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# In at the deep end

Ian Harbison reports from the 110<sup>th</sup> IATP Conference in Seattle

IATP (International Airlines Technical Pool) holds two conferences each year, each approximately one month before the start of the summer and winter flying seasons. Here, all Member Airlines and Associate Members, plus invited non-members, convene to establish new pooling agreements covering spares and line maintenance. The conference is well attended, with many companies each sending several delegates – there were 400 attendees in Seattle, for example.

Currently there are 101 airlines involved (see *Table 1*). There has been a slight decline in recent years, from a high of 111 in 2010, but this is mainly attributable to mergers, especially in the US – including American/US Airways, Continental/United and Delta/

Northwest. These are supported by 31 Associate Members (see *Table 2*) that are an interesting mix of large and small companies, from OEMs and MROs to specialist service providers. Of these, 23 were Associate Members in 2009, showing that this list also changes through mergers or closures.

The number of Associate Members is limited to 25% of the Airline Members – although currently there are more – though it could be seen that some of the long-term members may be excluding larger companies. Their presence, however, shows a continued commitment to IATP, which is a basic requirement of the organisation – especially for airlines, which should attend all conferences. If they are unable to do so, they

may ask another airline to represent them, but a proxy can only be used twice before the airline is obliged to attend the next event.

Each member has a Senior Delegate; the main qualification for this position is not necessarily based on the importance of job function but rather familiarity with the company's operations and pooling requirements, as well as a good working knowledge of IATP. This is because the Senior Delegate is the prime contact in IATP pooling matters, the system administrator for access to the online system, as well as being responsible for ensuring the accuracy of all online pooling activities. They also cast the airline's vote at meetings.

The 110<sup>th</sup> IATP Conference was held in Seattle and was hosted by Boeing (photo: Ian Harbison)

## Management

These requirements can clearly be seen via the current Management Committee – which features a very compact organisational structure:

- **Chairperson** – San Lucktong, Contract and Agreement Department Manager, Thai Airways
- **Vice President and Budget Controller** – Essam Hanafy, Chairman Advisor for Material, EgyptAir
- **Project Coordinator** – Danny Boulanger, Line Station Control, South African Airways Technical
- **Membership Coordinator** – David Boatright, Senior Category Manager, United Airlines
- **Custodian** – Julie McClain, Senior Analyst – Pool/Lease/Loan/Borrow, American Airlines
- **Standby Member** – Giorgio Pietra, Chief Executive Officer of Alitalia Maintenance Services

The Management Committee is voted in every four years by delegates of member airlines, they then work for the organisation as volunteers.

## Blue Book

The master document for any IATP member used to be the Blue Book, which contained information on every aspect of the organisation's business and procedures. In the last few years this has been transferred to the organisation's website, with much of the work being carried out by Continental Data Graphics (CDG), a Boeing subsidiary.

The most important platform functions, especially in AOG conditions, are spare parts pooling that can easily provide, participate and locate a required part in any of the 400 worldwide stations, as well as offering the ability to quickly identify a local counterpart at another location. Due to the conferences and other social events organised by the IATP, the operators often know exactly who they need to call. Other useful features include the ability to display line maintenance capabilities and equipment pooling availability, as well as the Technical Training Capabilities List, which gives quick access to the aircraft and engine training capabilities of all IATP members.

However, the main reasons for the existence of IATP revolve around the line maintenance assistance provided, the pool groups for parts, and aircraft recovery.

