



Sustainability Strategy for Airports 2.0

A practical, flexible guide for every European airport



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Foreword

When ACI EUROPE launched its first Sustainability Strategy in 2019, European airports were taking a decisive step towards making sustainability a core part of their future. Since then, the sector has made substantial progress, particularly on decarbonisation. Beyond merely setting net zero targets, airports have kept working on reducing their CO₂ emissions through *Airport Carbon Accreditation* with a number of them even achieving and maintaining a net zero carbon balance for their scope 1 & 2 emissions. That has come with significant investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, and also increasingly involves working with their operational partners to address emissions beyond those under their direct control.

But this progress has also come with the understanding that the sustainability challenge for airports is broader than carbon alone. Climate resilience, biodiversity, resource use, local environmental impacts, accessibility and the relationship with surrounding communities are all equally important to long-term success. All this is about future proofing our sector and maintaining our societal relevance.

The years ahead will require European airports to operate in a more uncertain and volatile environment, marked by increasing climate impacts, energy and resource pressures, a fast-changing aviation market, technological disruptions, unprecedented investment needs and continued policy and regulatory pressures. Sustainability therefore cannot simply be reduced to compliance and reporting or a set of environmental targets. It has to be a key strategic pillar, integrated as core to airport management and driving how airports prioritise, how they make decisions, invest, manage risk and create value for the people and places they serve.

This is why this new Sustainability Strategy takes a deliberately broader approach. Decarbonisation remains central, but it sits alongside climate resilience, local environmental quality, circularity, biodiversity, sustainable mobility, accessibility, people and community. These issues are not separate from the future of the airport business. They are increasingly part of its ability to remain resilient, competitive and trusted.

Airports are uniquely placed in this transition. They are critical infrastructure, major employers, important economic actors and permanent parts of the communities in which they operate. They also sit at the interface between airlines, energy providers, transport authorities, businesses and passengers. This gives airports both a responsibility and an opportunity to influence change well beyond their own operational boundaries.

The objective of this Strategy is not to prescribe a single model for every airport. European airports differ greatly in size, geography, ownership, resources and operating context. But what they share is the need for a clear direction and practical means of turning ambition into action. The maturity framework and tools provided here are designed to support that process, whether an airport is establishing its sustainability baseline or already working at the leading edge of the transition.

The trajectory is clear, action is underway and delivering results. We must now accelerate emissions reductions, prepare infrastructure for a changing climate, protect and restore nature, improve local environmental outcomes, strengthen accessibility and ensure our neighbouring communities continue to share in the benefits of airport growth. European airports have already shown that collective ambition can translate into real progress. The task now is to build on that foundation and make sustainability an integral part of the way our sector develops.

This strategy is ACI EUROPE's contribution to that effort and I would like to thank in particular our Sustainability Strategy Working Group¹ and Egis Sustainability Advisory. Its success will ultimately be measured not by the commitments we make, but by the changes we deliver.



Olivier Jankovec
Director General
ACI EUROPE

¹ AENA, daa, Gatwick, Copenhagen, Athens International Airport, Brussels Airport, Fraport Greece, London Luton Airport, SEA Milan, Royal Schiphol Group, Eindhoven Airport, Hermes Airports, Rotterdam-The Hague Airport, Fraport Slovenija, Brussels South Charleroi, Heathrow, Bologna Airport, Manchester Airports Group, Aeroporti Di Roma, Zurich Airport, Ostend-Bruges Airport, Avinor, Edinburgh Airport

328 Airports with net zero roadmaps	297 Airports in <i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i>	100+ Airports targeting net zero by 2030	83% European passenger traffic covered by airports with net zero roadmaps
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Global context

Airports are at the heart of modern life. They connect communities, power economies, and enable the movement of people and goods across the world. They are also well positioned to provide invaluable leadership to the transition to a sustainable aviation eco-system.

With European passenger traffic largely recovered from the COVID-19 period, and the sector now navigating accelerating climate regulation, investor scrutiny, and community expectations, the direction of travel is clear. The question is no longer whether airports must act, it is how fast and how ambitiously.

ACI EUROPE launched its first Sustainability Strategy in 2019, mobilising the European airport sector around a shared vision and practical guidance. The results have been significant: over 328 airports now have public net zero roadmaps, 297 airports are enrolled in the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* programme², and leading airports have demonstrated that world-class sustainability and commercial success can go hand in hand.

This updated strategy, covering 2026 to 2030 builds on that foundation, providing further guidance and tools to support a wider group of airports to implement effective sustainability strategies and thus accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices. The updated document reflects feedback provided by airports on their requirements: capturing the growing breadth of ESG topics, providing clearer guidance, more practical tools, flexibility for different sizes and contexts, and a stronger link between sustainability action and business performance.

What this strategy delivers

- Simple, clear navigation: what to do, when, and why
- Maturity-based approach: from compliance to sector leadership
- Step-by-step guidance, KPIs, and real airport examples
- Regulatory clarity and anti-greenwashing safeguards
- A link between every action and its business value

Since 2019, the global regulatory landscape has shifted fundamentally. The EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) have moved disclosure from voluntary to mandatory. The EUROCONTROL Trajectory 2030 Strategy has embedded climate adaptation at the heart of European aviation planning. And the principle of double materiality (assessing both the airport's impact on the world and the world's impact on the airport) is now a legal requirement for many members.

Aviation faces a significant reputational and operational challenge as other sectors decarbonise quicker, causing its relative share of global emissions to increase. This shift intensifies the pressure on airports to accelerate their own transitions to maintain their social licence. Beyond GHG emissions, airports must now navigate a volatile landscape of resource scarcity, geopolitical and (national) legal shifts, and rapid technological change. Successfully managing these risks requires a fundamental shift in airport operations to ensure long-term resilience and competitiveness in a changing global economy.

Against this backdrop, the period to 2030 presents both a strategic opportunity and a clear responsibility. This strategy sets out a practical framework for airports to respond to changing environmental expectations and support the sector's transition towards a more sustainable future.

² *Airport Carbon Accreditation* programme <https://www.airportcarbonaccreditation.org/>

Where we are: our progress since 2019

The ACI EUROPE Sustainability Strategy for Airports was launched in June 2019 as the first systematic approach to sustainability at European airports. In the years since, the sector has made remarkable strides, proving that collective action, structured frameworks, and shared ambition can drive real change at scale.

Decarbonisation

European airports became the first aviation stakeholders globally to commit to net zero operations under the leadership of ACI EUROPE. That commitment, which began with 190 airports in 2019 and which ACI EUROPE updates and re-affirm every year, has now grown to encompass 328 airports across the continent, covering approximately 83% of European passenger traffic³.

Broadening the sustainability vision

Building on this climate leadership, and to accelerate this transition, European airports voluntarily integrated comprehensive biodiversity protections and circular economy waste frameworks directly into their long-term operational master plans.

Beyond the environment, airports generate 14 million jobs across the continent, with an increasing number of operators launching onsite academies and community funds to ensure local residents directly benefit from airport growth.

What We Have Delivered

- 328 airports with public net zero roadmaps
- 297 airports in *Airport Carbon Accreditation*
- 100+ airports targeting net zero by 2030 or earlier
- ~540,000 tonnes CO₂ saved annually through *Airport Carbon Accreditation*
- *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Level 5 introduced for net zero operations + Scope 3
- 60% of airports implemented biodiversity action plans, including demonstrated ecosystem recovery such as fish returning near Helsinki airport
- Workforce programmes to support local employment and skills development

What Comes Next (2026–2030)

- System-wide decarbonisation: beyond the airport fence
- SAF, hydrogen, and electric aircraft infrastructure roll-out
- Mandatory CSRD/ESRS disclosure for qualifying airports
- Scaling circular economy and nature-positive approaches
- Unlocking green finance for the transition
- Stronger Scope 3 engagement with airlines, ground handlers and wider airport service providers.
- Climate adaptation embedded in all future physical assets and other relevant capital investments.

³ ACI EUROPE Net Zero resolution <https://www.aci-europe.org/netzero>

The airport of the future

By 2030, European airports will look and operate very differently from today.

