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Flight AirlineBusiness

ALL THE NEWS FROM
74th IATA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WORLD AIR TRANSPORT SUMMIT
SYDNEY > 3 — 5 JUNE 2018

Gareth Evans Chief executive, Jetstar Group
Andrew David Chief executive, Qantas Domestic
Alison Webster Chief executive, Qantas International
Alan Joyce Chief executive, Qantas Group

THE WIZARDS OF OZ

Qantas's fortunes have turned a dramatic corner in recent years as it heads toward a potential record profit this year.

Strong revenue performances across its domestic and international network, as well as its budget unit Jetstar are predicted to push to up to A$1.6 billion ($1.22 billion).

This year has also seen some major changes in the joint networks of partners Qantas and Emirates. The Australian carier stopped operating flights into Dubai in March, moving the stop for its Sydney-London flights to Singapore. It also cancelled its Melbourne-Dubai-London flights, in favour of its Melbourne-Perth-London flight.

Emirates, too, cut a number of tag flights from Australia's east coast to Auckland, as it focused on its nonstop flights to Dubai.

But Qantas group chief executive Alan Joyce says building out its hub-busting long-haul network has not weakened their relationship. "The partnership always evolved, we're getting better all the time. We're understanding each other a lot closer than we have ever been. We're really supportive and a really big fan of the partnership we have with Emirates, and nothing with that has changed."

Asked if the plans to operate more nonstop flights from Perth to Europe, and from 2022 nonstops from Sydney and Melbourne to New York and London would impact the relationship, Joyce noted that many passengers would still travel on its codeshare services with Emirates to its wider range of destinations in Europe.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

$33.8bn
Projected airline net profit for 2018, $4.6bn down on last forecast

$15bn
North American carriers continue to lead industry profits

7%
Projected increase in passenger traffic this year, still above 20-year trend levels

Africa the only region set to make a collective net loss this year

Higher oil prices mean IATA now sees fuel accounting for **24.2%** of airlines costs this year

Source: IATA forecast

Challenging SAA – 6

Inside this issue

How aviation can make a better job of driving gender equality

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Support for women and girls is vital in encouraging them to join the industry, panellists said during a session yesterday on driving gender equality in aviation.

Former president of International Aviation Women's Association, Mylene Scholnick, noted that women often carry two jobs: in the office and at home. The challenge comes in balancing the two, and that support from their partners and family members is essential.

Air Namibia's acting managing director Mandi Samson pointed out there is also a lack of female representation in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. This extends to aviation in general.

Scholnick disagrees with the idea of imposing quotas or rules to encourage female participation. Her preference is on helping them complete their education and to develop initiatives to encourage women to join the industry.

Luxon defends codeshare

Air New Zealand boss says domestic codeshares with Qantas not anti-competitive

Air New Zeland chief executive Christopher Luxon has dismissed concerns that its upcoming codeshare deal with Qantas will be anti-competitive.

Luxon notes that the Star Alliance carrier flies four million passengers on transtasman routes annually, but only around 137,000 of these take onward flights into other destinations in Australia.

Announced last week, the deal will see Qantas place its code on 30 domestic routes flown by Air NZ in its home market from 28 October. The Kiwi carrier, meanwhile, will place its code on 85 routes within Australia operated by Qantas. It does not apply to the pair's transtasman services.

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Luxon: Qantas codeshare is for a very small set of customers

Luxon says that since the connectivity between both first- and second-tier cities in the two nations is so strong that only a small number of passengers need an onward connection. "It's a connecting codeshare agreement for a very small set of customers, that we had to find a solution for," he says.

His remarks came the same day that the Australian Airports Association called on competition regulators in Australia and New Zealand to scrutinise the codeshare agreement, amid fears that it may hamper Virgin Australia's ability to compete on the Tasman and lower service quality.■

IN BRIEF

IATA GIVEN 2020 VISION TO TRACK BAGGAGE

IATA has been mandated by its board for an initiative to help meet consumer expectations for real-time baggage tracking. "We've got one year to develop a global deployment plan that will see IATA standard RFID inlays in all baggage tags," says director general Alexandre de Junaic. "During that time we will align our partners in the value chain - especially airports - so that we can achieve our industry's vision to begin rolling this out in 2020."

IATA LINKS WITH AFRAA ON AFRICAN AVIATION

IATA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Airline Association (AFRAA) to work together on a range of safety, security and market liberalisation efforts. Together, they will work on aspects including assisting African carriers to implement IOSA and other IATA audits and manuals, support the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market.

SABRE DEEPENS NDC TIES WITH VIETNAM AIRLINES

Vietnam Airlines and Sabre have expanded their partnership, as the carrier continues to implement IATA's New Distribution Capability. During an event at the AGM, the airline's executive vice-president Trinh Hong Quang, said that the carrier will continue working on NDC implantation.

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Executive viewpoints

This year's Airline CEO Insight panel was another lively, informative and entertaining affair. From host Richard Quest's opening salvo to KLM chief Pieter Elbers, leaders from airlines across the globe discussed wide-ranging topics ranging from industry-level issues impacting all carriers, to their own individual challenges and opportunies

"Six men in suits are going to discuss [gender] diversity"

RICHARD QUEST
CNN

"I wish journalists and bloggers would get a life"

CALIN ROVINESCU
Chief executive,
Air Canada

"Airport charges are a big deal"

RUPERT HOGG
Chief executive,
Cathay Pacific

De Juniac urges governments to resist protectionism

IATA director general and chief executive Alexandre de Juniac warns that governments must resist the "forces of protectionism" and work together to streamline security arrangements.

Delivering his keynote speech during the IATA World Air Transport Summit, he highlighted the threat of a looming trade war, tariffs and other geopolitical risks were at risk of undermining the positive role that airlines play in the world.

"We are at a juncture. Facts show that aviation has created immense value by bringing people, products and business together. And ultimately, I believe the enormous benefits of globalisation will guide us forward."

He reiterated IATA's long-held mantra of "aviation is the business of freedom", and espoused the hard work done by airlines to become the facilitator of "more inclusive globalisation."

De Juniac also called on governments to work together to create common standards around aviation security, and build stronger trust between the arrangements of different nations.

"One-stop security is a good example of the progress we are aiming for," he says, noting travellers from the USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore and Europe are experiencing benefits of moving to a risk-based approach to passenger screening at transfer points," he says ■

"Yeah, it's very strong. We like to think that we have acted as brand ambassadors [for] Dubai"

TIM CLARK
President,
Emirates Airline

"First question is: why not?" (when asked if it's possible for a Dutch person to be the chief of a French company)

PIETER ELBERS
Chief executive,
KLM

"It's a big question," when asked on artificial intelligence

CHRISTOPHER LUXON
Chief executive,
Air New Zealand

Creeping costs cap profits for 2018

Industry outlook for this year scaled back to $33.8 billion but still marks fourth consecutive year of strong airline returns

IATA has lowered its profit forecast for the industry in 2018, citing higher fuel and labour costs, as well as interest rates.

The association is now forecasting a collective net profit of $33.8 billion for airlines, down from its December 2017 forecast of $38.4 billion. The new forecast is also lower than the $38 billion profit posted in 2017, although IATA says comparisons to the figure is distorted by special accounting items such as one-off tax credits which boosted profits last year.

