influencing alcohol purchases, with experiential and premium offerings gaining popularity. The findings highlight the evolving preferences of Chinese travellers, shaping global travel retail and hospitality markets. #1233.OPS19

SSP Group and Indian joint-venture partner K Hospitality Corp have announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO) for Travel Food Services (TFS), a leading operator in the airport quick service restaurant and lounge sectors in India. The IPO, subject to regulatory approval, is expected to launch in Spring 2025, with both SSP and K Hospitality Corp acting as promoters. SSP currently holds a 49% stake in TFS, acquired in 2016 for £57.9 million (USD 73.9 million), and plans to increase its holding to 50.01% before the IPO by purchasing an additional 1.01% of shares at a value tied to the IPO price. Post-IPO, SSP will continue to consolidate TFS in its financial results. The Kapur Family Trust, the shareholding entity of K Hospitality Corp, will sell shares as part of the IPO. SSP Group CEO Patrick Coveney highlighted India's strategic importance as a high-growth market and noted that the IPO will support TFS's growth strategy, provide a platform to showcase its value, and align with SSP's prioritisation of markets with significant long-term returns. TFS CEO Varun Kapur added that the partnership with SSP has benefited from global expertise and best practices, positioning TFS for further expansion.

TFS operates across major Indian airports, including Bengaluru International Airport, with a mix of proprietary and franchise brands. A Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) has been filed with the Bombay Stock Exchange and will soon be available on Indian stock exchange and regulatory websites. #1233.OPS20

Western Sydney International Airport (WSI) in Australia has launched a tender for foreign exchange and ATM operations as part of its retail development ahead of its opening in late 2026. This follows an extensive registration of interest process, with operators now invited to bid. WSI, set to become Sydney's largest airport with an eventual capacity of over 80 million passengers annually, will feature 7,000 m² of leasable retail space, including 60 m² for foreign exchange services across domestic, international, and arrivals areas. WSI CEO Simon Hickey and Retail General Manager Glyn Williams emphasised the airport's progress, with construction now over 90% complete, and their aim to deliver a world-class shopping and travel experience. Upcoming tenders over the next 12 months will include general retail, food & beverage, and vending. For more information or to express interest, interested parties can contact: retail@wsaco.com.au. The airport, designed to handle international, domestic, and cargo operations, will initially serve 10 million passengers per year, further enhancing Sydney's aviation infrastructure. #1233.OPS21

Wellington Airport (New Zealand) has announced a USD 12.3 million (NZD 20 million) upgrade of its retail and hospitality spaces, set to roll out in 2025. The project includes a two-story bar and café with views across the runway and Lyall Bay, located in the centre of the terminal above the current Blue Lady outlet. This new venue is expected to open in the second half of 2025 and will add 130 seats to the dining area.

International duty-free operator LagardereAWPL has been selected as the new provider following a competitive tender process. In addition to operating duty-free outlets for arrivals and departures, the partnership includes the transformation of existing retail spaces, such as RELAY, and the introduction of new stores featuring technology, gifting, eyewear, and beauty products.

Covering a combined floor area of 900 m², the upgrade aims to deliver a refreshed experience for travellers and shoppers. The duty-free outlets will begin transitioning in early 2025, with the remaining developments following throughout the year. Wellington Airport's CEO, Matt Clarke, highlighted the project's focus on enhancing the passenger experience and offering a strong local connection, aligning with the airport's ethos. #1233.OPS22

Gebr. Heinemann, a global travel retail and duty-free operator based in Germany, and eurotrade, a wholly owned subsidiary of Munich Airport responsible for managing its retail spaces, have extended their 50-year partnership with a new supply agreement signed on 17 December 2024. The collaboration, which dates back to the 1970s, will continue to enhance the shopping experience at Munich Airport, where eurotrade operates around 40 shops across 10,000 m² of retail space.