The airport of the future is no longer a standalone transport hub, but a sustainable engine for the entire aviation sector. Success now requires moving beyond individual improvements toward a **total system transformation** that links flight operations, ground transport, and supply chains. To achieve this, future-ready airports are evolving into integrated platforms where environmental, social, and economic goals are achieved simultaneously through four key shifts:

1. **Strategic integration:** Sustainability should no longer be looked at as a standalone topic. It is a critical driver of all investment and core business decisions. This will mean that all investment decisions should be reviewed against a longer-term environmental policy or plan that can ensure decisions consider their environmental and social impact.
2. **Sector leadership:** Airports act as the central connectors, building deep partnerships with airlines and other operational/commercial stakeholders, energy providers, and local communities to address shared challenges.
3. **Scalable innovation:** New technologies, aircrafts and operational concepts, from hydrogen infrastructure to AI-driven resource management are moved rapidly from small trials to full-scale operations, along with acceptance to trial and review existing specifications.
4. **Purposeful delivery:** Regulatory requirements are viewed as a baseline, with a primary focus on delivering measurable, real-world benefits for both the planet and the people they serve.

ACI World: mapping the sustainability themes.

To translate our vision of the 'airport of the future' into measurable milestones, this strategy anchors itself in established global benchmarks. The wheel below, ACI World: Mapping the Sustainability Themes, was launched in August 2025 to address a critical gap: traditional corporate reporting fails to capture the unique, multi-faceted realities of airports as transport hubs, commercial landlords, and major local employers. By mapping airport-specific operations directly against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this matrix demonstrates that true aviation resilience extends far beyond environmental performance alone to encompass vital social and governance priorities. Ultimately, this framework helps us identify operational synergies, prioritise resources efficiently, and ensure that our local initiatives deliver maximum impact toward internationally recognised global goals. The below diagram illustrates how an airport's sustainability requirements align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mapping individual airport sustainability topics identified by ACI against the global priorities established by the UN.



Our Seven Key Themes

ACI EUROPE has aligned this strategy with the ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework for Airports (finalised August 2025). This established a unified standard mapping for airport sustainability, identifying 15 core topics. These were aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) and best practice guidance.

Our seven themes reflect both European airports' priorities and the materiality assessment conducted through the Sustainability Strategy Working Group (SSWG).

Decarbonisation & Energy Transition

Net zero operations · Renewable energy · SAF & hydrogen infrastructure

Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Infrastructure resilience · Risk assessment · Nature-based solutions

Local Environment Quality & Community Impacts

Noise · Air quality · Water management · People & community wellbeing

Circular Economy & Resource Management

Zero waste · Water efficiency · Sustainable procurement

Biodiversity, Land Use & Airside Ecology

Habitat management · Biodiversity net gain · Natural capital accounting

Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility

Modal shift · Accessibility · Zero-emission transport

People & Community

Workforce equity · Living wage · Social value · Community impact

Cutting across all seven themes are shared drivers that every airport should consider:

- **Regulatory pressure:** CSRD, ESRS, ETS, permit renewals
- **Geopolitical context:** energy security, supply chain disruption and evolving political priorities
- **Geographic context:** water stress, climate vulnerability, urban proximity
- **Cost and commercial viability:** balancing investment with return, and growing green finance mechanisms
- **Passenger and community expectations:** expectations are growing, both in accessibility and transparency of airport activities
- **Investor confidence:** ESG scores affecting access to capital
- **Emerging technology:** SAF, hydrogen/electrification and digitalisation
- **Eco-system sustainability:** airlines, airports, airside services and offsite suppliers, etc

 Sustainability starts with your people

The biggest sustainability challenge is not technology or regulation – it is engagement. Progress only happens when staff at every level see sustainability as part of their role, not a corporate add-on. Whether on the ramp, in the terminal, or in the boardroom, daily decisions directly affect the airport's footprint.

The goal is not a few people doing sustainability perfectly – it is thousands of people making better choices every day. Training, tools, and visible leadership make this possible.

How to use this strategy

This strategy is designed to be a living guidance and a reference tool, not a one-time read. Every theme section is structured in the same way so you can find what you need quickly:

	Context	Why this theme matters and its regulatory drivers
	Ambition	What good looks like for airports in 2030
	Actions by Maturity Level	Pick your level: steps from compliance through to sector leadership
	KPIs	Practical metrics to track and report progress
	Case Studies	Real examples from ACI EUROPE member airports
	Regulatory Guidance	Key laws, topic guidance and anti-greenwashing safeguards relevant to each theme

The Maturity Framework

We recognise that every airport is different. A regional airport of 500,000 passengers per year has different resources and pressures than a major hub handling 50 million passengers. That is why this strategy uses a four-level maturity framework:

 LEVEL 1 Comply	 LEVEL 2 Embed	 LEVEL 3 Advance	 LEVEL 4 Pioneer
Meet all current and anticipated legal and regulatory requirements. Build your baseline.	Go beyond compliance. Integrate sustainability into operations, culture, and planning.	Lead your peer group. Set ambitious targets and deliver measurable outcomes.	Shape the future of the sector. Drive system-wide change and contribute to global standards.

A toolkit has been developed which helps you score and see where you are against each theme. This also lets you create your own airport reports to track progress. The toolkit can be found [here](#). In case you experience any issues with the toolkit, you may contact theodoros.papachristou@aci-europe.org.

How to start: your materiality assessment

Before diving into the themes, we recommend a quick materiality review to identify your priorities. A simple double materiality approach (aligned with CSRD) asks three questions:

- **Impact materiality:** How do your operations affect the environment and communities? Use the seven themes as a checklist.
- **Financial materiality:** What external factors, such as climate change, energy prices, regulation could affect your airport's future viability?
- **Stakeholder interests:** What do your local authorities, shareholders, employees, and passengers want and need from you?

Identifying your maturity level will allow you to use the strategy at the most appropriate level for you.

Theme 1 of 7 | 🌱 Decarbonisation & Energy Transition

Decarbonisation & Energy Transition

Decarbonisation is the defining challenge for aviation and the strategic cornerstone of this strategy. It demands that airports simultaneously eliminate their own operational emissions and help build the infrastructure needed for zero-emission flights. Done well, it also reduces energy costs, secures access to green finance, and future-proofs the airport's licence to operate.

Offsetting can play a role in addressing residual emissions that cannot yet be eliminated through direct operational measures. In the airport context, this may include hard-to-abate emissions where technological, infrastructure or supply chain constraints limit immediate reductions. However, offsetting should be treated as a complementary measure within a wider decarbonisation pathway, not as a substitute for reducing emissions at source.

📍 Why it matters:

🌍 Climate & Regulatory

- Aviation contributes to around 2–3% of global CO₂, and pressure to decarbonise is accelerating
- The UK and EU ETS and ReFuelEU Aviation are raising compliance costs and requirements
- Scope 3 emissions (aviation, surface access) dominate the total footprint

💰 Financial & Strategic

- Heathrow's 2025 substation outage cost an estimated £26m in a single day, highlighting energy resilience risk
- Green bonds and sustainability-linked loans could offer lower-cost capital for decarbonised airports
- Rising energy demand from electrification makes efficiency and generation critical

➔ CASE STUDY | Larnaca International Airport – Aligning with Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 4+

Larnaca achieved *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Level 4+ status in 2023. Through 90+ energy efficiency projects, the airport achieved a 32% reduction in energy use and now generates 28% of its electricity from an on-site 3.5 MWp solar farm. By mandating carbon reductions for airline partners and committing to net zero by 2050, Larnaca transformed sustainability into a competitive advantage.

Business outcome: Lower energy costs, enhanced investor profile, and positioning as a regional clean energy leader.



➔ CASE STUDY | The TULIPS project – Hydrogen innovation

Led by Royal Schiphol Group, this €25M EU initiative tests zero-emission solutions at four major airports. One of the focus areas was on replacing diesel ground equipment with hydrogen to decarbonise the "invisible" side of aviation.

