



WORKING PAPER

**SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
(ATCONF/7)**

Montréal, HQ, 16 to 20 November 2026

**Agenda Item 4: Emerging technologies, new business models and other associated aspects
4.1: Economic regulatory frameworks on emerging technologies**

**TOWARDS A COMMON GLOBAL FRAMEWORK LED BY ICAO TO LINK AIR
TRANSPORT AGREEMENTS TO OPERATING PERMIT SYSTEMS USING
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

(Presented by Oman on behalf of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization
(ACAO))²

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents a proposal for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to adopt an international approach to develop an integrated global digital system linking bilateral air transport agreements with operating permit systems (Air Services Agreements – ASAs).

The system would be based on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as an enabling tool to enhance operational efficiency by accelerating the exercise of traffic rights, enhancing the efficiency of access to international markets, and reducing administrative and operational procedures.

Oman considers that ICAO's development and implementation of such a system, in cooperation with Member States, would contribute directly to achieving the objectives of the ICAO's 2050 Long-Term Strategic Plan by supporting the growth of the civil aviation sector, strengthening operational efficiency, reducing regulatory burdens and improving global air connectivity.

Action: The Conference is invited to:

- a) support the development and launch by ICAO of a common international digital system linking Air Transport Agreements with operational permit systems;
- b) adopt an international guidance material and common technical standards to ensure interoperability among States,
- c) encourage Member States to join such a system and progressively adopt its components;
- d) support the use of artificial intelligence as a tool to improve operational efficiency; and
- e) establish an international working group under the umbrella of ICAO to develop and oversee implementation of the system, provide technical support and build the capacities of developing countries.

*Strategic
Goal:*

This working paper relates to the following Strategic Goal: Strategic Goals: *The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All.*

¹ Arabic version provided by Oman.

² Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

<i>Financial implications:</i>	This working paper has no direct financial implications.
<i>References:</i>	<i>Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention, 1944)</i> <i>Doc 9626, Manual on the Regulation of International Air Transport</i> <i>ICAO Long-Term Strategic Plan to 2050</i> ICAO principles on digital transformation and innovation in civil aviation IATA digital-transformation reports and facilitation of air transport procedures OECD principles on trusted artificial intelligence and digital governance

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Air Transport Agreements (ATAs) constitute the legal framework governing traffic rights between States, while operating permits constitute the executive instrument for exercising those rights.

1.2 Despite the close link between the two, there remains an operational gap at the international level resulting from the absence of a common digital framework linking both sides, in addition to reliance on traditional procedures and repeated verification processes, which adversely affects the speed of issuing operational approvals and increases operating costs of airlines.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Oman's experience shows that the real value of ATAs can only be realized through their efficient and timely implementation by means of effective operating permit systems. Current practice, however, reveals disparities among States in implementation mechanisms and a lack of integration among systems, resulting in delays in the issuance of operating permits and increased administrative costs.

2.2 Accordingly, the development of an international system under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)'s supervision would address these challenges by harmonizing standards, reducing duplication and enhancing transparency.

3. PROPOSED WORKING MECHANISM

3.1 The proposed international system would include:

- a) A centrally managed platform containing data on bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the main provisions such as traffic rights, capacity and frequencies, in addition to operating conditions.
- b) A digital system for issuing permits, supported by artificial intelligence (AI) as an enabling tool, which analyses permit applications submitted by airlines and automatically checks their conformity with the provisions and limitations of agreements, thereby accelerating the issuance of approvals and reducing manual review.
- c) The system would include an integrated mechanism for categorizing and processing applications, whereby applications falling within the scope of agreements would be processed rapidly and directly, while applications falling outside the framework of

agreements would be referred to the relevant authorities in States for review and decision.

- d) Use of an AI-supported system to analyse operational data, including the preparation of periodic reports upon request, in addition to supporting the prediction of operational patterns and trends.

4. REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Oman emphasizes that the use of an AI-supported system under the umbrella of ICAO does not affect the right of States to exercise oversight and take their own decisions. Rather, it is intended to enhance implementation efficiency and is to be used as a supporting tool, not as a substitute for human decision-making, while ensuring direct oversight and the application of the highest standards of cybersecurity and data protection.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Oman considers that the current challenges associated with operational permit mechanisms and the absence of digital integration between ATAs and operating systems highlight the need for the adoption of a common international digital framework under the umbrella of ICAO. The use of AI in this field also represents a strategic opportunity to enhance operational efficiency, accelerate the processing of applications and improve transparency and reliability, while fully preserving State sovereignty and the States' right to take the final decision. Oman emphasizes that the establishment of such a common international platform would contribute to:

- accelerating the exercise of air traffic rights between States;
- reducing repetitive operational and administrative procedures;
- enhancing international connectivity and improving access to markets;
- supporting digital transformation in the civil aviation sector; and
- contributing to the achievement of ICAO's Long-Term Strategic Plan objectives to 2050.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Oman recommends that the Conference:

- a) Support the development by ICAO of a common global digital platform linking Air Transport Agreements with operational permit systems.
- b) Task ICAO with preparing a regulatory and technical framework identifying data-exchange mechanisms, technical interoperability requirements, cybersecurity standards and data protection.
- c) Establish an international working group under the umbrella of ICAO comprising Member States and relevant international organizations to develop the system and oversee the stages of its implementation.

- d) Encourage Member States to digitize Air Transport Agreements and standardize operational data to ensure integration with the proposed system.
- e) Support the use of artificial intelligence as an enabling tool to enhance the efficiency of operating systems, while maintaining the principle that the final decision remains under the supervision of the competent authorities in States.
- f) Provide capacity-building and technical-support programmes for developing countries to ensure the gradual and balanced implementation of the system at the global level.
- g) Invite ICAO to study the possibility of implementing a pilot project in cooperation with a group of States to assess the efficiency of the system before its international roll-out.

— END —