The agreement includes plans for a new 1,700 m² duty-free store in the highly anticipated Terminal 1 pier, with Gebr. Heinemann and eurotrade working closely on assortment planning. Gebr. Heinemann supplies a wide range of products, including wines, spirits, tobacco, confectionery, beauty items, fashion accessories, and jewellery, to eurotrade's shops. Additionally, the company supports operations at the shop floor level through its subsidiary, Beauty Consultant, which employs over 50 staff to assist with sales and customer service.

Executives from both companies praised the partnership's longevity and success, emphasizing their shared commitment to innovation, quality, and customer experience. The new agreement aims to expand services and create innovative solutions, further solidifying Munich Airport's reputation as Europe's first five-star airport and a premier shopping destination for travellers worldwide. #1233.OPS23

The Design Solution (TDS), a London-based airport planning and retail design firm celebrating its 40th anniversary, has transitioned to employee ownership by selling the company to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). This shift transfers ownership and control to TDS staff while maintaining uninterrupted business operations and its current project portfolio. TDS has completed over 1,000 design projects for 180 airports in 86 countries.

Robbie Gill remains Managing Director, with directors Graeme Johns and Nick Taylor continuing in their roles. The leadership team is strengthened with the appointment of long-standing employees Kevin Patience and Tom Johnson as new directors. The move to employee ownership reflects the company's commitment to preserving its culture, ethos, and creative vigour, ensuring continued customer-focused design and commercial acumen in its projects.

Employee ownership through EOTs is a growing trend in the UK, inspired by cooperative business models and adopted by notable firms like John Lewis Partnership and Zaha Hadid Architects. TDS's leadership views this transition as the best way to secure the company's future and support its team, laying a strong foundation for continued success. #1233.OPS24

Airport Lounges

Lithuanian Airports will launch a tender for leasing and operating an expanded business lounge in Terminal 2 of Vilnius Airport, Lithuania, with the contract beginning in Q1 2026 and lasting eight years. The new lounge will replace the existing Narbutas Business Lounge, which is set to close by the end of 2025.

The expanded facility will cover more than 700m², requiring the operator to invest in design, furnishings, staffing, supply, and promotions. A percentage of the lounge's revenue will be paid as a rental fee to Lithuanian Airports.

Vilnius Airport, located 5.9km south of the capital, anticipates steady passenger growth, with numbers projected to rise from 4.48 million in 2024 to 6.7 million by 2033.

Interested operators can contact Lithuanian Airports Head of Sales Aurimas Abisala (a.abisala@ltou.lt) or Sales Project Manager Vaidas Noreika (v.noreika@ltou.lt) for further details. #1233.OPS25

No1 Lounges, a joint venture between Airport Dimensions and Swissport, has opened a new premium lounge in Terminal 2 at London Heathrow Airport (England, United Kingdom), marking its fourth lounge at the airport. The 90-seat facility offers a tranquil space with amenities such as television zones, a library, private meeting rooms, free Wi-Fi, and a buffet featuring British-inspired seasonal dishes and beverages, including the exclusive No1 Signature Spritz cocktail.

Accessible to Priority Pass members and LoungeKey cardholders, the lounge can also be pre-booked online by other travellers. This expansion highlights Airport Dimensions' growth in the UK market and its collaboration with Heathrow Airport, with No1 Lounges now operating 15 locations across major UK airports, including Birmingham, London Gatwick, and London Luton.

The new lounge aims to enhance the passenger experience with its stylish design, premium services, and focus on customer choice. Heathrow Terminal 2 Services Manager Paul Ford emphasized the importance of such partnerships in improving the overall journey for passengers. #1233.OPS26

Swissport International (Switzerland) has reopened its renovated Aspire Executive Lounge at EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse, located on the border of France and Switzerland, following the renewal of its operating license in December 2023. The refurbishment aligns with Aspire's vision of enhancing the airport experience with a hotel-inspired ambiance. The lounge now features four distinct areas: Sky Lounge Café, open to all passengers for a fee; Sky Lounge View, offering a buffet and drinks; Sky Terrace, with views of airport operations; and Sky Bar, available for private events. Sustainability is a key focus, with renewable materials and energy-efficient appliances used throughout. Aspire's renovation efforts also extend to Zurich Airport (Switzerland), where the revamped Aspire ONE Lounge reopened on 6 December 2024, showcasing a modern design with upgraded interiors and innovative lighting.