By deploying the world's first hydrogen Ground Power Unit (H-GPU) and fuel-cell tow tractors, TULIPS proved that clean turnarounds are operationally viable. It also established on-site green hydrogen production and safety standards for the entire industry.

Business outcome: Scalable blueprints for hydrogen infrastructure and a standardised safety "rulebook" for European airport operations.





✈ CASE STUDY | Athens International Airport – Route 2025

Led by Athens International Airport, ROUTE 2025 is a €70M energy transformation programme designed to achieve a net zero greenhouse gas emissions balance by 2025, 25 years ahead of the wider European airport sector target. The programme focuses on decarbonising the airport's direct Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions through on-site renewable electricity generation, battery storage, electrification and real-time energy management.

By deploying 51.5 MWp of self-generation photovoltaic capacity and an 82 MWh battery storage system, Athens International Airport covers 100% of its electricity needs through clean energy produced within the airport boundary. The programme also includes fleet electrification, EV charging infrastructure, heat pumps to reduce natural gas use, and a digital energy management system to optimise production, storage and consumption.

Business outcome: A fully integrated airport energy ecosystem delivering renewable energy at scale.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Understand and meet your legal obligations under EU and local Emission Trading Systems and national energy reporting. Establish a carbon baseline (Scope 1 & 2). Key actions: Carbon audit · Utility metering · Join <i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i> at Level 1 · Net zero policy statement
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Set science-based targets. Switch to 100% renewable electricity. Begin fleet electrification, including (GSE). Publish your net zero roadmap, aligned with ACI EUROPE's Net Zero Resolution. Key actions: Renewable energy Power-Purchase Agreements · LED/building upgrades · Electric Vehicle charging · Scope 3 inventory · Net zero roadmap publication · Achieve <i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i> Level 2
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Install on-site renewable generation. Electrify all owned fleet. Begin influencing Scope 3 through airline and tenant engagement programmes. Key actions: Solar/wind generation, if possible · Fixed Electrical Ground Power expansion · Scope 3 engagement · Green lease clauses · SAF facilitation · Achieve <i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i> Level 3, 4 or 4+
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Become a net zero energy hub. Develop hydrogen/SAF usage. Act as a regional clean energy producer and publish a science-based target aligned roadmap. Key actions: Hydrogen fuelling infrastructure planning · SAF blending where possible / facilitation, if appropriate and/or fuel facilitation · Grid export capability · Cross-sector partnerships · Target alignment · Achieve <i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i> Level 5

What to measure: Decarbonisation KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Scope 1 & 2 GHG emissions intensity	kg CO ₂ e per passenger / per aircraft movement kg CO ₂ e Total Emissions

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
2	Scope 3 GHG emissions intensity	kg CO ₂ e per passenger / per aircraft movement kg CO ₂ e Total Emissions
3	Energy consumption intensity	kWh per passenger / per m ² terminal area kWh Total Usage
4	Renewable electricity share	% of total electricity consumption
5	Airport fleet electrification rate	% of owned vehicles electrified
6	SAF facilitation	% of jet fuel that is SAF / litres per year
7	Fixed Electrical Ground Power (FEGP) usage	% of stands where FEGP is available / % availability
8	Total absolute GHG emissions (Scope 1–3)	tonnes CO ₂ e per year
9	Energy cost intensity	unit cost per passenger / per m ²
10	Other Relevant KPIs	



Anti-greenwashing note

Offsetting should never substitute direct emissions reductions. *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Level 4+ allows certified offsets as an interim measure, but the pathway should look to include verifiable reference measures, such as science-based absolute reduction targets. CSRD requires airports to separately disclose offsetting from genuine emission reductions. Airports should avoid claiming that they are 'carbon neutral' without third-party verification.

Carbon neutrality refers to a state in which carbon emissions are balanced by an equivalent amount of carbon absorbed or offset elsewhere. Net zero refers to a state in which greenhouse gas emissions are reduced as close to zero as possible, with any residual emissions balanced through permanent greenhouse gas removals from the atmosphere. While the terms are often used interchangeably, net zero requires emissions reduction before relying on compensation mechanisms.



Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **Airport Carbon Accreditation:** The global standard for airport carbon management, now at Level 5 for net zero Scope 1 & 2 with Scope 3 influence. Managed by ACI EUROPE.
- **ACI EUROPE Net Zero Resolution (updated yearly):** Commitment framework covering 328 European airports.
- **ACI World ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Tiered metrics for energy and emissions reporting aligned to UN SDG 7 (Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- **EU CSRD / EU ESRS E1:** Mandatory climate-related disclosure for qualifying airports from 2025 onwards.

Theme 2 of 7 | Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Airports are critical national infrastructure, and yet they are increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather events and other climate-related disruptions. Europe is projected to be the fastest-warming continent. Over 70% of airports globally have already experienced climate-related disruption. The question is not whether your infrastructure will face climate stress, but whether you have planned for it.

Adaptation is the strategic partner of decarbonisation: while mitigation reduces long-term climate risk, adaptation protects the airport's operational continuity and asset value now. In December 2025, EUROCONTROL and ACI EUROPE jointly released new guidance on climate adaptation⁴, reinforcing that resilience planning is both an operational necessity and a strategic imperative.

Why it matters

Operational risk

- Extreme weather causes delays, capacity loss, and cascading network impacts
- Aging infrastructure was not built for current or future climate conditions
- Flooding, heat, and storm damage are increasing in frequency and severity across Europe

Financial risk

- Unmitigated climate risk creates 'stranded asset' exposure that reduces credit ratings and access to capital
- Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) have shifted from optional best practices to strict prerequisites for institutional capital allocation.
- Insurance premiums are rising sharply for high-exposure locations

CASE STUDY | Amsterdam Schiphol Airport – Flood resilience below sea level

Located below sea level, Schiphol operates one of the world's most sophisticated flood resilience systems: over 200 km of drainage pipes, coordinated management with Dutch water boards, and 'Green Ribs', which are landscaped ridges that act simultaneously as noise buffers and natural rainwater absorption systems. This approach has kept Schiphol operationally resilient through multiple extreme weather events.

Business outcome: Operational continuity through extreme weather · Nature-based solutions reducing CAPEX · Community co-benefit from green infrastructure.

 AMS Schiphol

CASE STUDY | Heathrow Airport – Climate-related disclosure and green capital

Through its Climate-related Financial Disclosures (CFD), Heathrow considers both transition and physical climate risks and ensures these are reflected in its long-term financial forecasting. The airport has identified 21 physical climate risks, ranging from impacts on maintenance and construction activities to disruptions to power supplies. This demonstrates its commitment to embedding climate considerations into strategic decision-making and financial planning.

 Heathrow

⁴ EUROCONTROL and ACI EUROPE "Adapting European Aviation to a Changing Climate: Guidance on Risk Assessment and Adaptation" <https://www.aci-europe.org/media-room/572-eurocontrol-and-aci-europe-release-guidance-to-strengthen-climate-resilience-across-european-aviation.html>

Heathrow has integrated Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) processes into its enterprise risk management framework and reports on physical climate risks every five years in line with UK Government requirements for Critical National Infrastructure. These assessments evaluate current and future physical climate risks, identify where existing mitigations need strengthening, and inform updates to asset strategies and engineering standards.