Table 1: Airline membership

Aer Lingus	Czech Airlines	Nippon Cargo Airlines
Aeroflot – Russian Airlines	Delta Airlines	Oman Air
Aerolineas Argentinas	EgyptAir	Pakistan International Airlines
Aerologic	EL AL Israel Airlines	Philippine Airlines
AeroMéxico	Emirates Airline	Polar Air Cargo Worldwide
Air Astana	Ethiopian Airlines	Qantas Airways
Air Atlanta Icelandic	Etihad Airways	Qatar Airways
airberlin	EVA Airways	Royal Air Maroc
Air Canada	Federal Express	Royal Brunei Airlines
Air China	Finnair	Royal Jordanian Airlines
Air France	Garuda Indonesia	Saudi Arabian Airlines
Air India	Gulf Air	Scandinavian Airlines
Air Macau	Hawaiian Airlines	Singapore Airlines
Air Malta	Hong Kong Airlines	South African Airways
Air Mauritius	Iberia	SriLankan Airlines
Air Namibia	Icelandair	SWISS International Air Lines
Air New Zealand	Japan Airlines	TAM Linhas Aereas
Air Transat	JAT Airways	TAP Portugal
Alitalia	Jeju Air	TAROM
All Nippon Airways	Jet Airways	Thai Airways
American Airlines	Kenya Airways	Thomson Airways
Asiana Airlines	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	TNT Airways
Atlas Air	Korean Air	Transmile Air Services
Austrian Airlines	Kuwait Airways	TUifly
Avianca	LAN Airlines	TUifly Nordic
Biman Bangladesh Airlines	Libyan Airlines	Tunis Air
British Airways	LOT Polish Airlines	Turkish Airlines
Cargolux	Lufthansa	United Airlines
Caribbean Airlines	Luxair	United Parcel Service
Cathay Pacific Airways	Malaysia Airlines	US Airways
China Airlines	Martinair Holland	Vietnam Airlines
China Eastern Airlines	Meridiana fly	Virgin Atlantic Airways
China Southern Airlines	MIAT Mongolian Airlines	Yemen Airways
Condor Flugdienst	Middle East Airlines	

(Source: IATP)

IATP has 10 parts pools covering aircraft and components – the main aircraft parts groups are:

- K** (Boeing 707, 727, 737)
- M** (Boeing 747)
- Q** (All Airbus models; McDonnell Douglas DC-10 and MD-11)
- S** (Boeing 757, 767)
- T** (Boeing 777)

Of the remaining groups, the most significant are F (Technical Facilities and Services) and L (Line Maintenance). These allow airlines to share manpower and technical facilities, covering all activities up

to and including A checks, as well as troubleshooting and defect rectification, which prevents AOG risks at line stations. Despite the wide range of airlines and airports, IATP provides a clear definition of services, with standardised contract forms, plus simplified administration information relating to approvals at each station available online. For Technical Services, the provider's cost is shared among all participating parties and paid as a monthly flat rate, while Line Maintenance handling charges are agreed between the provider and the individual member airline. ▶

Table 2: IATP Associate Members

Aeroplex of Central Europe
Airbus
AJW Aviation
Ameco Beijing
Ametek HSA
Aviation Concepts
AWAC Technics
Boeing
China Aircraft Services Limited (CASL)
Derichebourg Atis Aeronautique
Direct Maintenance
Fokker Services
GA Telesis
Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company (HAECO)
Interturbine Aviation Logistics
JAS Aero-Engineering Services
Lufthansa Technik
Mach 2 Maintenance
MINX Global Logistics
Nayak Aircraft Service
Perform Air International
Sabena technics
SIA Engineering Company
Singapore Technologies Aerospace
Sky Mart Sales
SR Technics
Sterling Courier
Taikoo Aircraft Engineering Company (TAECO)
Timco Aviation Services
Turkish Technic
UTC Aerospace Systems
Virgin Atlantic Airways
Yemen Airways

(Source: IATP)

Group E (Ground Maintenance Equipment) providers are obliged to: provide equipment in serviceable condition and ready for use; establish a local procedure covering the loan and return of the equipment, notifying all parties concerned as to what has been established; and arrange for substitute equipment when the pooled item is unavailable due to unserviceability. Users, unless otherwise agreed with the provider, will: use their own personnel to operate the equipment; ensure that they are fully qualified; and return equipment promptly to the provider after use.

In addition, G (Avionics & Interchangeables) has a Technical Watch Forum consisting of volunteer technical experts to monitor, advise and report back on technical matters pertaining to interchangeability (IC). This is because IC is a complex area – not only can there be several alternative part numbers for a component, airlines may not authorise all of them to be used. This could mean finding the correct, approved part becomes a lengthy process without any help or advice, says Brian Scarry, Senior Inventory Planner at FedEx, who heads up the pool.

Peter Benk, Material Service at Lufthansa Technik, heads up the M Pool for the Boeing 747. This is currently undergoing changes as airlines are phasing out their older 747-400s, while deliveries of the newer 747-8s are still at a low level. As a result of reducing fleets, he says, some operators are limiting their spares inventories at outstations to basic items such as wheels, hydraulic pumps, oxygen bottles and fire extinguishers. Additionally, individual supply support contracts could, in some cases, lead to restricted inventory availability for IATP, as the spares may belong to a commercial organisation rather than an airline.