Aspire Executive Lounges, one of the largest global airport hospitality brands, hosts over six million guests annually across nearly 100 locations. In 2024, more than 20 lounges were added, with plans to expand further, including 11 lounges at Moroccan airports under a new 10-year license starting in 2025. #1233.OPS27

Clune Construction has completed LOT Polish Airlines' first business lounge in the United States at Chicago O'Hare International Airport's Terminal 5 (Illinois, United States). The 6,641 ft² lounge reflects Polish craftsmanship, featuring materials such as custom tiles, furniture, and plumbing fixtures sourced from Poland. Its design includes intricate wall slats showcasing the Tatra Mountains, paying tribute to Poland's natural beauty.

The project was completed ahead of schedule despite the challenges of working near baggage and customs operations. Clune, known for its expertise in airport environments, is pursuing a Green Airplane certification for the lounge, aligning with its commitment to sustainable building practices. This project adds to Clune's portfolio at O'Hare, which includes the United Club and several restaurants.

#1233.OPS28

The Escape Lounge at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (Kentucky, United States) is relocating to a new, larger space near Gate B12, with a USD 7.4 million renovation project. The upgraded lounge, spanning 628m² on the mezzanine level of Concourse B, will be over four times the size of the current location and is expected to open in late 2025.

The design will feature four themed zones: Bluegrass Backstage, highlighting local breweries and distilleries; Riverbank Retreat, inspired by the Ohio River; Queen City Oasis, offering comfortable seating and local artwork; and Maker's Mark Workshop, reflecting the region's industrial heritage. The lounge will also offer a rotating menu of local and international dishes, including breakfast, entrée options, and snacks.

This expansion comes as CVG experiences continued passenger growth, reflecting the rising popularity of premium amenities at the airport. Escape Lounge, operating at CVG since 2019, aims to enhance the travel experience with its expanded services and unique local touches. #1233.OPS29

Several major airlines and credit card companies are set to unveil new airport lounges in the United States in 2025, focusing on enhanced comfort, dining, and workspaces for travelers.

Here's what's in store:

- American Airlines: Two lounges will open at Philadelphia International Airport (Pennsylvania) in Terminal A-West. The Admirals Club and Flagship Lounge will feature upscale dining, craft cocktails, and private suites with showers.
- Capital One: Expanding its lounge network, Capital One will debut lounges at LaGuardia Airport (New York), John F. Kennedy International Airport (New York), and Harry Reid International Airport (Nevada). Capital One Landing lounges, including one at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (Virginia), will offer Michelin-starred menus.
- Chase Sapphire: New Sapphire lounges will open at Harry Reid International Airport (Nevada), San Diego International Airport (California), Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (Arizona), and Philadelphia International Airport (Pennsylvania), doubling Chase's lounge presence across U.S. airports.
- American Express Centurion: A new Centurion Lounge is planned for Salt Lake City International Airport (Utah), featuring an outdoor area with heating, local food and beverages, and a curated cocktail and mocktail bar exclusively for cardholders.
- JetBlue: JetBlue will launch its first-ever lounges at John F. Kennedy International Airport (New York) and Boston Logan International Airport (Massachusetts), with openings expected in late 2025.

These new lounges highlight a growing focus on creating luxurious and accessible spaces to transform the travel experience for passengers across the country. #1233.OPS30

Traffic

Avinor's airports in Norway reported handling 4 million passengers in November 2024, a 5% increase compared to November 2023. International travel saw the most growth, rising by 12% in November and 9% for the year to date, reflecting increasing interest in Norway as a travel destination and continued prioritisation of international travel by Norwegians. Domestic travel grew by 2% in

November, although the domestic market itself declined slightly (-1%) compared to November 2023, with growth driven by international connecting flights.