At heart of the change is the impact of higher oil prices. IATA now expects the fuel price to average $70 per barrel, up from its previous forecast of $60 a barrel, and the $54.9 a barrel logged last year.

That cost increase is partly offset by more strong passenger demand, whiles yields are seen growing by 3.2%, after a 0.8% decline in 2017. The restocking cycle has come to an end for the cargo market, however, and demand in the segment is expected to grow 4%, dropping from the 9.7% jump last year.

"Solid profitability is holding up in 2018, despite rising costs. The industry's financial foundations are strong with a nine-year run in the black that began in 2010," says IATA director general and chief executive Alexandre de Juniac.

"And the return on invested capital will exceed the cost of capital for a fourth consecutive year. At long last, normal profits are becoming normal for airlines."

North American carriers remain the most profitable, and are expected to post a net profit of $15 billion, followed by European airlines with $8.6 billion and Asia Pacific carriers with $8.2 billion. ■

Mikosz puts Kenya back on the front foot

A year into the top job at Kenya Airways, chief executive Sebastian Mikosz is aware there is plenty more work required to complete the turnaround of the SkyTeam carrier but is heartened the airline is at least moving forward again.

The former LOT chief joined the carrier in June 2017 as work was underway on refinancing, after the previously profitable carrier had begun running up losses. That financial restructuring was finalised in November last year, enabling Mikosz to look ahead.

"What I started focusing on was the industrial restructuring, because despite the financial restructuring, the cost structure and the revenue is the challenge," he exlains.

But while this work continues, the airline has begun to be more positive. "I'm very proud of the fact the company started believing in itself. There is a pretty big psychological part of the restructuring…. breaking through is very important and for us the symbolic breakthrough is the launch of the New York flights which we will operate in October," he says.

In January the carrier announced plans for the long-discussed New York service - there are no scheduled direct flights from Kenya to the USA - using Boeing 787 aircraft.

"Next week we start operating direct fights to Mauritius, we are just opening a nonstop to Cape Town, and before the end of the year we will announce some new routes we are going to fly next year," he adds.

"There are still a lot of challenges, but at least there are the first moves of an airline that starts growing and fighting," says Mikosz.

Jarana embarks on task of rebuilding struggling SAA

New boss moves swiftly on plan aimed at moving loss-making carrier to breakeven

New South African Airways chief executive Vuyani Jarana is in no doubt of the size of the task he has inherited and is wasting no time to tackle its challenges.

"The biggest single issue for SAA is it has been a loss-making airline for decades, so we have to restructure the business, rebase it, make sure it can come back and be profitable," he says. "So we have put together a very solid and ambitious plan to make sure the business breaks even in three years time. Now obviously the big part is around making sure we have funding to support the turnaround plan and this is what we are talking to the shareholders [about]."

Former telecoms executive Jarana took over in November and is working with a team including former Air Malta and Brussels Airlines boss Peter Davies as chief restructuring officer.


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Jarana: we have to rightsize

"Costs are too high and we must take out the cost, but in a number of areas, whether it is in supply chain, how we buy things, business simplification, but also pure areas around headcount," Jarana says. "We have to rightsize the business.

"Looking at the fleet and network, we are probably quite thin for the size of the business we are running," he adds. "The immediate issue is that we have an older part of the fleet, we have to make decisions quite quickly, especially given the oil price movement now, so we are working very hard in terms of re-tuning the network.

"By September we should be able to present to the board a new growth path for SAA with associated fleet requirements. Then we have to find the right commercial construct within which we can refresh the fleet without putting too much burden on the P&L."

Singapore's longer range thinking

Singapore Airlines could face some cargo payload restrictions on its Airbus A350-900ULR flights to the USA, especially during the northern winter.

"There could be some payload concerns, but on the cargo side particularly," says SIA chief executive Goh Choon Phong. The restrictions would likely apply to westbound flights to Singapore during the winter months. "When we get the aircraft we do have modelling rules, but this depends on actual weather."

He adds that carrier has substantial data based on its previous nonstop services to New York and Los Angeles that used A340-500s. The first A350-900ULR is now undergoing flight testing. SIA will again operate the world's longest commercial flights from 11 October, with the start of its near-19 hour nonstop Singapore-Newark service.

The -900ULRs will have 161 seats, 67 in business and 94 in premium economy. The carrier will fly a daily frequency from 18 October. The first aircraft will arrive in September, with the remaining six to be delivered before the end of SIA's financial year, which ends on 31 March 2019. "I'm looking at where else to fly. Seven aircraft is probably more than what's needed for the New York and LA routes.

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Colvile takes lead role at SkyTeam

New chief appointment comes as alliance launches functionality to enable members to cross-sell ancillary products

SkyTeam introduced its new chief executive at a media briefing here yesterday, as Delta Air Lines executive Kristin Colvile took the helm of the alliance

Colvile is replacing Perry Cantarutti, who is returning to Delta as senior vice-president alliances.

In her new role, Colvile says she will focus on enhancing the technological capabilities of its members, as well as customer experience of their passengers.

SkyTeam detailed the launch of SkyLink Digital Spine, a technology-based functionality to allow member airlines of the grouping to exchange seat maps and cross-sell ancillary products to passengers. The functionality translates messages between airlines, using


Colvile takes over from Cantarutti who is returning to a role at Delta

BillyPix

the New Distribution Capability (NDC) technology.

Aeromexico and Delta Air Lines will be the first users of Digital Spine, with the functionality to be rolled out in mid-July. Five other airlines will subsequently participate this year, and all 20 members of the alliance will be connected in 2019.

One of the options available in Digital Spine include the seamless ancillaries programme, which SkyTeam expects around 7.5 million passengers to benefit on an annual basis.

Colvile has held several leadership positions at Northwest Airlines and Delta, most recently leading its cargo enterprise through a multi-year transition.

Cantarutti has led SkyTeam for two years. 'We thank Perry for all his hard work over the last three years. He brought many pivotal projects into fruition that will continue to expand under Kristin's guidance," says SkyTeam chairman Michael Wisbrun.

Goh: Reviewing what functionality connecting partners might need

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Star reviews connection

Star Alliance is reviewing its connecting partner model, after accepting Juneyao Airlines as the first partner under the programme last year.

Chief executive Jeffrey Goh says the alliance "wanted to take some time out in understanding what not only this model stands for but [also] the experiences we've had from the integration of Juneyao".

He notes when Juneyao joined as the first connecting partner in 2017, there were more than 40 standards the carrier had to implement. It was later found a number of these standards were "not required for a connecting partner."

In addition, a number of the connecting other partner candidates do not use the traditional global distribution systems, and that required technological changes delays their entry process.

Goh still expects more to follow Juneyao, noting it is likely to announce new connecting partners "towards the end of the year".

NDC ready for the next step

IATA believes its New Distribution Capability (NDC) is about to take an important step, moving from capability development to transaction volume.

Aleks Popovich, IATA's senior vice-president, financial and distribution services, says the strategy now is to focus on increasing the number of transactions using NDC. By 2020, IATA aims for 20% of secondary transactions conducted by NDC leaderboard airlines to go through NDC. Now, the number is marginal.