The P pool previously covered the McDonnell Douglas DC-9 and MD-80/90 series but, earlier this year, was swapped to cover the Bombardier CRJ and Embraer E-Jet families. This reflected the phasing out of the older aircraft and the increasing amount of regional aircraft in service with major airline partners, especially in the US. However, it may also be a way of gaining new members with individual fleets. Embraer, which is not an Associate Member, was represented at the conference by Andre op't Hof, Vice President Sales and Business Development North America. He says that, subject to agreement, components held in the company's E-Jet Pool could be made available to IATP members.

## Aircraft recovery

The Aircraft Recovery Pool Group, headed by Paul Caswell, Fleet Shift Manager at British Airways, manages a group of 12 recovery kits in strategic locations around the world (see Table 3). A recent addition has been Qatar Airways, with a brand new kit capable of handling the Airbus A380. Member Airlines pay an access fee, says Caswell, which is really an insurance policy. He notes that aircraft are becoming so reliable that there has been a decrease in the number of incidents over the last few years. Despite this, training is kept up-to-date and there is 24/7 coverage in case things do go wrong. The aim is to recover aircraft without causing any secondary damage and to clear runways and taxiways in order to keep operations on schedule. Some airports have a policy of removing an aircraft by any means after a set time, to prevent runways being closed for a lengthy period – thus rapid intervention could prevent an aircraft being bulldozed. Of course, depending on circumstances, airlines may only have to uplift part of a kit to move their stranded aircraft successfully.

There are two types of kits: the basic kit is used for aircraft with an empty dry weight of over 13,600kg, while a supplementary kit can handle aircraft with an empty dry weight of over 90,500kg. The basic kit contains airbags, low profile recovery jacks, belly bands and slings, earth anchors, towing fittings and towing cables. The supplementary kit, held by Air France, British Airways, Qantas and Qatar, is larger and contains additional equipment to take care of the A380.

Given this risk of forced removal, and the expense incurred in the event of non-membership, the annual fees are very cheap and are charged based on annual landings and the number of kits to which access is required. As an example:

### Airline A

9,800 landings per year, participating in 4 kits = approximately \$6,700 per year (\$0.68 per landing)

### Airline B

165,000 landings per year, participating in 12 kits = approximately \$27,000 per year (\$0.16 per landing)

As a result, use of the kits by members is almost free, but for non-members the cost of the basic kit includes an uplift fee of \$120,000, plus \$6,000 extra per day, as well as the wages of the accompanying specialists. The A380 kit is similarly priced, but the uplift fee is raised to \$180,000.

Caswell points out that British Airways is the only airline with a full kit that covers every aircraft type, including the A380, 747-8 and 787. This includes a completely new airbag system and the ability to defuel the aircraft without the use of aircraft electrics.

### Committees

Other committees include: the Maintenance Pooling Agreements Committee, which reviews the technical requirements relating to maintenance pooling agreements; the Supplier Services Committee, which acts as a liaison between the Management Committee and suppliers; the Platform Steering Committee, which is the interface between the membership and CDG; and the Authorities Requirements Committee, which focuses on the airlines' technical operations regulations. ▶

Table 3: IATP recovery kits

AIRLINE	KIT LOCATION	COVERAGE AREA
Air France	Paris-Orly	Europe 1 & 2
Air India	Mumbai	Middle East & Indian subcontinent
American Airlines	Chicago O'Hare	North America central
	Los Angeles	North America western
British Airways	London-Heathrow	Europe 1 & 2
Delta	New York-JFK	North America eastern
Japan Airlines	Tokyo-Narita	Asia eastern
Qantas	Sydney	Australia
Qatar	Doha	Middle East & Indian subcontinent
South African Airways	Johannesburg	Africa
TAM	São Paulo	South America
United Airlines	Honolulu	North Pacific

(Source: IATP)



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Finally, there is the Station Restrictions Committee, which reviews all the restrictions at airports and creates potential alternatives or solutions for the organisations. This has gained increased importance in recent years, as airports have either started their own ground handling/line maintenance operations, or subcontracted the work on an exclusive basis to a commercial organisation. It requires careful negotiation to persuade them – and sometimes the aviation authorities too – that the IATP pooling arrangements are not a threat to revenue, says IATP Chairperson, San Lucktong.