November also marked the strongest growth in flight load factors this year, increasing by 3.5 percentage points compared to the same month in 2023, supporting better infrastructure utilisation and reduced emissions. However, commercial flight movements decreased by 2% in November and by 1% for the year to date.

Drone flights surged, with 1,724 reported in November, a 25% increase year-on-year. Over 23,000 drone flights have been recorded so far this year, up 63% from 2023, highlighting the growing use of drones despite challenging weather conditions. #1233.OPS31

Manchester Airport (England, United Kingdom) achieved a record-breaking November with 2.1 million passengers, a 13% increase from its previous high. Amsterdam emerged as the most popular destination, with over 94,000 passengers, followed by Dublin, Dubai, and Tenerife. Winter sun destinations like Lanzarote and Qatar also saw significant traffic.

The airport is preparing for a busy festive period, with 1.1 million passengers expected between 20 December and 2 January. Around 25,000 travellers will head to Lapland, with seasonal flights to Finnish airports providing access to snowy landscapes, husky rides, and Father Christmas.

Operational efficiency remained strong in November, with 99% of passengers passing through security in under 15 minutes. The airport also celebrated milestones in its transformation programme, including the completion of external work on Terminal 2's second pier, successful trials of new taxiways, and progress on Sydney Avenue, a new link road to improve traffic flow.

Retail spaces in Terminal 2 are being prepared for opening next year, marking another step towards the completion of the airport's transformation project, which began in 2015. This period solidifies Manchester Airport's role as a global gateway for northern England, offering extensive connectivity outside London. #1233.OPS32

In November 2024, Schiphol Airport (The Netherlands) handled nearly 5.1 million passengers, a 7% increase compared to 2023. Of these, 3.2 million were direct passengers, while 1.9 million were transfer passengers, with over 900,000 counted twice due to international counting methods. European destinations accounted for 3.6 million passengers, while 1.5 million traveled to intercontinental destinations. The United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, and the United States were the most popular destinations.

The airport managed 36,590 flights, a 3% rise from 2023, with 29,576 flights to European destinations and 7,014 to intercontinental locations. Cargo operations saw a modest 2% increase, with 1,293 cargo flights transporting 120,293 tonnes, a 4% rise in volume compared to November 2023. These figures highlight steady growth in both passenger and cargo traffic. #1233.OPS33

Brussels Airport (Belgium) welcomed over 1.7 million passengers in November 2024, a 9% increase from the same period in 2023, driven by post-autumn holiday travel. The top destinations included Spain, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Cargo volumes also saw an 18% rise, with 67,320 tonnes transported, bolstered by a 30% increase in belly cargo due to more passenger flights. Key import regions were Asia, Africa, and North America, with Asia leading in exports. Flight movements grew by 5%, with 15,541 operations in November, including a 12% increase in cargo flights. Passenger flights carried an average of 140 passengers each, supported by larger aircraft and improved load factors.

Brussels Airport, a vital European hub, offers connections to 220 destinations through 72 airlines. It remains a leader in pharmaceutical logistics and is advancing its sustainability goals under the SHIFT 2027 strategy while supporting 85,000 jobs. #1233.OPS34

Liege Airport, Belgium's top-ranking cargo hub and a leader in Europe, achieved record-breaking performance in November 2024 with 2,586 cargo aircraft movements—a 12.6% increase from November 2023—and a 16% rise in tonnage to 112,106 tons. The airport, specialising in perishables, pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, and humanitarian cargo, has expanded its cargo airline portfolio by 20% to 49 freighter carriers and supports nearly 60 logistics companies. Boosted by strong demand from Asia and a booming e-commerce sector, Liege Airport recorded the second-highest cargo growth in Europe in October 2024, trailing only Madrid. The outlook for 2025 remains highly positive, driven by sustained air freight demand and double-digit growth. #1233.OPS35