Business outcome: Improving the long-term resilience of infrastructure and operations · Reducing the potential for climate-related disruptions and costs · Enabling informed investment decisions that protect operational performance, regulatory compliance and future business value.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Conduct a basic climate risk screening. Review insurance cover for weather events. Ensure BCMS (Business Continuity Management System) covers extreme weather. Align with CSRD double-materiality obligations. Key actions: Climate risk register · Business continuity plan update · CSRD gap assessment
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Complete a formal climate vulnerability assessment across all critical assets. Integrate climate risk into capital planning. Engage with national climate scenarios including EUROCONTROL Trajectory 2030 climate adaptation guidance. Key actions: Asset-level risk assessment · CAPEX climate criteria · Emergency response upgrades · Nature-based drainage solutions
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Align with TCFD/TNFD reporting frameworks. Quantify financial exposure to climate risks. Develop a multi-decade climate adaptation roadmap embedded in the master plan. Incorporate Climate Risks into Enterprise Risk Management for continuous monitoring. Key actions: TCFD disclosure · Scenario analysis (exceeding Paris Agreement targets) · Green bond issuance · Nature-based Solutions programme · Operational resilience KPIs
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Lead sector-wide climate resilience. Share methodologies with ACI peers. Collaborate with regional governments, ANSPs, and airlines on network resilience. Publish TCFD-aligned investor disclosure. Key actions: TCFD investor report · Regional resilience partnership · Cross-sector scenario modelling · TNFD pilot · Resilience-linked financing

What to measure: Climate Resilience KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Climate resilience maturity	Qualitative score
2	Critical infrastructure covered by climate risk assessment	% of critical assets assessed
3	Climate-related operational disruptions	Number of events / downtime hours per year
4	CAPEX programmes which contain climate resilience	% of total CAPEX
5	Insurance cost trend / climate risk exposure	% change year-on-year / €
6	Other Relevant KPIs	

 Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **EUROCONTROL/ACI EUROPE Climate Adaptation Guidance (Dec 2025):** Practical toolkit for integrating mitigation and adaptation strategies across infrastructure, operations, and planning.
- **TCFD (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures):** Widely expected reporting standard for climate-related risks; increasingly required by investors and lenders.
- **TNFD (Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures):** Emerging framework for nature and biodiversity-related risks linked to physical climate risk.
- **CSRD / ESRS E1 & E4:** Requires disclosure on both climate risk management and biodiversity impacts.

Theme 3 of 7 | Local Environmental Quality & Community Impacts

Local Environmental Quality & Community Impacts

Local environmental quality is the frontline of an airport's social licence to operate. Noise and air quality drive planning constraints, operational restrictions, and regulatory intervention. Proactive management transforms the airport from a perceived source of nuisance into a trusted, transparent neighbour.

Why it matters

Operational risk

- Noise exposure affects millions across Europe, driving curfews, caps and planning restrictions that directly limit growth and development
- The ICAO Balanced Approach and EU Regulation 598/2014 are increasingly being bypassed by governments under local political pressure
- Poor air quality performance triggers permit challenges and health authority scrutiny

Financial risk

- PFAS (man-made “forever chemicals”) contamination from historic fire-fighting foams and de-icing use is an emerging and significant financial liability across European airports
- CSRD/ESRS requires material environmental impacts to be disclosed. Failure to report local pollution is itself a compliance breach
- Community opposition is the single most common cause of planning delay and cost overrun of development projects at European airports

Zurich Airport

CASE STUDY | Zurich Airport – Linking charges to environmental performance

Zurich was the first airport globally to link landing charges directly to engine emissions levels in 1997, using a revenue-neutral fee structure. By substituting part of the weight-based landing by NO_x/HC (oxides of nitrogen and hydrocarbons)-related emission fees, the airport successfully demonstrated the inclusion of aircraft emissions in an overall mitigation plan as a basis to obtain the construction permits for further developing the airport in order to accommodate forecasted traffic growth.

Business outcome: Construction permits secured · Traffic growth maintained · Industry-leading community relations.



CASE STUDY | Athens International Airport – Real time public data

Athens International Airport (AIA) manages local impacts through its NOMOS Noise Monitoring System, a network of residential sensors for real-time public transparency. A web-based application allows residents to monitor flight tracks and noise levels in near real-time. Air pollution is tracked in a similar fashion through AIA's Air Quality Monitoring Network which measures nitrogen oxides, particulate matter (PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀) and other pollutants across five municipalities. This data is made available to the public and shared with the authorities for further evaluation.

Business outcome: Enhanced community trust through extensive data collection and radical transparency.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Meet all regulatory requirements: EU noise Balanced Approach (Reg. 598/2014), air quality limit values, water discharge permits, and PFAS monitoring. Establish community liaison channels. Key actions: Noise monitoring · Air Quality (AQ) permit compliance · Water quality reporting · Community committee establishment · PFAS-free de-icing and fire-fighting foams
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Develop a noise action plan and assess additional measures to reduce noise impacts. Begin transition of airside vehicles to zero-emission. Introduce continuous environmental monitoring. Publish noise and air quality data proactively. Investigate and identify any risks related to past usage of PFAS. Key actions: Noise action plan implementation · Electric Ground Service Equipment transition · Continuous AQ monitoring · Public environmental dashboard · PFAS remediation programme
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Introduce landing charge differentiation linked to aircraft noise/emission performance (e.g., Zurich model). Deploy predictive analytics for noise management. Implement zero-discharge water systems. Key actions: Performance-based charges · Zero-discharge drainage · Predictive noise modelling reduction programme
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Reduce significant aircraft noise exposure through coordinated measures with airlines, ANSPs and competent authorities, including operational improvements and land-use planning. Lead industry standard-setting on ultrafine particles and PFAS. Key actions: Collaborative flight path optimisation · Ultra Fine Particles (UFP) sector standards · Community health partnership

What to measure: Local Environment KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Population affected by noise	Number of people within Lden contours (55, 65, 75 dB)
2	Air quality: NOx and PM10/2.5 emissions	kg NOx / PM
3	Water quality compliance	Number of pollution incidents / % samples exceeding limits
4	Ultrafine particle (UFP) concentration	Particles/cm ³ (annual average)
5	PFAS/PFOA monitoring compliance	% compliance / number of exceedances
6	Soil contamination incidents	Number per year / remediation cases
7	Other Relevant KPIs	



Key standard and regulation: ICAO and EU noise balanced approach

EU Regulation 598/2014 provides the framework for noise-related operating restrictions. It requires a Balanced Approach – considering all available measures before imposing caps or curfews. However, political pressure is increasing, and governments are increasingly bypassing the standard process. Managing noise proactively and sharing clear information help airports build trust with local communities and support informed decision-making. Consistent application of the Balanced Approach is essential to ensure that decisions are based on robust evidence and a transparent assessment of available measures



Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI EUROPE Noise Policy Position (updated 2026):** ACI EUROPE's position on the EU Balanced Approach Regulation (598/2014) and guidance on engaging with national competent authorities on noise action plans.
- **ACI World Guidance on the Application of the ICAO Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management (2025):** Practical guidance setting out a six-step process to help airports assess noise impacts, identify problems and develop and review noise management measures suited to their local circumstances.
- **ACI World Airport Air Quality Manual:** Guidance on monitoring and managing air quality at and around airports, including NOx, PM2.5, and ultrafine particle assessment methodologies.
- **ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Includes standardised metrics for noise exposure, air quality emissions, and water quality – use as baseline for CSRD-aligned local environment disclosure.
- **CSRD / ESRS E2 (Pollution), E3 (Water) & S3 Affected communities:** Mandatory disclosure on pollution prevention and water management for qualifying airports from FY2025.
- **EU Regulation 598/2014:** Establishes a Balanced Approach process for evidence-based decisions and transparent assessment of available measures. Operating restrictions should be a last resort, after assessing other measures and demonstrating their necessity to achieve the defined noise objective.
- **EU Green Claims Directive (2024):** Applies to all environmental communications. Any public claims about air quality improvement or noise reduction must be substantiated and independently verified.

Theme 4 of 7 | Circular Economy & Resource Management

Circular Economy & Resource Management

Airports are essentially small cities: they generate significant volumes of waste, consume large quantities of water, and procure across highly complex supply chains. The transition to a circular model is both an environmental imperative and a financial opportunity, reducing disposal costs, lowering water bills, and building supply chain resilience.