The NDC leaderboard comprises 21 key IATA members such as Air France, American Airlines, British Airways, Qantas, Singapore Airlines, and United Airlines.

Most leaderboard airlines have Level Three NDC capability, the most advanced tier.

"In terms of capability it's job done," he says. "We've proved our point in terms of capability, but now it's about transactions."


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By focusing on the top NDC airlines, IATA hopes to gain user cases that it can highlight to the broader membership, furthering its development.

Popovich says that IATA is also happy with the adoption of NDC by the major global distribution systems Sabre, Amadeus, and Travelport. Their embrace of the standard is important for the crucial travel agent market.

He adds that the role of travel agent is evolving into a "travel advisor," which can see the full product range of airline offerings, and advise clients accordingly.

Air India chief touts positive signs despite sale blank

Air India remains unfazed by the uncertainty around its planned privatisation after New Delhi received no responses from interested parties after the passing of an end of May deadline.

Chairman and managing director Pradeep Singh Kharola says the airline has been focused on managing its growth expectations and running Air India efficiently, stressing that it will be up to the government to decide a way forward.

Measures the airline has taken include improving its operating efficiency and raising aircraft utilisation rates. It is also investing in improvements to its service and IT systems to meet the standards required by Star Alliance.

In the all-competitive domestic market, Air India is ramping up marketing efforts in an attempt to retain market share, and expanding its low-cost carrier Air India Express and regional operator Alliance Air.

"I would say India is a very diverse market. The strength of Air India [group] is that we have a very diversified product," notes Kharola.

Air India's key targets for the current financial year, include raising seat load factors and continuing to rein in its financial losses.

While Kharola says that they are "still counting the figures" on its results for the 2016/17 fiscal year, there have been other notable improvements across its business.

"Operational parametres have shown tremendous improvement, seat load factors have grown, revenue has grown, the on-time performance has also grown."

The IATA World Transport Summit opened up yesterday with a stirring welcome to country ceremony by the local indigenous community. The ceremony was accompanied by a series of dances paying tribute to various totems, including Australia's iconic kangaroo, were performed, accompanied by the primal sounds of the didgeridoo.

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Vauramo finishes on a high

Chief leaves Oneworld carrier with profits strong and fleet of A350s driving its growth

Outgoing Finnair chief executive Pekka Vauramo believes the airline is in strong shape as prepares to leave in November but notes rising oil prices provide a reminder of the challenging nature of the sector.

"This is a very competitive industry and that continues to be the case. Right now we are seeing the oil price going up," he says.

Finnair has just turned in its best first-quarter performance for a decade. It continues the run of improved fortunes for the carrier under Vauramo's leadership.

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Vauramo oversaw profits run

"We were in the middle of restructuring when I joined five years ago and now we are in totally different shape. We made a turnaround, we are in profit steadily every quarter for three and a half years. It's a good achievement by the organisation and great thanks to every Finnair employee who has been contributed to that development," he says.

That has included growing its Asian network with Airbus A350s. "More than half our widebody fleet is the A350 and its going well, and especially now the oil price is going up, it's a good fuel saver."

Airlines help Airlink deliver vital relief

Airlink had a busy year in 2017 providing lift for charities providing disaster relief around the world, and is looking to build new partnerships across the aviation spectrum to further its important work.

"Over the last year we've been very busy with all the hurricanes, and we've sent more relief workers than ever before, around 500 relief workers," Airlink president and chief executive Steven Smith.

But the need continues to grow. Smith says that there are 14 million people in need of ongoing humanitarian aid. By working with airlines to provide cargo and passenger capacity to move aid and relief workers into disaster zones, Airlink helps relief agencies to scale up their operations.

Smith says that Airlink is focusing on gaining some level of pre-committed capacity from airlines around the world to allow aid agencies to be able to respond quickly when disasters strike.

He says the charity has already had strong support from the airline industry, helping transport aid workers to affected regions.

"We've moved a lot of people into the Caribbean, we're moving a lot of people into Bangladesh for the Rohynga refugee crisis and other places around the world, but having that pre-committed capacity would be tremendous."

Airbus aims to take fight to NMA market

Airbus commercial president Guillaume Faury (below) says the manufacturer is doing its best to disrupt the market for Boeing's forthcoming New Mid-market Aircraft.

Asked about the proposed aircraft from his rival during a roundtable with reporters, Faury quipped: "What I can share with you is that we are trying to make their decisions difficult by having the very competitive A321, the A321 long range as well as the A330neo entering into the market - being complementary to the A321."

Boeing has been working on the NMA as a way to plug the gap in its product catalogue between the 737 and 787 and act as a replacement for the 757's unique medium-haul capability.

A number of airlines have expressed interest in being launch customers for the type including Qantas, American Airlines and United Airlines. Qantas in particular has been calling for Boeing to launch the aircraft, in order to have a competitor to the A321LR as a medium-term replacement for its Boeing 737 fleet.

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Embraer's Slattery supporting Brazilian wins

Embraer Commerical Aviation's Irish chief executive John Slattery is ready to champion Brazil's cause - both at this month's football World Cup and in the battle to tap into new markets for small jets.

One such key region is the Asia-Pacific, where it will beef up its presence in the area. The company plans to grow the size of its Singapore and Beijing offices. "We are beefing up after-sales support in the region, working to get more simulators in the region, raise our profile, and do more sponsorships," Slattery says.

This follows Embraer's high profile appearance at the Singapore Air Show in February, where it displayed a prototype E190-E2 in its 'profit hunter' livery.

"As the region's low-cost carriers look to chase profitability, they will need to go after secondary, tertiary markets," he says. "This will come from matching smaller jets with demand. If you do these trips with a higher trip cost you're leaving a lot of profit on the table."

He predicts that in the next 10-15 years the region's budget carriers, which predominately operate narrowbodies, will add a second fleet of smaller aircraft to serve point-to-point destinations.

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Boeing keeps designs on taking the middle ground

Manufacturer upbeat recent engine woes will not impact potential NMA timelines

Boeing remains committed to a mid-2020s service entry for its proposed New Mid-Market Aircraft (NMA), despite recent challenges facing the introduction of new engines.

Boeing vice-president of marketing Randy Tinseth says the company will "probably need to make a decision next year" about whether to move forward.

The basic design of the new aircraft, which will seat from 220-270 passengers and have a range of 5,000nm, is settled. Now, Boeing needs to work out the production system. "Once we know what that production system looks like, the final step is to pull everything together on the business case and make sure it hunts there."

On the issue of whether the engine makers have the bandwidth to support a new programme with a service entry in the 2025 timeframe, Tinseth is upbeat. Rolls-Royce is grappling with turbine and fan blade issues on some Trent 1000s that are one of two engines that power 787s, and Pratt & Whitney's geared turbofan engines have suffered durability and other issues that have marred the service entry of the A320neo. The issues have seen portions of both fleets grounded while the manufacturers dedicate substantial resources to deal with the problems.