Frankfurt Airport (FRA) reported a modest passenger increase in November 2024, with approximately 4.6 million travellers, a 1.0% rise from the previous year but still 8.4% below November 2019 levels. Cargo throughput rose by 2.4% to 178,355 metric tons, while aircraft movements and maximum takeoff weights (MTOWs) decreased by 1.4% and 0.6%, respectively. Across the Fraport Group, total passenger numbers increased by 4.2% year-on-year to 10.4 million. Ljubljana Airport (Slovenia) saw a 2.1% decline in passengers, while Brazilian airports Fortaleza and Porto Alegre faced a 12.6% drop, attributed to operational disruptions at Porto Alegre caused by severe flooding. In contrast, Lima Airport (Peru) experienced a 10.1% surge in traffic to 2.1 million passengers, and Fraport's Greek regional airports recorded an 11.6% growth with 876,317 travellers. Antalya Airport (Turkey) saw significant growth of 16.3%, handling 1.7 million passengers, while Bulgaria's Twin Star airports experienced a 14.8% decline. Fraport AG remains a major player in global airport operations, managing airports across four continents and serving over 168 million passengers in 2023. #1233.OPS36

German airports handled 15.18 million passengers in November 2024, marking a 6.3% increase compared to November 2023 but remaining 13.6% below November 2019 levels. Passenger volumes dropped by approximately 6 million from October, reflecting seasonal trends and limited seat availability. The recovery rate compared to pre-pandemic levels fell to 86.4%, the lowest in five months, leaving Germany trailing in Europe's aviation recovery. Domestic air travel saw a decline, with 2.05 million passengers in November—a 1.0% drop from the previous year and 44.6% below November 2019. European travel, with 9.78 million passengers, grew 7.3% year-over-year but remained 6.5% below pre-crisis levels. Intercontinental traffic reached 3.31 million passengers, growing 8.1% from 2023 and achieving a 98.0% recovery rate compared to 2019. From January to November 2024, German airports recorded 197.17 million passengers, a 7.4% increase year-on-year but only 84.5% of the 2019 level. Growth remains slower than 2023, which saw a 22% annual increase. Domestic air travel continues to struggle, operating at just 51.5% of pre-pandemic levels, while European and intercontinental travel achieved recovery rates of 91.4% and 94.0%, respectively. Cargo volumes also reflect challenges, with 415,560 tonnes handled in November, a 0.7% decrease compared to 2023 and 2.7% below 2019 levels. While outbound cargo grew by 1.0%, inbound volumes declined by 2.2%. Year-to-date air cargo totals reached 4.38 million tonnes, a modest 2.0% increase over 2023 but still 0.5% below 2019 levels, highlighting stagnation in air freight growth due to economic conditions. #1233.OPS37

Passenger traffic at Vienna Airport and its group airports, including Malta and Kosice, showed notable growth in November 2024. The Flughafen Wien Group handled 2,936,271 passengers, reflecting a 10.0% increase compared to the same month in 2023. Vienna Airport alone welcomed 2,264,936 passengers, marking a 7.4% rise. On 10 December 2024, the airport surpassed 30 million passengers for the year, setting a significant milestone.

Vienna Airport reported a 9.4% increase in local passenger numbers, reaching 1,850,561, though transfer traffic slightly decreased by 0.7% to 407,822. Flight movements rose by 4.1% to 17,291, and cargo volume saw a substantial increase of 23.5%, amounting to 27,134 tonnes. The airport also experienced growth across various regions, with passenger traffic to Western Europe up by 6.1%, Eastern Europe rising by 11.4%, North America increasing by 10.4%, and Africa growing by 9.8%. Destinations in the Middle East saw a modest rise of 1.2%, while traffic to the Far East surged by 27.6%.

Malta Airport handled 630,637 passengers in November, reflecting a 19.2% increase, while Kosice Airport saw a strong growth of 29.0%, accommodating 40,698 passengers.

