

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic has strongly affected the industry, it has also opened up immense opportunities for airports to rethink current models, enhance capacity building, and transform their businesses. **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard reports.**

# Licence to skill: Five-year plan to revolutionise airports

**A**frican airports are preparing to bounce back efficiently and sustainably in the wake of the pandemic, and Airports Council International (ACI) Africa will be supporting them all the way.

The council has set up a five-year action plan (2022 to 2026) to implement its newly launched African airports development programme (AADP).

This aims to assist airports in achieving aerodrome certification through expert missions, extended technical support, and capacity building.

The AADP is in line with ACI Africa's mission to democratise access to knowledge and expertise throughout the continent.

Describing its programme as "ambitious but realistic" ACI Africa will assist 25 African airports and train some 1,875 personnel in various disciplines including safety, security,

operations, and economic sustainability – important pillars of an airport's operations and vital in achieving aerodrome certification status.

The programme aims to proactively develop the capacity of African airport personnel and the leadership teams to meet and/or exceed the required standards. This will effectively contribute to building a resilient and reliable aviation industry on the African continent.

The programme will also build capacity, while ensuring fairness, social and gender equality.

In order to make the AADP accessible to the neediest of Africa's airports, ACI Africa will leave no stone unturned.

"We are fully committed to achieving the objectives set in the AADP to advance, improve and promote the cause of aviation safety and security on the African continent," explained Ali Tounsi, ACI Africa secretary-general.

He added that the AADP had now become the

leading and most recognised programme among African airports.

One of the essential prerequisites of the AADP rests on strengthening and promoting African competence and expertise to support the development of the air transport industry on the continent, while at the same time advocating for African airports to have fully accessible and affordable programmes and services, including assistance and support missions, and capacity building.

According to Tounsi, the AADP is the spearhead of ACI Africa. It is the new springboard for African airports to achieve excellence in operational matters, management, and assessment and capacity building, thanks to the sharing of experience and know-how.

One of the essential components of AADP is the consolidation and promotion of African skills and expertise – hence the establishment of affordable

programmes to support the development of all African airports.

New technologies, automation, contactless biometrics, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital commerce, and innovative solutions will play a key role for a lasting recovery and in boosting airport revenue. Airport platforms will stand out thanks to these growth vectors.

"ACI Africa continues to support African airports in a sustainable way, especially during this unprecedented and ongoing crisis, by offering them many programmes and services to bridge the gap in airport security and safety," said Tounsi.

**T**he programme offers virtual (due to the pandemic) and face-to-face training to meet the needs of airports and their staff, as well as financial support through scholarships.

From November 2020 to November 2021, more than 300 African airports personnel have been trained under the AADP, either at a nominal course fee or free of charge (around 25%).

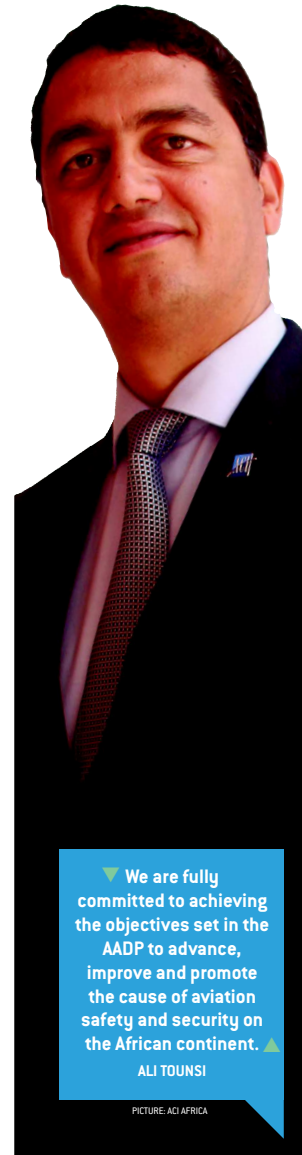
Virtual classes (due to travel restrictions) encompassed more than 40 courses delivered by highly qualified African trainers.

ACI Africa believes that, realistically, five airports can be assisted under the AADP with the certification process per year, totalling 25 African airports over five years.

Around 700 African airport personnel have been trained over the last three-and-a-half years (from 2018 to November 2021).

ACI Africa has signed agreements with key partners, as well as specialised training centres, to expand its training portfolio.

