

# Airports and Economic Development

## Global Training Programme



In collaboration with:



## 01. Context

Airports serve as striking nexus points for global innovation and sustainable development, playing a transformative role in shaping resilient regional economies. This transformative potential is powerfully exemplified by Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA), which generates an economic impact of over \$32.5 billion for metropolitan Atlanta and \$68.3 billion for the state of Georgia, illustrating the profound capacity of airports as catalysts for sustainable regional growth.

In line with this significant potential, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has established the Airports and Economic Development Global Training Programme. This initiative is supported through a strategic partnership with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) and the Georgia Institute of Technology, along with its Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2), bringing together world-class expertise in airport management and technological innovation to create a comprehensive framework for sustainable airport development.

The programme operates through close collaboration with UNITAR's International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders (CIFAL) Global Network, specifically engaging five strategic centres across key global regions: CIFAL Atlanta (United States), CIFAL Merida (Mexico), CIFAL Miami (United States), CIFAL Singapore (Singapore), and CIFAL York (Canada). This extensive network ensures comprehensive geographical coverage and facilitates robust knowledge exchange across diverse airport contexts.



## 02. Programme Description

The Airports and Economic Development Global Training Programme comprises four strategic two-day intensive workshops scheduled throughout 2025, strategically distributed across key global regions: Africa, North America, Asia, and Latin America. Each workshop delivers comprehensive training on critical aspects of airport development, including sustainable competitiveness strategies, advanced cargo logistics, innovative non-aeronautical revenue approaches, integrated safety management systems, and environmental sustainability frameworks, among others.

The programme targets representatives from governments, private, and civil organisations 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 airport 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. Deepen stakeholders' understanding of airports as catalysts for sustainable economic development, regional resilience, and environmental sustainability.
2. Provide innovative frameworks and practical tools for leveraging airports to drive future-proof economic growth
3. Equip participants with cutting-edge strategies in areas such as airport competitiveness, cargo logistics, non-aeronautical revenue generation, safety management systems, and environmental sustainability.
4. Foster global collaboration and knowledge exchange among airport stakeholders.
5. Facilitate Airport-to-Airport (A2A) partnerships for knowledge exchange.

## 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 landside 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, emphasising those most relevant to each targeted region and current global trends.

## 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 airport sector stakeholders from around the world, fostering long-term relationships and partnerships.
7. **Technological Innovation Insights:** Gain an 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. UNITAR's Schedule (2025)

- **San Salvador, El Salvador (Latin America):** Comalapa International Airport is rapidly becoming a logistics and passenger hub for Central America. Its modernization efforts focus on scaling infrastructure in an emerging economy context. San Salvador offers unique insights into airport growth under constrained resources, government-led development initiatives, and integration of aviation into national economic strategies.

**Date:** 4-5 March 2025

**Topics:** Technology, AI and Cybersecurity

- **Atlanta, USA (Global):** Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is a global benchmark for airport efficiency and connectivity, serving as the world's busiest by passenger numbers. Atlanta excels in hub-and-spoke model management, public-private partnerships, and high-volume operations. Its leadership in green airport certification and digital transformation makes it a key learning site for operational excellence.

**Date:** 28-29 May 2025

**Topics:** Emergency Management

- **Rabat, Morocco (Africa):** Rabat represents Morocco's strategic aviation development at the crossroads of Africa, Europe, and the Arab world. Its growing infrastructure supports regional integration and South-South cooperation. As a potential 2030 World Cup host, Morocco's preparations reveal strategies for event-ready aviation infrastructure, intermodal transport planning, and cross-continental connectivity.

**Date:** 24-25 June 2025

**Topics:** Innovation & Technology, Terminal Operations

- **Singapore, Singapore (Asia):** Singapore's Changi Airport is globally recognized for its innovation in passenger experience, automation, and sustainability. As a state with limited land and airspace, Singapore offers lessons in maximizing airport efficiency, airspace optimization, and urban-integrated aviation planning. It's a pioneer in aviation sector resilience and future-oriented governance.

**Date:** 22-23 October 2025

**Topics:** Innovation & Technology, Terminal Operations

## 06. CIFAL's Schedule (2025)

- **Merida, Mexico (CIFAL Merida):** Merida's regional airport plays a vital role in connecting remote areas with national and international markets. Located in a climate-sensitive and tourism-dependent region, Merida specializes in crisis-resilient airport operations, post-disaster recovery planning, and aviation's role in regional tourism ecosystems.

**Date:** 18-19 March 2025

**Topics:** Emergency Management

- **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (CIFAL Miami):** Las Américas International Airport supports the Caribbean's dual needs of tourism and trade. With frequent exposure to hurricanes, it is a leader in disaster response coordination, aviation-maritime integration, and transport logistics under extreme weather conditions. It serves as a blueprint for climate adaptation in aviation.

**Date:** 22-23 May 2025

**Topics:** Disaster Preparedness in Airports and Strategic Ports

- **Miami, USA (CIFAL Miami):** Miami International Airport operates as a gateway for Latin American and Caribbean cargo, with a specialization in cold chain logistics and pharmaceutical freight. Its multicultural workforce and experience as a regional FEMA emergency hub position it uniquely in coordinated disaster response and aviation's role in humanitarian logistics.

**Date:** 7-8 October 2025

**Topics:** Emergency Management