From January to November 2024, Vienna Airport served 29,339,140 passengers, a 7.3% rise compared to the previous year and 0.5% above pre-crisis levels in 2019. Cargo volumes during this period reached 272,921 tonnes, a 21.6% increase. Across the entire Flughafen Wien Group, passenger traffic totaled 38,399,111, up 9.1% year-on-year. #1233.OPS38

In November 2024, Aena Group airports served 26.4 million passengers, marking an 8.7% increase over November 2023, alongside handling 240,282 aircraft movements (+9.2%) and 130,424 tonnes of freight (+14.1%). Spanish airports within the Aena network contributed significantly, with 21.6 million passengers (+9.2%), 193,247 aircraft movements (+11.1%), and 120,427 tonnes of freight (+17.6%). Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas led with over 5.2 million passengers and 34,177 movements.

Cumulatively, Aena airports have handled over 342.5 million passengers (+8.6%) and nearly 1.3 million tonnes of freight (+18.8%) in 2024. Notable records include the highest-ever November passenger and freight volumes at multiple airports, including Madrid-Barajas and Zaragoza.

Aena Brasil and London Luton Airport also reported passenger growth, with Brazilian airports seeing a 6.3% increase in November and London Luton recording a 6.3% rise in the same period. #1233.OPS39

New York City area airports are preparing for a record 150 million passengers in 2025, reflecting surging air travel demand and a strong recovery in international travel, according to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ). Libby McCarthy, the agency's CFO, shared the projection during a board meeting, highlighting that 2025 is expected to be a record year for airport and transit activity, including the PATH train network connecting Manhattan to New Jersey. Major redevelopment projects are underway at Newark Liberty and JFK International Airports. Newark is undergoing a long-term redevelopment, including a new international terminal, while JFK is advancing its USD 19 billion overhaul with a new Terminal One and expansions of Terminals 4 and 8. Aviation upgrades account for USD 16 billion of PANYNJ's capital plan, underscoring the focus on modernising and expanding infrastructure to handle the anticipated growth. #1233.OPS40

GMR Airports reported a 13.6% year-on-year (YoY) increase in passenger traffic across its airports, reaching 11.2 million passengers in November 2024. Domestic traffic grew by 14.3% YoY, while international traffic increased by 11.3% YoY. Delhi Airport handled 6.7 million passengers (up 12% YoY), and Hyderabad Airport saw a notable rise to 2.5 million passengers (up 25% YoY). Aircraft movements also rose by 8% YoY, with 69,540 recorded in November.

GMR Airports, Asia's largest private airport operator and the second largest globally, operates major airports including Delhi, Hyderabad, and Goa's Manohar International Airport. The company is partnered with Groupe ADP, which holds a 49% stake. Despite passenger growth, GMR Airports posted a consolidated net loss of approximately USD 33.6 million in Q2 FY25, compared to USD 10.9 million in Q2 FY24. Meanwhile, net sales rose by 20.9% YoY to approximately USD 299.4 million. #1233.OPS41

Beijing Capital Airport (Beijing, China) saw significant passenger growth in November 2024, with a throughput of 5.4621 million, up 16% year-on-year. Cargo and mail throughput reached 127,400 tons, a 6.6% increase, while aircraft movements totalled 36,000, reflecting a 6.7% rise compared to the same period last year.

From January to November 2024, passenger throughput reached 61.857 million, a 28.7% year-on-year increase. Cargo and mail throughput rose by 14.7% to 1.3164 million tons, and aircraft movements climbed to 396,800, an increase of 14.7%. #1233.OPS42

Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (Guangdong, China) reported strong growth in November 2024, with passenger throughput reaching 6.5 million, a year-on-year increase of 19.94%. Cumulative passenger numbers for the year totalled 69.67 million, up 21.16% compared to the previous year.