The upheavals experienced globally are forcing airports to rethink training throughout the process to instil an innovative, creative and evolving training culture in the airport sector, and ACI Africa is at the forefront of this revolution. ▲



▼ We are fully committed to achieving the objectives set in the AADP to advance, improve and promote the cause of aviation safety and security on the African continent. ▲

ALI TOUNSI

PICTURE: ACI AFRICA

## NAS TAKES CARE WITH RAPID COVID SERVICE

National Aviation Services (NAS) has signed a partnership agreement with global healthcare company, Abbott, to drive the implementation of Covid-19 rapid testing solutions at major airports and trans-border lounges across Africa and the Middle East. **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard reports.**

The leading airport services provider is using its global network, local relationships, and industry expertise, to work with local authorities to deploy Abbott's Panbio Covid-19 ag rapid test device and the ID NOW molecular point-of-care test system.

Both these solutions offer quick testing for Covid-19, thus encouraging and facilitating safer cross-border travel and supporting the global aviation industry to recover safely and sustainably.

These solutions can help fuel economies as more people resume international business, commerce and travel.

Abbott's Panbio Covid-19 ag rapid test device is a highly reliable, portable, and affordable rapid antigen test, which has received the European health, safety, and environmental protection standard CE Mark, and the World Health Organization (WHO) use listing procedure (EUL) go-ahead.

It has been deployed in dozens of countries across the world and delivers results in 15-20 minutes with no instrumentation, providing a scalable and cost-effective solution for governments and private industry.

"Our collaboration in purchasing and deploying the Abbott systems is aimed at continuing efforts to help restore passenger confidence to aid further recovery of international travel," explained NAS Group CEO, Hassan El-Houry (pictured right).



PICTURE: NAS

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, NAS, which is present in more than 50 airports, collectively managing in excess of 100 airlines and 50 airport lounges in Africa, the Middle East, and south Asia, has been driving efforts to implement digital solutions to help restart travel globally by collecting and verifying health data and ensuring authenticity of PCR test certificates of travellers.

NAS also introduced the medical utility network accreditor (MUNA), a patented blockchain technology that connects PCR testing labs in different countries and cities to verify and authenticate certificates for cross-border travel.

El-Houry said that the MUNA data in Kuwait, for example, was showing promising results. "We discovered that the number of positive cases entering the country were three times higher before MUNA was introduced. This suggests a significant reduction in infected cases entering the country with forged certificates or fake results." ▲

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### ACI AFRICA DÉMOCRATISE L'ACCÈS À LA FORMATION

Les aéroports africains se préparent à une relation post-COVID efficace et durable avec le soutien d'ACI Africa qui vient de lancer l'African Airports Development Programme (AADP).

« ACI Africa continue d'accompagner les aéroports africains de manière pérenne, surtout durant cette période de crise en leur proposant de nombreux programmes et des services pour combler le fossé au niveau de la sécurité et de la sûreté aéroportuaire », affirme Ali Tounsi, secrétaire général d'ACI Africa.

Le conseil a ainsi pris les devants pour que les aéroports africains soient dotés de ressources humaines qualifiées et adaptées aux besoins futurs des plateformes aéroportuaires notamment pour répondre aux enjeux de la transformation digitale et de la transition environnementale.

« L'African Airports Development Programme (AADP), le fer de lance d'ACI Africa, est le nouveau

tremplin permettant aux aéroports africains d'atteindre l'excellence en matière opérationnelle, de gestion, et d'évaluation et de renforcement des capacités grâce à un partage d'expérience et de savoir-faire », explique Ali Tounsi.

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Selon lui, l'une des composantes essentielles du programme demeure la consolidation et la promotion des compétences et des expertises africaines pour soutenir le développement de l'industrie du transport aérien à travers le continent. D'où, la mise en place de programmes abordables et accessibles pour accompagner le développement de tous les aéroports africains. ▲

Le programme propose une formation virtuelle (en raison de la pandémie) et en présentiel répondant aux besoins des aéroports et de leur personnel, de même qu'un soutien financier à travers des bourses.

Grâce au programme AADP plus de 300 employés ont bénéficié d'une quarantaine de cours de formation dispensés par des experts africains entre novembre 2020 et septembre 2021, soit à un coût nominal ou sans frais ou sous forme de bourse (plus de 25 % des participants).

Signalons que ACI Africa a signé des accords avec des partenaires clés de même que des centres de formation spécialisés pour étoffer et élargir son offre de formation. ▲