"There is no question that advances in engine technology help advancements in aircraft, and are often the leading drivers of efficiency," says Tinseth. "When you look at the track record over the last 20-30 years, engines consistently get more efficient… we're confident they'll work through their issues and be there for that next new aircraft when it comes."

Boeing has talked with R-R, Pratt & Whitney, and General Electric on engines for the NMA.

Another concern expressed about NMA is a disagreement among carriers about the cargo capabilities of the type, with Asia-Pacific airlines believed to want greater cargo capacity. "Any time you speak to 57 customers, you're going to have a variety of opinions, I think we have a configuration of the airplane our customers like," says Tinseth. ■

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Digital move for IOSA to further drive airline safety

IATA targets transformation as next step for audit programme after 15 years in action

IATA plans to digitise its IOSA (IATA Operational Safety Audit) programme to help enhance safety awareness and connectivity among airlines, audit organisations, and service providers.

Gilberto Lopez-Meyer, IATA's senior vice-president, safety and flight operations, says the transformation is based on three pillars; advanced data management, audit programmes as a collaboration platform, and a digital remastering of the audit programme.

The benefits of digitising audit reports are clear. A dummy IOSA report viewed by FlightGlobal runs to 214 pages. It covers the full gamut of safety considerations for airlines. It includes procedures and processes on the ground, procedures in the air, maintenance, safety equipment and more.

Obtaining and maintaining an IOSA is an IATA membership requirement. Keeping IOSA accreditation is no easy matter. Thirty IOSA audits are conducted annually, but every year sees an average of 24 airlines dropped from the IOSA registry.

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Lopez-Meyer: IOSA is one of the most tangible safety efforts

The digital transformation's first pillar, data management, is foreseen offering better value to the industry through superior reporting and analytics. The second pillar sees "different players in the IOSA ecosystem interact with each other seamlessly".

Pillar three, digital remastering, makes the IOSA programme's business processes easier to change, and greatly improves the programme's scalability.

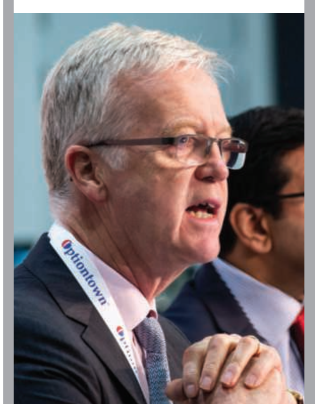
"In general IOSA has done well the last 15 years," says Lopez-Meyer. "We started with the first audit in 2003, and it has grown steadily for more than a decade. We really believe that IOSA is one of the most tangible safety efforts undertaken by IATA. ■

Competition key to airport privatisations

IATA is raising the level of its campaign to ensure states adopt a cautious approach to airport privatisations, by proposing a resolution during the AGM calling for governments to consider a series guidelines on such projects.

It comes after IATA teamed with Deloitte to develop a set of guidelines for governments pursuing airport privatisation, and how to regulate privately-operated airports. Among its recommendations, the Airport Ownership and Regulation report calls for wide consultation with all stakeholders and thorough evaluation of the wide range of different models before moving ahead with any decisions.

Speaking at a briefing at the AGM, IATA chief economist Brian Pearce highlighted a lack of competition as a key factor. "I think the big difference with what we saw happen with steel, the airline industry and airports, is competition," he says. "Because we see in the airline industry a lot of competition and that's the thing that drives management to deliver efficiency gains."



Pearce: competition drives delivery of efficency gains

Seeking airline visionaries

IATA is promoting virtual reality goggles as a way to improve the passenger experience. The goggles can be used for a range of applications, such as retailing, generating ancillary revenues, and entertainment. Uses include giving passengers a sense premium class cabins, which could prompt them to upgrade. Tim-Jesper Schaaf, director of marketing and sales, says IATA is looking for airlines to test the goggles out, initially with 20 headsets per aircraft.

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Volotea maps strategy

The southern European carrier and its unique business model, which aims to connect under-the-radar destinations using smaller narrowbody aircraft, has brought a new dimension to the IATA membership

European carrier Volotea joined IATA in April as it continues to develop its activities between the lines of traditional network, low-cost and regional carriers.

Volotea is headed by Carlos Munoz, launch chief executive at Vueling, who moved to establish another Barcelona-headquartered carrier in 2012. Volotea's operations are split across a range of airports in France, Italy and Spain – many of which have remained under the radar of other carriers.

A look at the maps outlining its network illustrates this strategy. Coloured markers representing the budget carrier's major bases and markets are pinned to less-familiar points.

Cities such as Bordeaux, Nantes, Verona and Toulouse loom large as bases, while many of Europe's capitals – which would normally feature prominently in an airline's network – are noticeably absent.

Speaking to FlightGlobal earlier this year, Munoz said this was not a failure but rather a "validation" of his belief that smaller markets have historically been left behind in the race to connect Europe's largest cities.

"Small and mid-sized cities in Europe need to be better-connected among themselves," he says. "If you are from London you can fly just about everywhere in the world. If you are from Barcelona, Vueling are actually flying to more places than from London. If you are from Nantes – our largest base – you can go to a handful: 15, 20 destinations – but not 200, or 100 or even 50."

Making its point: Volotea under Carlos Munoz has focused on flying to under-served European cities

Tom Campbell

Of the EU's approximately 510 million inhabitants, Munoz says the "fortunate" 110 million who live in or near major capital cities with access to a rich global network of airline connections, while the remaining 400 million have far less choice.

Volotea's success to date has come from using smaller narrowbodies – initially Boeing 717s with the later addition of Airbus A319s – to link those European cities with low-frequency flights on a seasonal basis.

Munoz says that of the almost 300 routes the carrier is operating this summer, 220 did not exist before Volotea started flights.

The airline will have a fleet of 32 aircraft this summer – 17 717s and 13 A319s along with two leased aircraft, including an A320. It has added three new bases – in Athens, Bilbao and Marseilles – the Greek capital being its first outside its core markets of France, Spain and Italy.

THINNER ROUTES

According to Munoz, the origins of the Volotea business model date back to his time as chief executive of Vueling more than a decade ago. He recalls seeking to understand why the Spanish budget carrier "didn't make money" on its thinner routes, especially those that did not touch major markets. He concluded that serving those "smaller markets" with "smaller flows" on city pairs that proved "much more seasonal" would require an entirely different business.

It would be years later, in 2007, when he left Vueling after floating it on the stock market, that the theory could be put into practice.

The seasonality of Volotea's business model and the thin routes it was planning to serve meant the carrier could not emulate Vueling and operate a fleet of A320s, Munoz notes. It opportunistically launched with Boeing 717s, before opting for Airbus A319s for the its expansion requirements.

The first of A319s arrived in March 2016 and the total has risen to 13 this year. Volotea is now gradually switching to an all-A319 fleet, with the last 717s expected to leave by 2021.

Munoz says it took some time for Volotea to adapt to a 150-seat aircraft, having only had 125 seats on the 717.

The solution has been to deploy the aircraft in "mature markets" such as Volotea's main bases of Nantes and Bordeaux, where those "extra 25 seats have proved to be very good after five years".

