

Airports and Economic Development Global Training Programme





01. Context

Airports play a pivotal role as economic engines, significantly influencing regional development and global connectivity. However, there is often an underutilization of airport resources and infrastructure, leading to missed opportunities for economic development. To address this gap, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has developed the Airports and Economic Development Global Training Programme.

This initiative is a collaborative effort involving UNITAR, the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders in Atlanta (CIFAL Atlanta), the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders in Merida (CIFAL Merida), Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA), and Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2). The programme aims to empower aviation sector stakeholders with the tools and knowledge to leverage airport infrastructure for long-term economic growth.

The programme recognizes the significant economic impact airports can have on their surrounding regions. For example, HJAIA has a direct economic impact of over \$32.5 billion on the metropolitan Atlanta region and a total economic impact of \$68.3 billion on the State of Georgia. Such examples underscore the potential of airports as catalysts for regional economic development when properly managed and utilized.

02. Programme Description

The Airports and Economic Development Global Training Programme consists of four intensive two-day training workshops held between February 2025 and May 2025. These workshops will take place in different regions of the world: Africa, North America, Asia, and Latin America. Each workshop will focus on key areas such as airport competitiveness, cargo logistics, non-aeronautical revenue strategies, safety management systems, and environmental sustainability, among others.

The programme targets delegates from governments, private, and civil organizations across the Western Hemisphere, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East regions, including:

- Airport Officials
- Civil Aviation Authorities
- Business Leaders
- Economic Development Officials

Using UNITAR's integrated knowledge management methodology, the programme includes:

1. Expert presentations on best practices in airport management and economic development
2. Panel discussions with industry leaders and practitioners
3. Interactive group assignments and case studies
4. Development of action plans for improving airport operations and economic impact

This approach ensures a dynamic and engaging learning experience, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application. By bringing together professionals from various aspects of the aviation industry, the workshops foster a rich environment for knowledge exchange and collaboration, enhancing the overall learning experience and promoting global networking within the sector.



03. Objectives

The programme aims to:

1. Enhance participants' understanding of the critical role airports play in stimulating sustainable economic development.
2. Provide practical tools and strategies for leveraging airport infrastructure to drive long-term economic growth.
3. Address the underutilization of airport resources and infrastructure, maximizing economic development opportunities.
4. Equip participants with cutting-edge strategies in areas such as airport competitiveness, cargo logistics, non-aeronautical revenue generation, safety management systems, and environmental sustainability.
5. Foster global collaboration and knowledge exchange among aviation sector stakeholders.
6. Develop participants' capacity to act as change agents in their respective organizations and countries.

04. Topics

The programme covers a wide range of critical topics, including but not limited to:

1. Economic development strategies for airports
2. Airport competitiveness
3. Technological innovations in airport operations
4. Safety management systems
5. Security preparedness
6. Terminal and airside operations
7. Strategies to generate non-aeronautical revenue
8. Cargo logistics
9. Airport service quality
10. Environmental sustainability
11. Preparedness for mega events
12. Disaster preparedness and service recovery

Each workshop will focus on a selection of these topics, with emphasis placed on those most relevant to the host region and current global trends in aviation.

05. Key Benefits

Participants will gain:

1. **Enhanced Strategic Leadership and Management:** Develop skills necessary to lead and manage airport operations efficiently, including strategic planning, financial management, and stakeholder relations.
2. **Environmental Sustainability Expertise:** Learn best practices for integrating environmental sustainability into airport operations, including energy efficiency measures, waste reduction, and carbon offset programs.
3. **Social and Economic Inclusivity Strategies:** Gain insights into economic development strategies tailored for airport hubs, fostering social inclusion and community engagement.
4. **Regional Competitiveness Boost:** Acquire skills to improve airport competitiveness and service quality, enhancing the region's marketability and global positioning.
5. **Security and Safety Management Proficiency:** Develop critical skills in safety management systems, security preparedness, and disaster response.
6. **Global Networking Opportunities:** Engage in knowledge sharing and networking with aviation sector stakeholders from around the world, fostering long-term relationships and partnerships.
7. **Technological Innovation Insights:** Gain understanding of the latest technological advancements relevant to airport operations, such as automation, data analytics, and biometrics.
8. **Mega Event and Emergency Preparedness:** Learn effective strategies for managing large-scale events and responding to emergencies while maintaining smooth operations.
9. **Interconnectivity Enhancement Skills:** Explore strategies to improve connectivity within and beyond their regions, supporting economic development and trade.
10. **Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals:** Understand how improved airport management and operations contribute to various SDGs, including Goals 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17.

06. Locations

- **Atlanta, USA:** As home to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, one of the busiest airports globally, Atlanta's expertise in airport management, technological innovations, and environmental initiatives is invaluable. Its experience in hosting major events underscores its commitment to sustainable aviation and operational excellence.
- **Rabat, Morocco:** Positioned at the crossroads of Africa and Europe, Morocco is a crucial gateway for air travel and trade. Its potential role as a host for the 2030 World Cup highlights its importance in international events, making it an ideal location to gain expertise in managing air traffic and fostering economic development.
- **Singapore:** As a major hub in Asia, Singapore excels in air traffic management, sustainability, and cutting-edge airport technology. Its continuous advancements in infrastructure and commitment to operational excellence make it a prime source of expertise in future-ready airport solutions and economic growth strategies.
- **El Salvador:** El Salvador's Comalapa International Airport is a key hub for regional travel and trade. Its strategic location offers a growing role in connecting North and South America. Its ongoing efforts in modernizing infrastructure, improving safety, and promoting tourism offer valuable opportunities for knowledge sharing in airport expansion, sustainability, and economic development.



07. Schedule

1. **Atlanta, USA (Global):** February 2025 - Main Theme: Emergency Management
2. **Rabat, Morocco (Africa):** March 2025 - Main Theme: Route Development
3. **Singapore (Asia):** April 2025
4. **El Salvador (Latin America):** May 2025

By participating in this comprehensive programme, aviation professionals will be equipped to become agents of change in their respective organizations and countries, driving sustainable economic development through improved airport operations and management.