

**61st CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7 - 11 September 2026*

**AGENDA ITEM 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF
AIR TRANSPORT**

**PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT OF AIR-RAIL
INTERMODAL TRANSPORT TO ENHANCE PASSENGER
TRAVEL CONVENIENCE**

(Presented by the People's Republic of China)

SUMMARY

This paper provides an overview of the practical experience gained by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. (China Railway) in advancing air-rail intermodal transport. Focusing on key areas including the development of both physical hard infrastructure linkage and digital soft connectivity in services, standards and information, as well as service improvement, brand cultivation, emergency coordination, and standards refinement, China has forged steady strides in advancing high-quality air-rail intermodal transport development, with concrete deliverables outlined below: enabling 24 domestic airlines to interconnect with the national railway 12306 ticketing platform; upgrading hardware facilities at airport and high-speed railway stations; optimizing one-stop ticketing services; establishing cross-sector emergency passenger transfer coordination mechanism; issuing national service standards for air-rail intermodal transport. These efforts have expanded travel options for passengers and significantly improved travel convenience. The experience offers a practical and replicable model for Asia-Pacific countries in coordinating civil aviation and railway sectors and building integrated multimodal transport systems.

PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT OF AIR-RAIL INTERMODAL TRANSPORT TO ENHANCE PASSENGER TRAVEL CONVENIENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Air-rail intermodal transport is a passenger interline transport model that efficiently connects air transportation and railway transportation within a single journey. By leveraging the comparative advantages of the two modes of transport, it contributes significantly to expanding the catchment of aviation markets, enhancing the operational efficiency of aviation hubs, broadening the radiating coverage of air transport networks, and unlocking the potential of domestic consumer markets.

1.1.2 In June 2024, CAAC and China Railway signed the Strategic Cooperation Agreement on Promoting High-Quality Development of Air-Rail Intermodal Transport, establishing a comprehensive framework for cooperation in such areas as improving intermodal infrastructure, developing innovative intermodal products, enhancing passenger services, expanding information sharing, and promoting demonstration projects for air-rail intermodal transport.

1.1.3 In June 2025, CAAC and China Railway jointly issued the List of Key Tasks for Promoting High-Quality Development of Air-Rail Intermodal Transport (2025–2027), which sets out 15 specific tasks across seven areas, including planning alignment, infrastructure integration, product enhancement, service optimization, system interconnection, brand development, and standards establishment.

2. CONCEPTS

2.1 **Air-Rail Intermodal Transport** is a passenger intermodal transport model that efficiently connects air transport and railway transport. Through system integration, infrastructure connectivity, and service coordination, this model enables the sharing of capacity resources, the exchange of information and data, and the optimization of travel processes between civil aviation and railways, thereby enhancing passenger travel convenience and the overall efficiency of the transport system.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 China's civil aviation and railway authorities have actively promoted both "hard connectivity", in terms of infrastructure planning and development, and "soft connectivity" covering transport service organizations, standards, and information, between the two sectors. By fully leveraging the combined strengths of air and rail transport, they are advancing the high-quality development of air-rail intermodal transport.

3.2 Implementation and Promotion

3.2.1 **Accelerating the expansion of system "soft connectivity"**. CAAC supports airlines in partnering with the national railway 12306 platform to integrate sales and service systems, and develop combined air-rail intermodal products. Air-rail intermodal services are simultaneously made available across multiple channels, including airline official websites, mobile apps, and the 12306 platform, enabling functions such as through-ticketing for connecting journeys, online consultation, and coordinated handling of flight delays.

3.2.2 **Strengthening "hard connectivity" through facility development**. Work is progressing on high-speed rail facilities at airports and the rollout of intermodal services. Currently, 211 transport airports — 81.5% of the national total — are located in cities served by high-speed rail. A total of 22 airports, including Beijing Daxing, Shanghai Hongqiao, and Guangzhou Baiyun, have realized physical connection with high-speed rail stations, and are put into regular operation. Airports like Shijiazhuang and Changsha have launched passenger-friendly measures such as free shuttles,

exclusive lounges, and free overnight stays for transferring passengers, along with tailored intermodal services to improve the overall transfer experience.