So will Volotea move to 180-seat jets or larger? "Probably not," says Munoz, adding the 150-seat A319 is "here to stay". ■

VOLOTEA

Launch	2012
Largest base	Nantes
Fleet	17 x 717s, 13 x A319s
Pax (2017)	4.8m
Destinations	77

»

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Vistara eyes next step

Singapore Airlines' Indian joint venture carrier joins the airline association as, having established itself in the domestic market, it is finalising plans to undertake its first moves into the international segment

Indian carrier Vistara joined IATA this year after the passing of its operational safety audit in September 2017, as it embarks on its expansion on to international routes.

The carrier says becoming an IATA member will enable it to collaborate with other international member airlines in the areas of codeshares and interlines.

Vistara is a 59:41 joint venture between Indian conglomerate Tata and Singapore Airlines, and launched operations in 2015.

Vistara chief Leslie Thng says: "This membership couldn't have come at a better time as we gear up to launch our international operations soon."

Speaking to FlightGlobal earlier this year, Thng said: "Our mission from day one is to go international, using the domestic market's size and... feed, for our international operations."

Seconded from SIA, Thng will be the key driver of Vistara's next phase of growth. The SIA veteran was formerly chief executive of the mainline's regional arm SilkAir, as well as the chief commercial officer at Budget Aviation Holdings, the parent company of low-cost unit Scoot.

LOCAL POTENTIAL

Thng says SilkAir and Scoot had an international focus from the onset "simply because Singapore does not have a domestic market". Vistara, in contrast, is in a market with tremendous potential. "For India, its population is 1.3 billion and the percentage of people who have actually travelled by air is only about 3%… We are very optimistic about how we can tap this growing market."

That said, for an India-based carrier to be eligible for international operations, it must have at least 20 aircraft in domestic service. Flight Fleets Analyzer shows Vistara reached 20 aircraft in March.

Airbus

Vistara's fleet of A320s hit the 20-aircraft mark in March this year

VISTARA

Launch	2015
Largest base	Delhi
Fleet	20 x A320s
Pax (2017)	4.1m
Destinations	22

Thng says the majority of Vistara's international operations will be launched out of its main base at Delhi Indira Gandhi International airport, but it also plans to fly internationally out of secondary hubs in Bengaluru and Mumbai.

The caveat, however, is that its overseas expansion must be closely tied to the growth of its domestic footprint. "We know our domestic network is not extensive enough in terms of reach, but at the same time we want to bring Vistara as a brand to overseas markets," Thng says. "Our footprint on the international market will grow simultaneously with the domestic front. We want to be considered an international airline with a strong domestic network to support feed profile."

Thng acknowledges Vistara faces stiff competition on the domestic market, but says the carrier already has "a decent market share in tier-two and -three cities".

"India is big enough that different airlines with different business models can carve out a niche for themselves."

Cobalt builds year-round role as it targets key major cities

Cypriot carrier Cobalt Air became an IATA member in March, less than two years after its launching service in the summer of 2016.

The airline is seeking to evolve from "niche player" to "credible" European regional carrier while also creating a transit market at its home base at Larnaca, commercial director Paul Simmons told FlightGlobal in an interview in London at the end of March this year.

Simmons says that the Cypriot carrier has ambitions to become an established year-round operator by accessing key European markets such as Athens, Frankfurt and Copenhagen.

COBALT AIR

Launch	2016
Largest base	Larnaca
Fleet	4 x A320s 2 x A319s
Destinations	22

Cobalt's network this year was supplemented at the end of March by Heathrow flights – meaning it now serves three London airports this summer – as well as Dublin, Dusseldorf, Paris Charles de Gaulle and Madrid. It is also making a return to serving the Moscow market.

"I am literally trying to pick off major cities and conurbations as well as places where people come to Cyprus for holidays," he says. "I need two-way flow and year-round flow, and that's what we are trying to develop."

Simmons says Cobalt sees more potential for routes to Russia, such as to cities like St Petersburg. He says that to date Cyprus has managed to "hold on" to Russian tourists despite the return to popularity of other leisure markets such as Turkey.

At the same time, Cobalt is developing its network to destinations in the Middle East as it seeks to create a transit product. Simmons says the airline is "actively pushing" its Tel Aviv, Beirut and Abu Dhabi services as "connecting routes". He notes "a lot of opportunity" to expand east, with cities such as Cairo within an hour's flying time from Cyprus.

The airline still harbours ambitions to develop a long-haul business and is "very much evaluating" the proposition at present, adds Simmons. Cobalt would first look at Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and then at points in India and the USA.

Technological progress

The world's airframers have a wide variety of new aircraft and engine options at various stages of development – from initial testing through to mature products that are already part of airline fleets

Embraer

Wideroe plots 'bright future' with Embraer jets as first two E190-E2s join its fleet

Norwegian regional carrier Wideroe completed the first commercial flight of an Embraer E190-E2 on 24 April, flying a domestic route from Bergen to Tromso.

It then took delivery of another E190-E2 in May, with one more to follow by the end of the year.

The first revenue service came 20 days after Embraer delivered the first Pratt & Whitney PW1900G-powered E190-E2 (*pictured*) to th Norwegian carrier.

"We see a bright future with our new E2 jets," says Wideroe chief executive Stein Nilsen.

The jet-powered E190-E2 replaced Wideroe's Bombardier Q400s on the route from Bergen to Tromso. The fleet change should reduce flight time by 15-20min on the route, Wideroe says.

Embraer designed the E190-E2 to reduce fuel consumption by 17.3% compared with the original E190.

"I know Wideroe's customers are going to love flying on such a green airplane," says John Slattery, chief executive of Embraer Commercial Aviation.

Embraer has so far secured 74 orders for the E190-E2, including the two aircraft that have been delivered to Wideroe, Flight Fleets Analyzer shows. It holds orders for 106 E195-E2s and 100 E175-E2s.

Irkut

Second Irkut MC-21 takes to the skies

Irkut's second flight-test MC-21 conducted its maiden sortie on 12 May, almost a year since the type's first airframe initially became airborne.

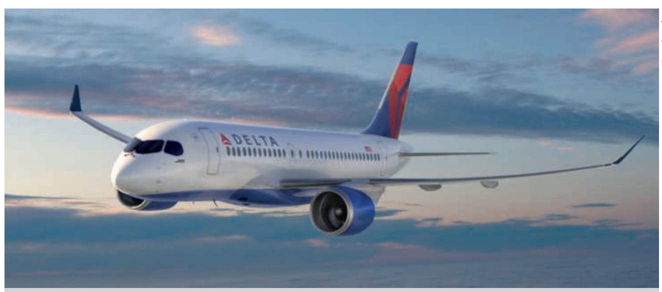
The second aircraft took off from Irkutsk for a relatively short flight lasting 1h 7min.

Irkut says the aircraft underwent basic stability checks, undercarriage retraction, and wing configuration tests. It reached an altitude of 3,000m and speeds of up to 215kt.

"Flight of the second aircraft is a significant event that will ensure timely conduct of flight certification tests," says Russian trade and industry minister Denis Manturov.

The first MC-21 initially flew on 28 May last year.

Two flight-test MC-21s, powered by Pratt & Whitney PW1400G engines, are currently complemented by a third airframe, which is undergoing static tests.



