The global economic crisis along with financing challenges and changes in the structure of the European aviation market have led to a stronger focus on quality, efficiency and performance for Europe’s airports.

This involves working on more efficient ground operations to reduce both related costs for airlines and CO\textsubscript{2} emissions. It has also involved more vocal support for the Single European Sky, as well as taking active steps to participate in the deployment of the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) programme – along with airlines and air navigation service providers.

In that context, European airports have been leading the implementation of airport-collaborative decision making (A-CDM) globally, working closely with their operational partners at a local level. They have done so under the umbrella of a specific joint action plan, initially launched by EUROCONTROL and ACI EUROPE back in 2008, as part of a wider cooperation agreement linking the two organisations. This collaboration was also complemented by similar action plans with IATA and CANSO.

Total system approach

Streamlining air and ground processes is part of the underlying philosophy of the Single European Sky, which is based on a total system approach – and this is exactly what A-CDM is about, as one of the initial key prerequisites of SESAR deployment.

In concrete terms, A-CDM allows for the exchange of accurate and timely operational data and information across all stakeholders involved at tactical level. It also has repercussions at strategic and wider network levels through the involvement of the EU’s Network Manager.

As this real-time information sharing improves interaction between the airport operator, airlines, ANSPs and ground handlers, it consequently allows for improving operational efficiency by reducing delays between the landing and departure of aircraft. This in turn allows the optimal use of resources and ground facilities – helping airports to sweat their assets and make the most of their capacity – and enhancing predictability and recovery in relation to disruptions. All of this obviously comes with additional benefits for the passenger and for the environment.
On average, A-CDM delivers a three-minute reduction in aircraft taxiing time, with related fuel savings presently amounting to €56.3 million for the airlines using the European airports where it has been fully implemented so far. This real time information sharing is also key to improving airports’ own performance in areas such as the optimal use of gate and de-icing operations. And, simultaneously, this improves the performance of the network as a whole.

**Significant achievements**

This year’s annual progress update on the commitment of airports in the implementation of A-CDM was released at the 9th Annual ACI Airport Exchange Conference & Exhibition, which was hosted by Aéroports de Paris and took place on 3-5 November 2014 in Paris.

On this occasion, ACI EUROPE and EUROCONTROL announced that A-CDM is implemented at 15 airports, with Oslo Airport, Rome-Fiumicino, Berlin-Schoenefeld, Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas, Stuttgart, Milan-Malpensa and London Gatwick all joining the A-CDM airport community over the past 12 months.

The 15 airports where A-CDM has been fully implemented collectively welcome 27.8% of European passenger traffic, equivalent to 480 million passengers a year. A further 12 airports across Europe are in the process of implementing A-CDM either locally or fully. This means that more and more airports are now willing to connect and to cooperate with the whole network – a significant achievement compared with the initial years of the ACI EUROPE action plan, when making progress was much more difficult.

The economic and financial crisis of 2008/2009 initially impacted airports’ willingness to engage in the A-CDM process. They also faced resistance from other stakeholders – which mainly came from the fact that A-CDM involves a significant change in operational culture, including an acceptance for more transparency and genuine collaboration efforts.

There is little doubt that A-CDM is the way forward and that it is a win-win-win-win for airports, airlines, ANSPs and the travelling public. Ultimately, it also represents the first step towards Total Airport Management and the Ground Coordinator concept, which should see airports taking a more active role in coordinating the way in which their infrastructure and facilities are used so as to guarantee the best outcomes for all partners and passengers.