3.2.3 Promoting "one-stop ticketing" services for passengers. CAAC has encouraged airlines to optimize their online channel presence by adding dedicated air-rail intermodal ticketing sections on their official websites and mobile app homepages. Promotional efforts have been carried out through diverse channels, including online new media, offline promotional materials at airports, and counter guidance, to ensure that passengers can easily benefit from the convenience of "one purchase, one payment" for air-rail through-ticketing.

3.2.4 Cultivating high-quality air-rail intermodal service brands. In 2024, CAAC, in collaboration with China Railway and the Ministry of Transport, organized the first round of brand solicitation and selection for passenger intermodal transport services. 11 mature air-rail intermodal demonstration cases, including that of China Eastern Airlines, were promoted across the industry to set service benchmarks. On December 19, 2025, Air China and China Eastern Airlines, led by CAAC and in collaboration with railway authorities, launched two pilot air-rail intermodal products for inbound tourism at the China International Travel Mart, and rolled them out to markets both at home and abroad. These intermodal offerings are expected to drive the integrated development of aviation, culture, and tourism, while supporting China's high-standard opening-up.

3.2.5 Strengthening coordinated emergency response between the two sectors. Efforts have been made to promote the establishment of air-rail intermodal evacuation and transfer coordination mechanisms in multiple regions across the country for adverse weather and emergency events. Airports have been guided to develop routine joint action plans with local railway authorities, and coordinated transfer and handling procedures have been promoted for scenarios prone to passenger stranding, such as snow, ice, freezing conditions, and low visibility.

3.2.6 Improving the standards framework. Based on industry experience, relevant national and industry standards are being developed to provide guidance and regulatory support for air-rail intermodal operations.

3.3 Implementation Results

3.3.1 Expanding service coverage. As of June 2026, 24 Chinese domestic airlines, including Air China, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines, and Hainan Airlines, had established system integration with the national railway 12306 ticketing platform. All flights of these airlines have been paired with high-speed rail services to form interline itineraries. Passengers can enjoy air-rail intermodal services, including ticketing, online customer support, and delay handling, on airline official websites, mobile apps, and the 12306 platform.

3.3.2 Rapid growth in intermodal sales. In 2025, a total of 690,000 air-rail intermodal tickets were sold through direct sales channels (airline websites and apps) and the 12306 platform, representing a year-on-year increase of 50%.

3.3.3 Smoother emergency coordination. Airports in multiple regions, including Xinjiang and Gansu, have established emergency coordination mechanisms with local railway authorities. During the 2026 Spring Festival travel rush, Urumqi Airport experienced sudden low visibility conditions, leading to multiple flights being diverted to Turpan Airport. In response, civil aviation authorities coordinated with the railway sector to operate additional temporary trains, successfully transferring over 1,000 passengers to Urumqi.

3.3.4 A more robust standards system. On July 1, 2025, the national standard Quality Requirements for Air-Rail Passenger Intermodal Services officially came into effect, providing greater standardization and efficiency in the advancement of air-rail intermodal transport.

4. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

4.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) support the establishment of a dedicated expert group under the Asia-Pacific Office to prepare and submit a report on the collaborative development of air-rail intermodal

transport, select and publish exemplary practice cases, and hold exchange seminars, so as to provide reference for the development of air-rail intermodal transport among States in the Asia-Pacific region;

- b) encourage Asia-Pacific countries, in consideration of their respective national and regional transport development contexts, to draw upon the integrated development model of China's civil aviation and China State Railway Group, characterized by cross-sectoral coordination, the simultaneous advancement of hard and soft connectivity, service brand cultivation, emergency coordination, and standards development; and
- c) encourage Asia-Pacific countries to establish air-rail coordination mechanisms, improve intermodal infrastructure, digital services, and emergency response capabilities, jointly build a regional intermodal service system, and collaboratively promote the high-quality and interconnected development of air-rail intermodal transport in the Asia-Pacific region, so as to better facilitate passenger travel.

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