Cargo and mail throughput for November stood at 212,059 tons, reflecting a 5.68% year-on-year rise, with the cumulative figure reaching 2.16 million tons, an 18.12% increase. Aircraft movements in November totalled 43,637, a 12.94% rise, while the year-to-date total reached 465,983, up 12.05% year-on-year. #1233.OPS43

VINCI Airports reported an 8.8% increase in passenger traffic for November 2024 compared to 2023, maintaining strong growth momentum. Year-to-date (YTD) figures show an 8.5% rise in passenger numbers for the first 11 months of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. Key regional highlights:

- Portugal: November up 6.1% (YTD: +4.3%), maintaining a strong 17% increase versus 2019.
- United Kingdom: November up 7.9% (YTD: +7.6%), but still below 2019 levels by 2.9%.
- France: November up 5.4% (YTD: +4.7%), remaining 12% lower than 2019.
- Hungary: November saw significant growth at 22% (YTD: +19%), continuing its recovery.
- Mexico: November up 8.4%, though YTD slightly declined by 1.9%.
- United States: Passenger traffic increased 7.6% in November (YTD: +8.7%).
- Japan: November up 13%, marking a steady recovery despite being 5.5% below 2019 levels.
- Cambodia: November surged by 25%, though still 29% below 2019 traffic levels.

The results reflect strong recovery trends across most regions, with notable year-over-year increases, though some areas remain below pre-pandemic levels from 2019. #1233.OPS44

Cargo Terminals

Worldwide Flight Services (WFS), a SATS company, is opening its fourth cargo terminal at Copenhagen Airport (Denmark, expanding its specialised e-commerce and freight forwarder handling (EFFH) services in Denmark. Initially, the services will operate from a 2,500 m² facility at Kystvejen 24, moving to a newly refurbished 4,800 m² warehouse at Kystvejen 28 by summer 2025. WFS will also take over Wallenborn Outsourcing's customer portfolio in Copenhagen from Wallenborn Transports, a major European air-cargo road feeder service operator, starting 1 March 2025. The new facility will strengthen WFS's position as the airport's largest air cargo handler, supporting over 50 airline

customers. This expansion adds to WFS's existing operations, which include purpose-built facilities and a pharma-certified warehouse serving the life sciences sector.

WFS already offers EFFH services at eight other major airports, including Amsterdam, Brussels, and London Heathrow, and plans to introduce more value-added solutions in Copenhagen. The acquisition and expansion highlight WFS's commitment to innovation and growth in Denmark's logistics and air cargo handling market. #1233.OPS45

Wiremind Cargo and TAP Air Cargo have enhanced their partnership by integrating SKYPALLET, a capacity optimisation tool, with CHAMP's Cargospot cargo management system. This API integration allows TAP Air Cargo to seamlessly transfer air waybill data from Cargospot to SKYPALLET, streamlining shipment evaluations and flight planning. Key benefits include automatic co-loadability checks, segregation, and T-ULD optimisation, reducing flight planning time from up to 30 minutes to just seconds.

The integration ensures Cargospot remains the authoritative source for booking updates, which are reflected automatically in SKYPALLET, eliminating manual data input and boosting operational efficiency. SKYPALLET, introduced to TAP Air Cargo in October 2022, has already demonstrated its ability to improve flight load factors by 5-10% on average.

Wiremind Cargo emphasised the value of seamless software integration in enhancing process efficiency, while TAP Air Cargo highlighted the benefits of API-driven collaboration in maximising system usability. CHAMP Cargosystems supported the integration, showcasing its API ecosystem designed to drive innovation in cargo management. #1233.OPS46

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has introduced the Air Cargo Device Assessment Program, designed to validate tracking devices, data loggers, and sensor-equipped devices used in air cargo. This initiative ensures compliance with stringent safety standards outlined in IATA's Recommended Practice 1693, which addresses battery safety and electromagnetic compatibility. Validation data will be accessible via ONE Source, a centralised platform for industry stakeholders.