Bombardier

Delta outlines CSeries service plans

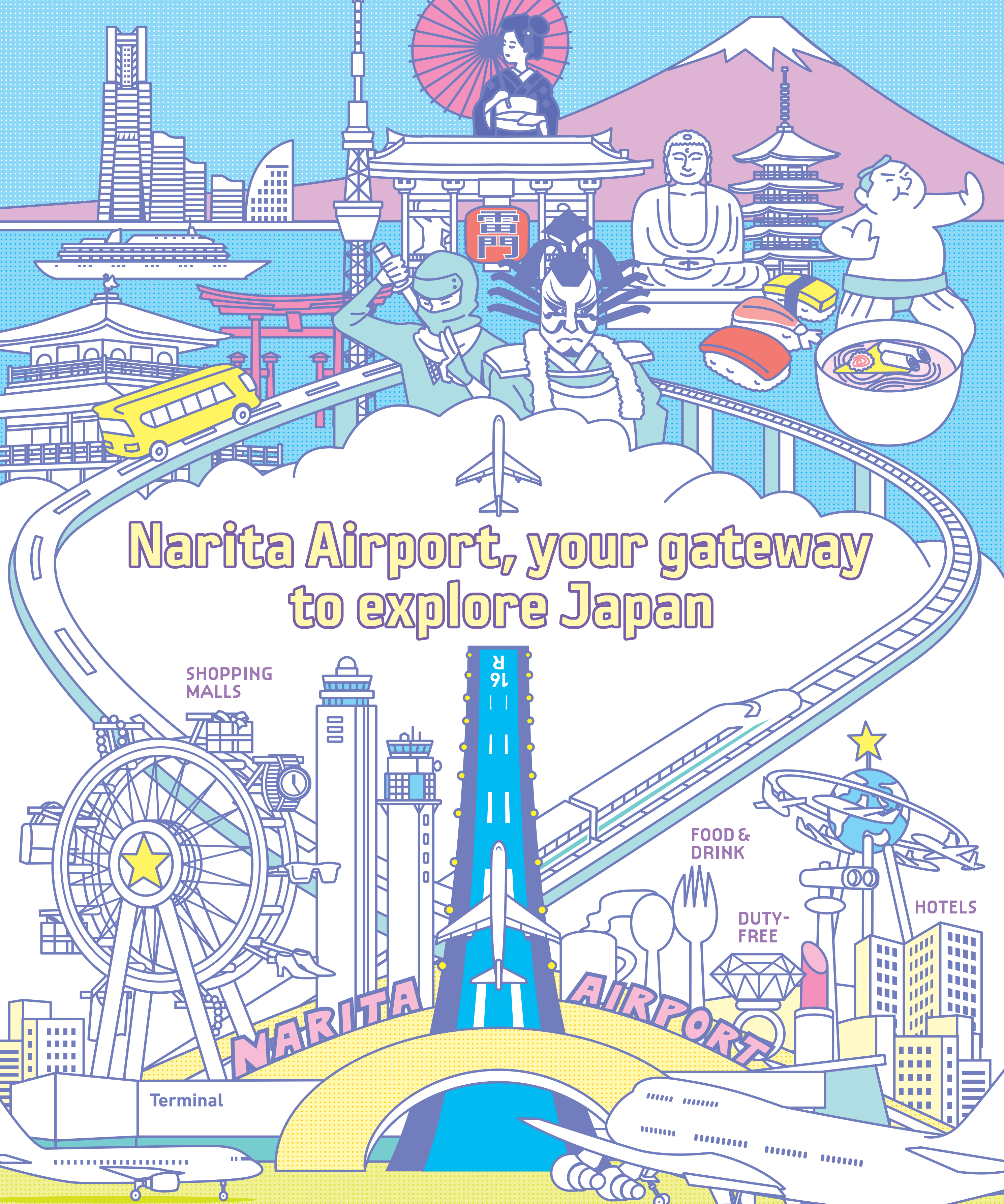
Delta Air Lines plans to introduce its first Bombardier CS100 in early 2019, with deliveries set to begin later this year.

It anticipates taking delivery of a "handful" of aircraft in the fourth quarter, with entry-into-service planned for early in the new year, Delta chief executive Ed Bastian said in April.

Delta will configure the aircraft with 110 seats and use them to displace 76-seat regional jets in markets where demand warrants the additional capacity.

Executives have previously indicated that the airline will fly the CS100 from coastal hubs in Los Angeles, New York and Seattle to mid-continent points.

Delta can begin taking CSeries aircraft this year following a trade ruling in favour of the Canadian airframer in January.



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United Airlines

Swoosh livery for first United Max 9

United Airlines took delivery of its first Boeing 737 Max 9 in late April, marking the stretched Max variant's debut at a US carrier.

The 737-9 is adorned with the special swoosh livery United has on its Boeing 787 fleet, a decision it says was driven by the aircraft's fuel efficiency.

"In honour of this more eco-friendly aircraft, United has given the Max a new livery… so that employees and customers can easily recognise the plane and its superior fuel efficiency," the airline says.

United was planning to debut the 737-9 from its Houston Intercontinental and Los Angeles bases in June.

United has firm orders for 60 more 737-9s and 100 737 Max 10s, its fleet plan shows.

Boeing delivered the first Max 9 to Thai Lion Air on 21 March, 10 months after handing over the first Max 8.

Airbus

TAP A330neo joins certification push

Airbus has embarked on a cabin test programme for its A330neo with the maiden flight of the first customer aircraft, bound for Portuguese carrier TAP.

The A330-900 twinjet, MSN1819, departed Toulouse on 15 May for a flight lasting some 4h 32min.

Two other A330-900 test aircraft are already involved in certification flight tests.

Airbus said last year that the TAP aircraft would be used to supplement the certification campaign.

It is being used to validate the interior Airspace cabin, and examine the cabin environment, ventilation systems, as well as such installations as the crew rest area. The jet has a small quantity of flight-test instrumentation fitted.

Airbus is aiming to deliver the TAP aircraft, powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 7000 engines, during summer this year.

Imaginechina/REX/Shutterstock

C919's alternative engine powers up

China has achieved power-on for the first CJ-1000AX demonstrator engine, the alternative powerplant for the in-development Comac C919, it revealed in mid-May.

The C919 will initially be powered by CFM International Leap-1C powerplants (*as shown in the above picture of a C919 during flight-testing*).

The high-bypass turbofan demonstrator engine's core reached a maximum speed of 6,600rpm, disclosed China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Conducted in a test cell in Shanghai, the engine power-on means the functionality of its various components and systems have preliminary verification, the ministry states. Subsequent tests will determine the performance of the engine in its entirety.

The CJ-1000AX has a diameter of 1.95m (77in) and a length of 3.29m (10.7ft). China plans to build 24 more CJ-1000 prototype engines to support an airworthiness campaign, with entry into service targeted after 2021.

Aeroflot

'Russified' Superjet could tempt Iran

Sukhoi's civil aircraft division has yet to decide on the crucial powerplant issue for its proposed "Superjet 100R" featuring greater Russian content.