Why it matters

Operational risk

- European airports generate 0.12–0.23 kg of waste per passenger, much of which is hard to recycle due to cross contamination/ lack of segregation
- EU Circular Economy Action Plan is tightening compliance obligations for airport concessions and infrastructure projects
- Cabin waste regulations are tightening under EU aviation environmental policy, placing new obligations on airports

Financial opportunities

- Closed-loop water and waste systems typically achieve payback periods of 2–4 years at almost any airport scale
- Circular procurement reduces exposure to commodity price volatility and strengthens supply chain resilience
- Water efficiency is becoming a strategic risk as drought frequency increases across Southern and Central Europe

CASE STUDY | Rotterdam The Hague Airport — Optimising Collection of Deposit Bottles and Cans

Operating with *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Level 5 certification and targeting net-zero emissions and full circularity by 2050, Rotterdam The Hague Airport (~2.2M passengers/year) needed an effective waste strategy when the Dutch statiegeld deposit scheme expanded to cans in 2023. As Royal Schiphol Group's sustainability testbed, the airport required a solution to meet regulations, curb plastic waste contamination, and fulfill passenger expectations.

In 2024, RTHA partnered with Statiegeld Nederland and charity Stichting Jarige Job to launch a hybrid collection system. The airport installed dedicated bins airside and landside alongside a reverse-vending machine (RVM) in Departures, letting passengers either claim their refund or donate it to charity.

Business outcome: A low-cost, high-impact circular model easily transferable to other regional transport hubs · 29,000 units collected (17,400 via bins / 11,400 via RVM) · Direct Social Impact with €3,000 donated to charity · 30% reduction in mixed plastics contamination · Strong positive response from passengers and local media



CASE STUDY | Eindhoven Airport – Sustainable/circular procurement criteria for terminal expansion

The expansion of Eindhoven Airport incorporates sustainability/circular criteria. For example, materials will be reused, such as the facade elements from the existing terminal. The airside construction will be made of sustainable wood, self-healing concrete with a circular component and will be completely gas-free. A heat and cold storage will be used to heat and cool the extension of the terminal. Almost 1,100 solar panels will be installed on the roof of the terminal extension. This will generate approximately 363,500 kilowatt-hours of energy per year, which is about 40% of the energy consumption in the new part of the terminal. Part of the roof will be covered with sedum plants. This contributes to water retention and insulation of the terminal. A water basin will be installed in the basement to collect rainwater. This water will be used for the toilets in the extension. The design is made in such a way that materials can be easily reused in the future. Almost all of the equipment used during construction will be electric. The outdoor area, on the forecourt, will be landscaped with greenery.



Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Meet EU waste framework directive requirements. Track and report waste generation and diversion rates. Ensure water discharge compliance. Key actions: Waste audit · Landfill diversion tracking · Water permit compliance · Supplier waste clauses
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Significant reduction in waste to landfill. Introduce standardised recycling and segregation across terminal and airside. Implement water metering and reduction targets. Shift procurement to circular/low-waste criteria. Key actions: Zero-to-landfill programme · Unified bin system · Water reduction targets · Circular procurement policy
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Deploy closed-loop water systems for vehicle washing and non-potable water use. Engage airlines and tenants in circular economy commitments. Include circular criteria in new material purchases and all major infrastructure projects. Key actions: Grey water recycling · Closed-loop vehicle wash · Tenant circular commitments · Recycled content / waste reduction targets in construction and new material purchases
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Achieve full terminal circularity: minimal waste, maximised water reuse, and circular supply chain across all concessions. Share methodology with ACI and Sustainability Strategy Working Group. Contribute to EU circular economy policy. Key actions: Full circular concessions · Water neutrality · Industry circular roadmap contribution · Waste-to-energy programme

 What to measure: Circular Economy KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Waste reuse	% of waste recycled / reused
2	Waste diversion rate	% of waste diverted from landfill
3	Waste generation intensity	kg per passenger
4	Water consumption intensity	litres per passenger
5	Water reuse rate	% of total water consumption
6	Sustainable procurement spend	% of spend meeting sustainability criteria
7	Circular materials in construction	% recycled / reused / renewable content
8	Supplier circular procurement compliance	% of key suppliers meeting criteria
9	Other relevant KPIs	



The on-the-go waste challenge

Passenger waste is uniquely difficult to manage. Travellers often cannot identify which bin to use, leading to recycling contamination. The most effective airports are moving away from passenger education and towards system design: identical bin types across all transport modes, and requiring concessions to use only easily recyclable packaging.

Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Includes standardised metrics for waste generation, diversion rates, water consumption, and sustainable procurement – the baseline for CSRD-aligned circular economy reporting.
- **Airport Carbon Accreditation:** Scope 3 guidance (2022) covers waste and water as part of the broader carbon footprint – circular economy actions contribute directly to *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Level 4 and 5 requirements.
- **CSRD / ESRS E5 (Circular Economy), E3 Water:** Mandatory disclosure on resource use, waste management, and circular economy strategies for qualifying airports.
- **EU Circular Economy Action Plan (2020, updated 2023):** Driving regulation on packaging (EU Packaging Regulation), single-use plastics, construction materials, and textiles – all directly relevant to airport concessions, retail, and capital projects.
- **EU Waste Framework Directive (updated 2023):** Sets the legal hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, disposal – and minimum diversion targets that airports must meet and report against.
- **EUROCONTROL Environmental Assessment Framework:** Includes resource efficiency metrics applicable to airport operational planning and infrastructure design.

Theme 5 of 7 | Biodiversity & Land Use & Airside Ecology

Biodiversity & Land Use & Airside Ecology

Airports can be among the largest landowners in their regions. That land, which is often restricted-access grassland, is a significant opportunity for nature. By actively managing biodiversity, airports do not merely offset their presence: they create habitats, sequester carbon, support natural flood management, and reduce wildlife hazard risks.

Regulatory pressure is increasing. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now required for new development in the UK, and the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) is rapidly becoming an investor expectation. Airports that quantify their nature-related dependencies and impacts are ahead of the curve.

Why it matters

Operational risk

- EU Nature Restoration Law (2024) is advancing equivalent frameworks across Europe. Biodiversity Net Gain is now a legal requirement for new development in the UK; Infrastructure expansion triggers Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive obligations. Airports without baseline biodiversity data face significant planning delays
- Poorly managed airfield grassland creates dense monocultures that concentrate wildlife and increase bird strike risk

Financial risk

- TNFD is rapidly becoming an investor-expected disclosure standard. Airports not yet mapping nature dependencies are behind the curve
- Heathrow identified £11m/year in ecosystem services from its surrounding environment showing unquantified, this value is invisible to investors
- Sustainability-linked loans increasingly require credible biodiversity commitments as conditions of favourable terms

CASE STUDY | Ostend-Bruges Airport – biOSTdiversity programme



Ostend-Bruges converted 22 hectares of airport land into a managed biodiversity zone. By restoring native habitats, installing raptor perches, and using short-grass management to steer wildlife away from runways, the airport decreased bird strike risk, provided sanctuary for the endangered Black-tailed Godwit, and co-located a solar park saving 9,600 tonnes CO₂ annually.

Business outcome: Reduced wildlife strike risk · Safety and ecology aligned · Renewable energy co-benefit · Award-winning international recognition.

CASE STUDY | Heathrow Airport – Natural strategy

Heathrow

Heathrow's Nature Positive Plan provides a framework for supporting the transition towards nature recovery and biodiversity net gain. The plan was developed using the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)'s Locate Evaluate Assess and Prepare (LEAP) methodology which recognises impacts and dependencies as a result of its direct operations and broader value chain and informs the development of appropriate interventions. Further, Heathrow has adopted the TNFD framework to further their understanding on nature-related dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities.

Business outcome: Heathrow managing its biodiversity sites in line with leading standards for biodiversity protection · Strengthened approach to nature-related risk management · Expansion of partnerships that support nature recovery · Exploring nature-based solutions enhancing resilience and deliver long-term environmental value.



✈ CASE STUDY | Bologna Airport – World's first FSC-certified airport green space

Bologna Airport achieved FSC® certification (Forest Stewardship Council – FSC-C214976) for responsible management of a 40-hectare woodland created in acquired land in neighbouring municipalities. This project reinforces trust and enables long-term collaboration with local communities, as through this independent verification, stakeholders obtained assurance that carbon storage, biodiversity conservation and other ecosystem services will be maintained through responsible forest management. The airport also deployed, in collaboration with University of Bologna, beehive biomonitoring using bee serum analysis to detect air pollutant concentrations, a low-cost, high-impact approach to environmental monitoring.