## Projects

There are project committees and project groups. The first are permanent and cover the following: authorities' requirements; maintenance pooling agreements; the platform steering committee; stations restrictions; and supplier services.

The groups, meanwhile, are temporary and often relate to new aircraft coming into service. At the moment, there are two – one for the introduction of the Airbus A350 XWB, the other for new Boeing models and derivatives (737 MAX, 787 and 777X).

For Airbus, André Loenker, Material Support and Sales Director, explains that maintenance tooling for the aircraft, excluding engines and nacelles, has been defined.

The company is working towards even greater preventative maintenance on the



400 delegates from airlines and Associate Members attended the IATP conference, making it an excellent networking event (photo: IATP)

A350 XWB, as the amount of data available has increased dramatically. There are 400,000 parameters available, compared to 250,000 on the A380 and 13,000 on the A320. There are also some 4,500 parameters available for post-flight analysis. As well as identifying trends during normal operations, he adds, information can also be used to advise on the workscope for heavy checks.

## One for all

Perhaps another reason for the success of IATP is that it defines itself as a not-for-profit, independent, non-political, global organisation based on a democratic structure with equal

opportunities for all Member Airlines and their delegates. There are no boundaries and every member is encouraged to bring forward their ideas, suggestions and opinions without any political prejudice.

Nevertheless, the organisation is still looking to change and evolve. IATP 2020 is a programme that started earlier this year to find new ways to improve services and increase membership. This is still at an early stage, as suggestions are put forward for review by the members. The target is to increase value for members, while also adapting the organisation to meet new industry trends. ■

## IATP history

IATP dates back to 1948, when the head of KLM approached both Sabena and Swissair with a proposal to save money by pooling equipment for their respective fleets of Convair CV-240 and Douglas DC-3 aircraft at airports served by all three carriers. This was a reciprocal agreement, negating the need for any financial payments. The concept quickly attracted interest from more international airlines, but it became difficult to maintain a balance of pooled resources. Instead, the system changed so that providers had the opportunity to receive regular payment for items and services they provided, while users were able to benefit from widely available spares, equipment and services at a much lower cost than purchasing them outright.

By 1960 there were 24 Airline Members in

the Consolidated Pool, all under the guidance of a Steering Committee. Seven years later the organisation's name was changed to the current International Airlines Technical Pool. While in 1971, the Steering Committee's title was changed to the current Management Committee. The next major change occurred in 1977, when the 16 airlines in the North American Airlines Technical Pool (NAATP) merged with IATP. Since then, IATP has become a global organisation.

In 2000, having been in existence for over 50 years, an outside consulting firm was commissioned to review the organisation's operations and management. There were several recommendations for reorganisation and improvements to the corporate structure, the most important being the introduction of

Associate Members in 2004. These are divided into three categories: the Supplier Technical Forum (parts), Repair and Overhaul Forum (airframe, engine, component MRO), and the Service Provider Forum (line maintenance, ground handling, training, logistics, transportation, e-business). Further categories include Guest Airlines (non-Member Airlines permitted to use the facilities and services under sponsorship of a Member Airline) and Equalized Airlines (non-Member Airlines more than 50% owned by a Member Airline that are permitted to use the facilities and services under sponsorship of that airline).

A year later, in 2005, the IATP Administrative and Operational Office was established in Luxembourg with permanent, paid staff on board.

On the line



(photo: Direct Maintenance)

Roger Meels, Technical Director at Direct Maintenance, the only independent widebody line maintenance provider in The Netherlands, says his company became an Associate Member during the October 2006 conference in Osaka, Japan. This was just after IATP management had decided to

open up membership to a limited group of vendors and service providers.

He explains: "We have very much enjoyed being part of the IATP community. Having been present at 18 conferences at alternating global locations during the past nine years, I can say the down-to-earth atmosphere,

with plenty of opportunities for face-to-face discussions, makes it very valuable. The personal contact with your customers is what really counts: being able to sit down at regular intervals and transparently evaluate the level of services you provide is very helpful, rather than just using email or telephone. IATP is more than just business, IATP is like a family."

This is especially important as the company is not just present at Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport, but has stations in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It also covers 43 aircraft/engine combinations, including the A380, 747-8 and 787.

At the same time, he adds, the conference is a forum where members can keep abreast of the latest industry developments in the field of line maintenance, such as regulatory issues, by participating in the various project meetings. It is a very intense but highly valuable week that runs twice a year.

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