The current Superjet fleet is fitted with the Franco-Russian PowerJet SaM146 (*as pictured above in Aeroflot livery*), with Snecma as the manufacturer's Western partner in the venture.

Two Iranian airlines have signed preliminary agreements to take the "Russified" aircraft.

One engine option could be Aviadvigatel's proposed PD-10, a smaller version of the PD-14 family.

Meanwhile, Russia's S7 Airlines has reached an initial agreement to take 50 of the proposed 75-seat SSJ75 derivative.

"If the project is successfully completed, we will be happy to become the initial customer of the SSJ75," says S7 Group chief Anton Eremin.

The SSJ75 will involve a "comprehensive upgrade" of the current Superjet 100, with the cockpit design more closely aligned to that of the Irkut MC-21 twinjet.

AirAsia

AirAsia has been trialling biometric identification at Malaysia's Senai International airport. It hopes to link the data to its loyalty scheme

Biometric journeys

A range of potential efficiencies and revenue streams are emerging as more airlines and airports consider digital identity management solutions – not least around dynamic personalisation

There are perennial efforts that are universal for any modern airline: strip out inefficiencies; make processes safer and more secure; streamline and digitise to offer a better experience. Rinse, repeat. However, moves are currently under way to adopt biometric technologies and identity management tools that will not only tick these boxes, but also go much further.

In the not-so-distant future, a biometric token, such as a facial scan and a glance into a camera to authenticate the traveller, will become increasingly commonplace. This technology will facilitate journeys without noticeable barriers or queues, not just at the airport or in flight, but for onward travel as well. Today's repetitive authentication processes will move to the digital back-end and, as a result, will become more transparent to the traveller.

The deliverables enabled by biometrics and identity management will have an increasing impact as stakeholders in the aviation and travel ecosystems start to collaborate and harmonise, enabling more interoperability across jurisdictions and sectors.

PERSONAL SERVICE

However, there is a bigger prize: once airlines can connect biometric adoption with industry efforts to adopt order management and create digital travel retail platforms, an ability to offer dynamic personalisation, in real-time, throughout the journey is within their grasp. This promises to shake up airline business models and create extra revenues.

IATA is spearheading the One ID concept for the industry. A trusted digital identity and biometric recognition token will facilitate an improved customer experience, with speed, efficiency and security. The basis for One ID is early validation of the passenger's identity, and controlled access to that information by the public and private stakeholders on an authorised-to-know basis. The intention is that the passenger can be recognised and served in the most efficient way in subsequent process steps.

The first round of guidance to achieve this is expected from IATA this summer. Meanwhile, airlines, airports, technology partners and other security and border agency stakeholders are also working to achieve journeys that are hassle-free for the passenger, and to minimise security and immigration risks. The aim is to end the need to show travel documentation, and to avoid repeat authentication at each step.

Recent months have seen a flurry of airlines testing biometric identity solutions. S7 Airlines successfully tested face recognition technology at its own offices in partnership with VisionLabs. S7 is planning to deploy the technology at the entrance to the Moscow Domodedovo airport busi- »

» ness lounges. The intention is to recognise S7's passengers using those lounges and also track both those who leave on time and those who need to be reminded that they must move to the gate.

FASTER BOARDING

In March, British Airways and SITA began trialling biometric boarding gates on flights from Orlando International airport to London Gatwick. The automated boarding gates have been integrated with US Customs and Border Protection and the airline's IT systems to allow the necessary checks and authorise boarding. A spot photo is all that is needed to board – enabling BA to board flights of almost 240 passengers in about 10 minutes.

> "The key is having the information travelling ahead of the passenger"
>
> GUIDO PEETERMANS
> Head of passenger security, IATA

Ideally the airport will be "fashioned more like an open-space mall or art gallery, without barriers or obstacles", according to Jeff Lennon, vice president sales and marketing at identity management specialist Vision-Box. "The modern airport is no longer a place to line up in, but rather a place to move through – a passenger-centric ecosystem."

The Vision-Box airport model is one where all airport processes aspire to be contactless, seamless and on-the-move. Lennon continues: "Virtual assistants [will] immediately recognise the passengers, know where they're going and support them in their journey via friendly, personalised instructions. The passenger is immersed into a journey of positive visual and sensorial experiences."

Facilitating passenger journeys with a biometric token can go further: inflight entertainment and connectivity company Panasonic Avionics is working with identity innovator Tascent to bring biometric identification to every stage of the passenger's journey, including on board. The partners predict that their combined capabilities will bring amenities such as seat-back immigration services and inflight biometric-authenticated payments within reach.

Some early industry implementations of biometric recognition have begun with an enrolment process at the airport. However, Guido Peetermans, head of passenger security at IATA, argues that biometric authentication should actually start earlier in the journey – just after booking – and also has the potential to extend beyond air travel into the destination or return leg of the journey.

"Ideally we would like to see that move as much as possible off-airport or at least span across multiple journeys," he says. "The key concept [is] having the information travelling ahead of the passenger, so that [he or she is] already pre-processed and you have decided how to treat the passenger."

MOBILE FOCUS

It is no surprise that mobile technology will be a key enabler in the roll-out of biometric identity solutions. Multiple biometric sensors are already embedded in many smartphones and consumers use their finger prints or a face scan to make a mobile payment or access a secure web account.

Sean Farrell, director of strategy and innovation for SITA, envisages that travellers will be enrolling and sharing their identity verification with various industry stakeholders via their smartphones before they arrive at the airport. And, in the air, they will most likely use the biometric technology integrated into their smartphone to authenticate payments for products and services purchased through the airline app.

"Another potential early use case is for passengers to complete pre-clearance into their destination country; however, the most likely scenario will again be that the passengers will do this using the biometric technology integrated into their smartphone, using an app to verify their identity and submit their pre-clearance data," says Farrell.

"A good example is Miami airport, where Mobile Passport Control has been integrated by SITA into the airport's app. While this is initially focused on pre-clearance of US citizens and Canadians using biographic data, we expect the solution to evolve to include biometrics in the near future as Customs and Border Protection extends this option to residents and foreigners."

IATA is currently discussing biometric identity initiatives with the World Travel and Tourism Council, which has a keen interest in applying identity management tools across the wider travel value chain. "What if you could tie it into onward transportation, cruise lines, hotels, rentals cars? There are really a lot of possibilities there," notes Peetermans.

British Airways

British Airways has been trialling biometric gates at US airports


REX/Shutterstock

Biometric photos have key role

"The core of our One ID concept is that you could use biometrics and identity management at each of these touchpoints," Peetermans continues. "Each of these private or public stakeholders, such as an airline, airport, border agency, security screening authority or customs agency, could individually use identity management and biometrics to do a better job... but it's only when you tie it all together and they start to work together, collaborate and share information, that you get to a whole new level of benefits."

By combining this new paradigm of engaging with passengers with the IATA One Order programme, order management and fulfilment will be introduced into the distribution mechanism; add in improved travel communications throughout the journey, and the business opportunity will further increase.

"If you put all those things together, you could now offer a much more personalised experience that can change in real-time," suggests Peetermans.