Business outcome: International recognition · Air quality monitoring innovation · Community co-benefit from CO₂ capture and restored habitat.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Conduct Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). Meet Habitats Directive obligations. Maintain wildlife hazard management in line with safety requirements. Key actions: EIA compliance · Habitat protection plan · Wildlife management programme · Safety-ecology balance review
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Develop a biodiversity management plan for all airport land. Map habitats and species. Introduce short-grass management and raptor perches to reduce bird strike risk while improving ecology. Key actions: Biodiversity management plan · Habitat mapping · Native planting · Bird strike risk-ecology balance
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Target biodiversity net gain (no net loss). Align with TNFD and report on nature-related dependencies. Integrate solar co-location on biodiversity land. Collaborate with local conservation bodies. Key actions: No net loss commitment · TNFD reporting · Explore solar-biodiversity co-location · Regional ecological corridors · Biomonitoring
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Achieve measurable biodiversity net gain. Quantify ecosystem services using natural capital accounting. Lead sector standard-setting on nature-positive airports. Publish TNFD-aligned disclosure. Key actions: Nature capital valuation · TNFD disclosure · Nature-positive certification · Regional biodiversity corridor stewardship

What to measure: Biodiversity KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Area of habitat protected or restored	Hectares (ha)
2	Biodiversity net gain / no net loss indicator	% net gain / biodiversity index score
3	Wildlife strike rate (safety + biodiversity link)	Number per 10,000 aircraft movements
4	Airport land under biodiversity management plan	% of total airport land

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
5	Nature-related financial dependencies and exposure	TNFD-aligned qualitative / quantitative disclosure
6	Other relevant KPIs	



Biodiversity Net Gain: what does it mean?

Biodiversity Net Gain means an airport does not just 'do less harm', it leaves the local environment in a measurably better state than before. For airports, this means that for every area of habitat affected by operations or development, more and higher-quality habitat is created elsewhere – on the airfield or in the surrounding community. This simultaneously improves ecology and reduces wildlife hazard risks.



Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Includes biodiversity metrics aligned with UN SDG 15 (Life on Land) – habitat area, species monitoring, and net gain indicators.
- **ACI World Wildlife Hazard Management Guidance:** The sector reference for balancing aviation safety requirements with ecological management on and around the airfield.
- **TNFD (Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures):** The emerging investor-standard framework for nature-related risk and opportunity disclosure. ACI EUROPE recommends airports begin TNFD alignment now ahead of anticipated mandatory requirements.
- **CSRD / ESRS E4 (Biodiversity & Ecosystems):** Mandatory disclosure on biodiversity impacts, dependencies, and targets for qualifying airports – requires habitat mapping, impact assessment, and a biodiversity plan.
- **EU Nature Restoration Law (2024):** Binding restoration targets for degraded ecosystems across EU member states – airports with significant landholdings may be directly affected and should assess exposure now.
- **EU Habitats & Birds Directives:** The legal baseline for species and habitat protection across Europe. All airports near designated sites (Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) must maintain compliance and evidence no net harm.
- **FSC Forest Stewardship Certification:** Applicable to airports managing woodland or green space. Bologna Airport achieved the world's first airport FSC certification, demonstrating the standard is attainable.

Theme 6 of 7 | Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility

Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility

Surface access – how passengers and staff get to the airport – can account for a significant proportion of total airport-related GHG emissions. It is also the most visible sustainability issue for millions of passengers and residents, whilst ensuring that an airport is reliably accessible represents a constant challenge. This challenge applies not only to ensuring that passengers and employees can reach the airport efficiently and via alternate means to car transport (such as train or by bike), but also to managing suppliers with heavy commercial vehicles that may place additional strain on road infrastructure, in particular its lifespan and capacity.

Equally, provisions need to be made for passengers who may require additional accessibility support (PRM Assistance). ACI provides its 'Accessibility Enhancement Certification' as a means of measuring an airport's accessibility to those with assistance requirements.

The accessible travel market represents a rapidly growing commercial opportunity: globally, it was valued at €68.5 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach €107 billion by 2031.

Why it matters

Operational Risk

- Surface access can account for a significant proportion of Scope 3 GHG emissions
- *Airport Carbon Accreditation* requires airports to measure and disclose surface access emissions. Data collection must begin now
- EU urban mobility policy and clean air zones are progressively restricting high-emission vehicles near major transport hubs

Financial Risk

- The global accessible travel market is a major and underserved commercial opportunity to be harnessed
- ~2% of all global air travellers now require special assistance, growing faster than overall passenger traffic
- Non-compliance with EU Regulation 1107/2006 (Passengers with Reduced Mobility) exposes airports to regulatory sanction and exclusion from quality benchmarks influencing airline route decisions

CASE STUDY | Brussels Airport – STARGATE initiative

Brussels Airport's STARGATE programme launched a multimodal travel planner to direct passengers towards low-carbon transport, trialled autonomous electric shuttles, and introduced 3D virtual walkthroughs to improve passenger experience. These combined accessibility and decarbonisation initiatives are central to the airport's goal of cutting ground-based emissions by 30% until 2030.

Business outcome: Access to €68bn+ accessible travel market · 30% ground emission reduction target · Improved passenger experience scores.



CASE STUDY | Edinburgh Airport – Multimodal access leadership

Edinburgh Airport has achieved the highest public transport share of any UK hub outside London, with 40% of passengers using bus, coach, or tram on an annual basis. This success stems from a "unified gateway" approach, integrating the airport directly into the city's mass transit network.



Through a partnership with Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, the airport aligned transit schedules with flight peaks and staff shift patterns. The tram delivers direct city centre connectivity from the terminal in under 30 minutes and operates 0600 to 2300 daily. EDI has also mapped underserved areas for bus networks, using passenger and staff data to highlight opportunities for new routes. Alongside an annual staff and campus travel survey to monitor progress, the airport is encouraging a shift away from single-occupancy and fossil-fuelled car journeys with incentivised car share schemes, a staff salary sacrifice EV scheme and accompanying 'at-cost' EV charging rates for employees.

Business outcome: Significant reduction in Scope 3 emissions, decreased local congestion, staff benefit attraction and improved workforce accessibility via 24-hour bus routes.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Meet EU accessibility requirements (PRM Regulation EC 1107/2006). Provide baseline public transport information. Comply with local air quality transport plans. Key actions: PRM compliance audit · Transport information systems · Staff commute data collection
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Set modal shift targets for passengers and staff. Incentivise public transport and active travel. Explore provision of electric vehicle charging points and parking options. Electrify owned ground transport fleet and provide the infrastructure partners need to electrify. Measure and report Scope 3 surface access emissions. Key actions: Modal share targets · Staff travel plan · EV fleet transition · Scope 3 surface access baseline · Active travel infrastructure
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Develop a multimodal travel planner for passengers. Engage regional transport authorities for rail and bus integration. Introduce accessibility programmes for hidden disabilities. Trial autonomous and electric urban air mobility. Key actions: Multimodal journey planner · Rail/bus authority Memorandum of Understanding · Hidden disability scheme · EV charging hubs · Parking pricing reform · Inclusion in Airport Masterplan of accessibility to airport
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Transform the airport into a true multimodal low-emission transport hub. Introduce autonomous and electric Advanced Air Mobility. Lead European policy on the decarbonisation of airport surface access. Key actions: Autonomous shuttle trials · Advanced Air Mobility · Policy leadership on surface access

What to measure: Mobility KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Public transport modal share	% of passengers arriving by public transport, active travel and electric vehicles
2	CO ₂ emissions from passenger and staff access	kg CO ₂ e
3	Employee commuting modal share	% by transport mode

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
4	Availability of low-emission transport options	% of total transport options that are low/zero emission
5	PRM service quality / accessibility compliance	% compliance / quality score (0–100)
6	Accessibility satisfaction score	Score (0–100) / NPS
7	Other relevant KPIs	



Accessibility: a growing obligation and opportunity

Approximately 2% of all global air travellers now request special assistance – a figure growing faster than overall passenger traffic due to an ageing population and increased travel confidence among people with hidden disabilities. EU Regulation 1107/2006 sets the compliance baseline, but leading airports are going much further. Accessibility is both a legal duty and a commercial differentiator.



Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI EUROPE Publication New Passenger Experience : Digitalisation and Automation at European Airports (2026):** Examines the impact of digitalisation and automation on the airport passenger journey. It highlights both the opportunities these technologies bring – in terms of efficiency, convenience, and personalisation – and the challenges they pose regarding accessibility, trust, and inclusivity.
- **ACI EUROPE Inclusion Charter (2025):** a comprehensive commitment to promoting diversity, accessibility and inclusion within and by Europe’s airports.
- **ACI EUROPE Publication Assisting Passengers with Non-visible Disabilities (2024):** Guidance supporting airport managing bodies and their stakeholders in relation to assisting persons with non-visible disabilities, sharing best practices and practical information on how to deal with the specific needs and expectations that arise for these passengers.
- **ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Includes surface access modal share, CO₂ per passenger from access, and accessibility compliance metrics aligned to UN SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).
- **STARGATE Programme:** The EU-funded initiative led by Brussels Airport testing integrated sustainable mobility solutions within their Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP). This includes multimodal travel planners, autonomous electric shuttles, and digital accessibility tools. Findings and blueprints are available to all ACI EUROPE members.
- **ACI World Accessibility Guidelines:** Practical guidance on designing and operating airports that meet the needs of passengers with visible and hidden disabilities, aligned to ICAO and EU regulatory requirements.
- **EU Regulation 1107/2006 (PRM Regulation):** The legal framework for the rights of passengers with reduced mobility. Compliance is the baseline – leading airports are going significantly further.
- **CSRD / ESRS S4 (Consumers & End-users) & E1 (Climate – Scope 3):** Disclosure requirements covering both accessibility as a social topic and surface access emissions as a Scope 3 category.
- **EUROCONTROL Multimodal Connectivity Framework:** Guidance on integrating airports into regional and national transport networks – relevant for airports negotiating rail access or engaging with national infrastructure plans.
- **EU Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP):** Many European cities are developing SUMPs that include airports – proactive engagement ensures airports shape rather than react to urban mobility planning decisions.

Theme 7 of 7 | People & Community

People & Community

Airports support tens of thousands of jobs both directly and indirectly, and sit at the heart of their regional economies. The social contract between an airport and its community is a strategic asset built on mutual benefits and trust. Thus, to ensure a positive relationship, airports should seek to actively engage with their local communities and be transparent with activities that will have an impact on them whilst ensuring care is taken to manage those impacts, such as noise. Airports with strong community relationships and equitable workforce practices experience fewer planning delays, lower staff turnover, and better access to ESG-linked capital.

Europe's airports and the air connectivity they enable generates 14 million jobs and €851 billion in GDP (5% of entire European GDP) each year⁵. For airports, the focus must be on making those jobs good jobs: fairly paid, safe, inclusive, and offering pathways for development.

Why it matters

Operational Risk

- Skills shortages in engineering, digital and technical disciplines are worsening as the aviation workforce ages
- High turnover in safety-critical roles carries significant direct cost and safety risk that no airport can afford
- The EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CS3D) Directive extends human rights and labour standards obligations into supply chains. Complex contractor models face growing compliance exposure

Financial Risk

- Strong social performance directly unlocks lower-cost debt through Sustainability-Linked Bond structuring
- S&P Global ESG scoring now weights social capital significantly. Workforce equity and community engagement affect cost of capital
- Airports with strong community relationships experience measurably fewer planning delays, social licence has direct, quantifiable financial value

CASE STUDY | Rome Airport – Gender equality certification

Aeroporti Di Roma (ADR) became the first Italian airport operator to achieve UNI/PdR 125:2022 Gender Equality Certification, implementing a formal Gender Equality Management System with merit-based recruitment, annual pay-gap audits, and inclusive leadership training. High social performance scores enabled ADR to issue Sustainability-Linked Bonds, directly lowering cost of debt.

Business outcome: Sustainability-Linked Bond issuance · Reduced cost of debt · Improved talent retention and recruitment.



⁵ ACI EUROPE study on “The Economic and Social Impact of European Airports & Air Connectivity” <https://www.aci-europe.org/media-room/513-new-study-shows-airports-air-connectivity-power-5-of-european-gdp-also-supporting-quality-education-gender-equality-r-d-and-well-being.html>



✈ CASE STUDY | Bologna Airport – Eco-system ESG Screening

Bologna Airport developed a structured ESG risk assessment model for suppliers and commercial partners combining key factors such as health and safety, sector-specific corruption risk, operational relevance and sustainability performance based on a dedicated questionnaire. Suppliers and operators are classified into different risk levels: those with higher-risk profiles undergo targeted ESG audits; while medium-risk operators are involved in dedicated training and engagement programmes. This risk-based approach supports the integration of sustainability into supply chain management and promotes continuous improvement across the eco-system.

Business outcome: Reduced supply chain ESG risk · Enhanced investor reporting · Supplier capability building at no net cost.



✈ CASE STUDY | Larnaca and Pafos airports – Hermes Academy

Initially set in 2018 to help instil a common approach and direction across the airport community on customer service, Hermes Academy has since evolved to play a key role for sustainability. Courses are developed in-house with the help of specialised consultants and are rolled out gradually to the Airport Community. Courses, which are offered either free or at cost tackle selected aspects of sustainability, ensuring that a common sense of direction is instilled within the whole community, setting the tone on the sustainability themes that Hermes feels passionate about.

Business outcome: Growth of environmental culture and awareness.

Actions by maturity level

 LEVEL 1 Comply	Meet all employment law requirements and demonstrate effective due diligence. Comply with health and safety legislation. Undertake mandatory gender pay gap reporting. Implement human rights and anti-modern slavery policies and supply chain due diligence. Key actions: Health & Safety management system · Gender pay gap report · Modern slavery statement · Fair pay audit
 LEVEL 2 Embed	Commit to paying at least the Real Living Wage. Introduce workforce diversity targets. Develop a community engagement plan. Launch apprenticeship or academy programme. Key actions: Living wage commitment · Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) strategy · Community forum · Local hiring targets · Airport academy or apprenticeships
 LEVEL 3 Advance	Introduce sustainability skills training for all staff. Develop social value measurement framework. Engage supply chain on living wage and ethical labour. Position relevant partnerships and accreditations. Key actions: DEI certification · Sustainability upskilling programme · Social value measurement · Supply chain ESG screening · Employee wellbeing programme
 LEVEL 4 Pioneer	Issue Sustainability-Linked Bonds with social KPIs. Lead ACI peer learning on workforce transition and community equity. Demonstrate measurable social value through independent assessment.

Key actions: Sustainability-Linked Bond issuance · Social value assessment · ACI peer leadership on just transition · Community impact fund

What to measure: People & Community KPIs

#	Key Performance Indicator	Recommended Unit / Measurement
1	Workforce diversity ratio	% (gender, ethnicity, disability – leadership vs. total)
2	Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR)	Number per 1,000,000 hours worked
3	Employee engagement / satisfaction	Score (0–100) – annual survey
4	Employee turnover rate	% per year
5	Training hours per employee (incl. sustainability)	Hours per employee per year
6	Suppliers screened for ESG / human rights	% of supplier spend assessed
7	Local procurement spend (defined by a max of 50km by EU Public Procurement Directive)	% of total spend with local suppliers
8	Community satisfaction score	Score (0–100) / Airport Service Quality (ASQ)
9	Social value investment	€ invested / volunteering hours
10	Other relevant KPIs	

Social impact: driving Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a performance measurement framework that quantifies the broader environmental and social value an airport creates, such as local job creation and noise reduction. In some countries (like the UK, and in 2026, Ireland) this can be monetised, allowing airports to prove their worth as essential community assets to investors and regulators.

Investors (driven partly by EU CSRD) are now seeking measurable data on how airports improve local social mobility, workforce health, and community resilience. "Good" looks like an airport that functions as a high-value community asset, where a significant proportion of what is spent on operations generates a quantified social benefit.

Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI EUROPE Publication European Regional Airports and Community Engagement (2026):** Guidance document providing a practical framework to help regional airports strengthen their community engagement strategies.

Governance, Reporting & Anti-greenwashing

As sustainability reporting becomes mandatory across Europe, the risk of greenwashing, i.e. making claims that cannot be substantiated has become both a regulatory and reputational hazard. This section provides practical guidance for reporting with integrity.

The regulatory landscape

Framework	What it means for airports
EU CSRD / EU ESRS	Mandatory sustainability disclosure for all large EU companies from FY2025 (large airports) and FY2026 (listed SMEs). Requires double materiality assessment, third-party assurance, and disclosure across all ESRS topics.
EU Taxonomy	Classification system for sustainable economic activities. Airports accessing green finance must demonstrate 'substantial contribution' to climate mitigation/adaptation and 'do no significant harm' across other environmental objectives.
TCFD / TNFD	Investor-expected disclosure on climate and nature-related financial risks and opportunities. Increasingly a condition of institutional investment and sustainability-linked lending.
ACI ESG Framework	The ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework for Airports (2025) provides a unified reporting standard with tiered metrics, aligned with UN SDGs. This strategy sets our ACI EUROPE's ESG framework to provide a clear route to embedding and accelerating sustainability. Use this as your baseline airport-specific reporting standard.



Anti-greenwashing safeguards – five rules for every airport

1	Never claim 'carbon neutral' without third-party verification.
2	Disclose offsetting separately from genuine emission reductions in all public communications.
3	Ensure all sustainability-linked financing (bonds, loans) is linked to specific, measurable, time-bound KPIs.
4	Under CSRD, material sustainability topics must be disclosed accurately – non-disclosure of material issues is itself a compliance risk.
5	Apply the EU Green Claims Directive criteria: claims must be substantiated, specific, independently verified, and avoid creating a false overall impression.

While regulatory requirements continue to evolve, airports should not view sustainability reporting solely as a compliance exercise, with the introduction of CSRD and ESRS having raised the expectations of voluntary transparent reporting. Airports are therefore encouraged to establish regular sustainability reporting processes, aligned with internationally recognised frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the ACI ESG Framework, or the principles underpinning CSRD reporting.

Key ACI frameworks & relevant legislation for this theme

- **ACI World Global ESG Reporting Framework (2025):** Includes workforce diversity, Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR), employee engagement, community investment, and local procurement metrics aligned to UN SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities).
- **ACI World Human Resources Guidance & Workforce of the Future Reports:** ACI World's series on aviation workforce trends, skills transition, and talent development – essential context for workforce strategy through 2030.
- **ACI EUROPE Social Value Framework:** Guidance on measuring and communicating the socio-economic contribution of airports to their regions, including employment multipliers, local procurement impact, and community investment.
- **CSRD / ESRS S1 (Own Workforce), S2 (Workers in the Value Chain) & S3 (Affected Communities):** The most detailed social disclosure requirements in the CSRD framework – covering pay equity, working conditions, community engagement, and supply chain labour standards.
- **EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D):** Requires large companies to identify, prevent, and remediate adverse human rights and environmental impacts in their own operations and supply chains. Airports with complex contractor and concession models should assess compliance exposure now.
- **UN Global Compact Principles:** The internationally recognised framework for corporate human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption commitments – ADR's alignment with these principles underpinned its gender equality certification and Sustainability-Linked Bond issuance.
- **UN SDG 5 (Gender Equality) & SDG 17 (Partnerships):** The specific SDG anchors for DEI and stakeholder engagement commitments – use these to frame board-level social value reporting.

Looking Ahead: 2030 and the Road Beyond

Airports have moved from setting goals to delivering results. The next phase is more complex: it requires transforming not just individual airports but the entire aviation system. This means deeper partnerships, shared infrastructure, and significant investment – estimated at €1.3 trillion across the aviation sector through 2050⁶.

The challenges of the next five years

Scope 3 emissions The largest emissions come from aircraft, passenger travel to the airport, and supply chains – all areas airports do not directly control. Leading through influence, collaborative working groups and partnerships is the only path.	New technology infrastructure Scaling SAF, hydrogen, and electric aircraft requires new infrastructure and processes that no single airport can fund alone. Collaborative investment models and public-private partnerships are essential.
Policy and regulatory alignment Clearer EU and Pan-European frameworks, consistent incentives, and standardised reporting timelines are needed to translate airport-level action into system-wide change. ACI EUROPE continues to engage the EU institutions, EUROCONTROL, ECAC and European States on these priorities.	Climate resilience at scale As extreme weather becomes the norm, airports must move from emergency response to long-term resilience design, embedding climate adaptation in every capital decision.

How we keep this strategy alive: the ACI EUROPE SSWG commitment

The ACI EUROPE **Sustainability Strategy Working Group** (SSWG) will ensure this strategy remains relevant, practical, and responsive to a fast-changing environment. As a group, they are committed to:

- **Member co-ownership:** Rotating leadership of key themes among member airports, ensuring the strategy is driven by those on the ground.
- **Research and pilots:** Specific research projects and pilot programmes to create replicable blueprints for new technologies and circular systems.
- **Annual review:** Yearly assessments to keep the strategy responsive to evolving risks and opportunities.
- **Shared problem-solving:** Active links with airlines, ANSPs, European and global bodies including the World Economic Forum, ensuring airport-level changes connect to system-wide transformation.

Our commitment: from strategy to sector transformation

We will no longer measure success solely by the goals we set, but by the real, verified changes we make to the aviation system. By working together, sharing leadership, and holding ourselves to the highest standards of transparency and integrity, we ensure this strategy delivers what European airports, and the communities they serve, need most: a sustainable future for aviation.

If you want to join us in this mission, please contact ACI EUROPE.

⁶ Refers to the estimated premium expenditures required for the decarbonisation of the European aviation sector by the year <https://www.destination2050.eu/roadmap/>

Quick Reference: ACI EUROPE Sustainability Toolkit

This strategy is designed to be used alongside the ACI EUROPE Sustainability Toolkit, which contains expanded KPI guidance, templates, calculation methodologies, and detailed regulatory explainers for each theme. Key references:

Resource	How it supports this strategy
ACI EUROPE Sustainability Strategy Toolkit	Expanded guidance, templates, and worked examples for each of the seven themes
<i>Airport Carbon Accreditation</i>	The global standard for carbon management at airports – from baseline mapping to net zero carbon balance at Level 5
ACI World ESG Reporting Framework (2025)	Unified metrics standard aligned to UN SDGs; CSRD baseline reporting
EUROCONTROL/ACI EUROPE Climate Adaptation Guidance (2025)	Practical framework for integrating climate resilience into operations and infrastructure
ACI EUROPE Net Zero Resolution (updated 2026)	Commitment framework and governance for the collective airport net zero pledge
CSRD / ESRS Standards	EU mandatory reporting requirements, applicable to qualifying airports from FY2025. CSRD stands for Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and ESRS for European Sustainability Reporting Standards.
TCFD Recommendations	Investor-standard disclosure framework for climate-related financial risks
TNFD Framework	Nature and biodiversity-related financial risk disclosure. Increasingly investor-expected
EU Taxonomy Regulation	Classification of sustainable activities for green finance and EU Taxonomy alignment

For further information and access to the full ACI EUROPE Sustainability Toolkit:

www.aci-europe.org

Sustainability Strategy Working Group (SSWG) | ACI EUROPE



ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over **600 airports** in **55 European countries**. Our members facilitate over **95% of commercial air traffic** in Europe. Air transport supports **14 million jobs**, generating **€851 billion** in European economic activity (**5% of GDP**). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.

EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.

The 'Sustainability Strategy for Airports 2.0' was launched at the joint ACI EUROPE and ICAO Environmental Protection Seminar, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 7 October 2026.

It is the result of the work undertaken by ACI EUROPE Sustainability Strategy Working Group & Egis Sustainability Advisory.

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