

Message from Luis Felipe de Oliveira

Director General, Airports Council International World

Aviation connects the world. It also contributes to a prosperous and sustainable world. But climate change remains the biggest existential threat of our time.

On 8 June 2021, following a feasibility assessment¹, ACI was the first global aviation organization to commit to a goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Shortly afterwards, the global air transport industry, through the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), followed suit.

Across the world, airports have long been reducing their carbon emissions and supporting a broader transition to a sustainable future. Globally 396 airports in 79 countries participate in the Airport Carbon Accreditation program. This demonstrates their progress towards reductions in carbon emissions. ACI World has developed tools to assist airports with their emissions inventory (ACERT) or with evaluating environmental and economic benefits of certain emission reduction initiatives (AGES-S), but support is needed from governments to allow more airports to develop and implement decarbonization strategies and action plans. While the net-zero goal addresses scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, many airport operators are also working in collaboration with their stakeholders to tackle scope 3 reductions.

ACI's support in sustainability transformation

To help the entire aviation ecosystem to thrive in a net-zero world, ACI has developed guidance to support the sector during the energy transition. ACI World released a whitepaper on sustainable energy sources for aviation from an airport perspective and provided further guidance on the integration of hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuels into airport operations. Regardless of the sustainable energy source, new building, ground, mobile and energy airport infrastructure might be required along with adjustments of operations, and specialized training. Furthermore, engagement with passengers is key to ensuring acceptance of new technologies, similarly to early planning and coordination with other stakeholders. The promotion of an inclusive, accessible, positive, healthy, and sustainable passenger journey must focus on the services delivered to improve customer experience. ACI's Airport



Service Quality (ASQ)² program provides solutions, expertise, and benchmarking tools to help airports measure and improve passenger satisfaction, business performance, and service quality.

ACI has produced several sustainability-related publications guiding airports as they build and continuously refine their sustainability strategies. During the pandemic, efforts focused on highlighting the advantages of incorporating sustainability into recovery plans and providing best practice to balance the environmental, social, and economic demands. Above and beyond a sustainable recovery, a long-term sustainable strategy is also key for a responsible and ethical operating model that can continuously revise and maximize the socio-economic benefits it generates. The report, Sustainability Strategy for Airports Worldwide³, provides the first overview of the most relevant and commonly reported sustainability topics by airports globally. ACI also released a first of its kind guidance on ESG management best practice⁴ to help airports with their reporting frameworks to meet investors' needs on performance and risk mitigation, while establishing an inclusive institutional framework that achieves good governance, compliance, and stewardship.

1 <https://store.aci.aero/product/long-term-carbon-goal-study-for-airports-report-2021/>

2 <https://aci.aero/programs-and-services/asq/>

3 <https://store.aci.aero/product/sustainability-strategy-for-airports-worldwide/>

4 <https://store.aci.aero/product/environmental-social-and-governance-esg-management-best-practice/>



ACI has also done much to combat wildlife trafficking. Wildlife trafficking is one of the world's largest organised international crimes, posing a significant threat to biodiversity, and adversely affecting communities that rely on local wildlife and tourism. Through a six-year partnership with USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species, ACI developed training materials for airport members, including a first edition of the Combatting Wildlife Trafficking Handbook⁵.

Solving the puzzle

The transformation of the sector to net-zero emissions requires significant change and unprecedented collaboration. Enabling such change will require breaking silos, decisive leadership, strong partnerships across the aviation ecosystem, ambitious government policies, appropriate funding, new technologies, and innovation to decarbonize and create a better quality of life for all. While the availability of measures varies regionally, and depends on airports' operating context, progress will secure airports' and aviation's future license to operate.

ACI will continue to support its members and to support ICAO as it develops the necessary measures to deliver a net-zero future and a sustainable aviation ecosystem.

5 <https://store.aci.aero/product/combating-wildlife-trafficking-handbook-first-edition-2021/>