

Event Report – IFATCA AFM 10th Virtual Presentation

Topic: Strengthening Global ATC Capacity: The Intersection of Training, Technology, and AI

Speaker: Oliver Farirayi – Former IFATCA EVP (AFM) & Director, Takeoff Academy

Date: Saturday, 9th August 2025

Audience: ATCOs, ANSP/CAA Leaders, Aviation Trainers & Stakeholders

Overview

The 10th IFATCA AFM Virtual Presentation brought together aviation professionals from across the Africa & Middle East region to explore how training evolution, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence can collectively strengthen ATC capacity.

Oliver Farirayi, drawing from decades of operational ATC and leadership experience, delivered an engaging and thought-provoking session that moved from personal career insights to practical, future-focused strategies. The presentation generated active participation and concluded with a strong call for collaboration in shaping the region's aviation future.

Key Themes Covered

- From Tower to Leadership – Oliver's journey from operational controller to IFATCA EVP, addressing challenges such as blacklisted airspace, training disparities, and resource limitations.
- Evolving Training Standards – Transition from traditional lecture-based methods to ICAO's competency-based training (PANS-TRG, Doc 9868), with regional success stories and persistent barriers in infrastructure, funding, and retention.
- Digital Transformation – Advancements from procedural simulators to immersive VR/XR, growth in online and blended learning, and lessons from the Seychelles ATO's virtual training adoption.
- AI in Training – AI-driven adaptive learning, simulation feedback, and mentorship models, while addressing risks in bias, cost, and regulatory integration.
- Takeoff Academy's Role – ICAO-aligned global training initiatives, leveraging SkySave for adaptive e-learning and SkyLab for school/community engagement.
- Cooperation Opportunities – Potential partnerships with IFATCA AFM to provide affordable, accessible training, multi-currency payment options, and scholarships for self-funded controllers.

Impact & Engagement

- Attendance: Strong representation from controllers, managers, and training leaders across AFM states.
- Engagement: Active Q&A session exploring regional collaboration, AI integration, and practical solutions to training challenges.
- Feedback: Positive responses on the relevance of AI in ATC training, affordability initiatives, and community outreach through SkyLab.

Next Steps

- Explore formal cooperation between Takeoff Academy and IFATCA AFM to deliver targeted training programmes.
- Initiate a multi-currency payment system and scholarship fund to improve accessibility.
- Expand SkyLab and data-driven SkyPulse initiatives to strengthen the ATC skills pipeline.