Lennon at Vision-Box concurs on the personalisation opportunities: "Eliminating the booth and stoplight mentality leaves space for newly designed flexible airports without obstacles and promoting a value-based, personalised, passenger-centric engagement addressing each and

every passenger individually."

The dynamic personalisation IATA has in mind is still a way off. However, early adopters like AirAsia have an eye on potential ancillary revenue and operational uplifts. In March, the low-cost airline launched its own Fast Airport Clearance Experience System (FACES) at Malaysia's Senai International airport, Johor Bahru. Passengers over 18 can enrol in the scheme via a dedicated kiosk at check-in. A scan of their MyKad identity card or chip-enabled passport, plus looking into a camera, creates the biometric token that is valid for all AirAsia biometric gates for all flights, as long as the identity document remains valid.

Aireen Omar, AirAsia's deputy group chief executive of digital, transformation and corporate services, cites IATA's 2017 Global Passenger Survey finding that 64% of more than 10,000 respondents favoured biometric identification systems. "Thus, we believe this will impact our business model positively as [this] biometric data will also be tied to AirAsia BIG [loyalty programme] membership, which will then be linked to Single Sign On to allow passengers to purchase and make payment from home until they are on board with their biometric data."

Omar adds: "While initially our guests were resistant to adopting this new technology, once they learnt the advantage of FACES, they enrolled and boarded the flight successfully without presenting any travel documents. Many of the guests using the system found the process quick and easy."

AirAsia

AirAsia sees a positive response

MIA

Mobile Passport Control has been integrated by SITA into Miami International airport's phone app

AirAsia's strategic focus is to develop paired departure and arrival airports and to eventually have seamless biometric travel between all ASEAN hubs.

As the demand for air travel continues to boom for airlines and other aviation stakeholders, biometrics and identity management tools also offer an innovative approach to addressing constraints in operational capacity.

STAYING CONNECTED

"The development of digitalisation strategies based on self-processing Internet of Things (IoT) interaction points, mobile identity and the biometric single token are replacing traditional investment rationales and over-ambitious infrastructure investments," says Lennon at Vision-Box, adding: "Virtual and physical systems connect passengers and stakeholders in real-time, allowing for cross-individual, cross-organisation and cross-national cooperation. Being empowered to stay connected is key."

Recent trials and implementations by Vision-Box with Dubai Airports and Emirates, and with Los Angeles International airport and BA, have seen biometric identification halve the time required for boarding and end-to-end wait times fall by an average of 40%. Non-aviation business has enjoyed a revenue uplift in the 20-30% range.

"Some passengers were so pleased by the experience at Los Angeles airport, the speed and the seamless feeling, that they were asking if they could do it a second time... that could not be a better reward for us as we put the passenger in the centre of the equation in the first place," says Lennon.

Lufthansa Group, which joined forces with Amadeus, Customer and Border Protection, and Vision-Box to also pilot biometric boarding for two daily flights from LAX in March, says it was able to board around 350 passengers on an A380 in 20 minutes. Head of digital strategy, innovation and transformation, Christian Langer, adds: "In LAX [there has been] overall high passenger acceptance and approval, for example in the four days of roll-out only one passenger has refused to board biometrically and we even had passengers from other airlines and gates come to watch Lufthansa biometric boarding."

The trial has given Lufthansa an appetite to expand its use of biometric technologies. "Currently we are in a concept phase to develop a holistic biometric experience across various touchpoints and airports. Apart from the trials that were initiated in cooperation with CBP in the US, we are looking closely at our hubs and home markets," says Langer.

The evolution already under way in airport IT infrastructure, combined with the proliferation of smartphones with biometric sensors, will further enable future biometric identity roll-out and adoption across the industry.

"The role of smartphones will become even more important as airports migrate away from dedicated infrastructure to cloud-based services interconnected with IoT devices," says Farrell. "Passengers' smartphones will be capable of interacting directly with devices at the airport, using biometric verification to authenticate the identity at each step."

Inevitably, airlines and their aviation partners must be prepared to adopt a new way of thinking about their business and operational models. Lennon at Vision-Box says: "Airlines and airports should judge each new technology, or customer new behaviour, not by how it impacts their current business model, but by how it might create their next one. They should ask the following question: 'What business are we in?' Maybe the answer is: 'To provide a seamless, affordable and convenient door-to-door experience for travellers'."

New venue for top awards

Judging is complete for July's Airline Strategy Awards and preparations are under way for the ceremony at the Honourable Artillery Company's home

Judging is now complete for this year's Airline Strategy Awards, which takes place on 15 July on the eve of Farnborough air show.

The invitation-only ceremony takes place at a new venue this year: the Honourable Artillery Company's London home. This stunning venue is located in London's financial quarter, just a few minutes from Moorgate, Liverpool Street and Old Street stations.

A team of judges from across the industry gathered in London for a meeting in mid-May hosted by our event partner Korn Ferry where they decided on the winners across six categories: Executive Leadership, Sector Leadership, Low-cost Leadership, Network Strategy, Finance and Marketing.

The judges were asked to choose from a list of nominations that was drawn up after several months of deliberation and in-depth research. A special Flight Airline Business award – judged separately – will also be handed out on the night.

High Level/REX/Shutterstock

The stunning venue sits in the heart of London's financial quarter

This year marks the 17th running of the awards and the second time Flight Airline Business has partnered with Korn Ferry, a leading human capital management firm, to deliver the event.

Aside from recognising the airline industry's biggest talents, the ceremony also offers unrivalled networking opportunities with high-profile executives from across the world.

Last year's winners included Alan Joyce of Qantas, Vitaly Saveliev of Aeroflot and Joszef Varadi of Wizz Air. Other awards went to EasyJet, KLM and Air Canada.

To find out more, including information about attending and sponsorship opportunities, visit: **strategyawards.com**

Pick up Routes dailies in Guangzhou

A FlightGlobal team will be heading to Guangzhou in September for this year's World Routes event.

Our journalists will be on site in south China, producing three special issues of *Flight Airline Business* and publishing all the latest news on Flight Dashboard and flightglobal.com.

The 15-18 September event takes place at the China Import and Export Fair – one of the largest exhibition venues in the Asia-Pacific region. The venue hosts the famous Canton Fair twice a year.

FlightGlobal will also have a stand at the show, where delegates can find out about our schedules and fleets data, along with our news and analysis products.

As part of a packed schedule – including the usual speed dating-style meetings between airlines and airports, and a conference programme featuring top-level speakers – delegates will be treated to a networking evening at the Canton Tower, the fourth-tallest free-standing structure in the world.

Routes Online

The event was handed over to Guangzhou at the 2017 show

Organisers predict 3,000 delegates will attend from 110 countries. Some 300 airlines, 700 airports and 130 tourism authorities are expected to be represented.

Guangzhou is one of the world's oldest trading hubs. Its contribution to China's economy was reflected in the late-April opening of a new terminal at Baiyun airport.

China Southern Airlines, which anchors the terminal, is starting operations in phases.

Last year, Guangzhou Baiyun handled 65.8 million passengers, up 10.2% from the year before, and well above its design capacity of 40 million. Its throughput is expected to hit 70 million passengers this year.

flightglobal.com/WorldRoutes


RETHINK
EVERYTHING