The program's first validated product, THE BOX, a smart reusable packing solution by LivingPackets Group, highlights its importance for innovation and global standard compliance. The program benefits the air cargo industry by simplifying validation processes for device manufacturers, enhancing safety and approval processes for airlines, and improving planning and carrier selection for shippers and forwarders. It aims to support the efficient delivery of sensitive shipments, reducing waste and ensuring shipment integrity. #1233.OPS47

DHL Express is investing NZD 42 million (USD 24.6 million) in a state-of-the-art gateway facility at Christchurch Airport's Dakota Park freight precinct, set to open in 2026. This development reinforces Christchurch Airport's role as the largest freight hub in New Zealand's South Island, facilitating trade and connectivity for local businesses. Dakota Park, an 80-hectare freight precinct, already hosts leading logistics firms, and DHL's investment underscores the airport's strategic importance in economic growth and global market access.

The new facility will integrate DHL's service point and gateway operations, featuring advanced sorting technology and sustainable infrastructure, aligning with the airport's environmentally responsible growth objectives. The project also supports Christchurch Airport's 2040 Master Plan, aimed at enhancing the South Island's global competitiveness and connectivity. Direct tarmac access at the facility will improve shipment processing speed, benefiting exporters and importers in the region. #1233.OPS48

Awards & Recognition

dnata has been named Ground Support Services Provider of the Year at the 2024 Aviation Business Middle East Awards for the 14th time, marking its fifth consecutive win. The recognition highlights dnata's ongoing investments in technology, sustainability, and service excellence. Recent innovations include integrating autonomous drones in UAE operations, implementing AI-powered solutions in Singapore, and expanding its advanced cargo management system, One Cargo, globally. The company has also focused on environmental efficiency, reducing its carbon intensity by over 8% and transitioning its non-electric fleet to biodiesel at Dubai's airports. In 2024, dnata handled services for over 91.8 million passengers, reflecting a 5% year-on-year increase, and supported 175 airlines, including eight new partnerships.

Additional milestones include continued progress on dnata Cargo City Amsterdam, growth of its airport hospitality brand marhaba, and enhancements to 2.9 million travellers' journeys in Dubai. The award reaffirms dnata's role in supporting Dubai's position as a global aviation hub. #1233.OPS49

Names

ABM Aviation, part of ABM UK and Ireland, has promoted Ian Mitchell to Vice President of Operations for Aviation and Transport after a year of significant achievements. As a leading provider of facilities and transport solutions, ABM specialises in passenger assistance, secure cabin cleaning, and bussing services, alongside sustainable operational support for airports and transport networks.

Mitchell, who brings decades of experience in aviation and transport, has previously managed flagship contracts at Heathrow Airport and worked with National Express. In his new role, he will lead a senior leadership team under Managing Director Jim Niblock, overseeing operations across the UK, including key roles at Heathrow, Gatwick, and Manchester airports. #1233.OPS50

Philippe Margueritte, a former senior executive at Coty, has been elected as President of the Tax Free World Association (TFWA) for a one-year term starting December 2024. Margueritte, who spent 15 years at Coty, including six years as Senior Vice President for Global Travel Retail & Export Europe, succeeds Erik Juul-Mortensen, a founding member of TFWA who served as President for a total of 23 years.

The TFWA President oversees the Association's activities, ensuring they align with its members' interests and values. Margueritte brings extensive experience in travel retail and leadership, having recently served as CEO of Ritz Enterprise. Juul-Mortensen expressed gratitude for the support during his tenure and wished the Association success as it enters a new chapter. #1233.OPS51

Royal Schiphol Group has announced that Joost van Doesburg, its head of cargo since March 2023, will step down from his position on 1 February 2025 amid accusations of "defamatory allegations." While the specific nature of the allegations was not disclosed, the group expressed regret over the situation, emphasising that business-related criticism had been unfairly personalised, leading to media attention.

Patricia Vitalis, executive director of Schiphol operations, praised van Doesburg for his dedication and significant contributions, including overhauling the Cargo Port Community system Cargonaut, increasing cargo volumes, and initiating efforts to reposition cargo operations with a focus on sustainability and quality. Schiphol acknowledged his achievements and expressed gratitude for his service during challenging circumstances. #1233.OPS52



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