



IATA Digitalization Leadership Charter Forum – 25 February 2025 Report

1. Executive Summary

The third DLC Forum was held on 25 February 2025 in Dublin, Ireland, bringing together key stakeholders from the air cargo industry. The primary objective of the forum was to assess the progress of digital transformation initiatives, particularly the adoption of ONE Record, and to discuss industry-wide challenges and opportunities related to digitalization, innovation, and sustainability. The forum also served as a platform for stakeholders to share best practices and define actionable steps to drive industry readiness for the ONE Record adoption by 1 January 2026.

The discussions were enriched by practical insights from key players, shedding light on the realities of implementing digital cargo initiatives. Participants expressed a strong desire for practical and tangible outcomes, with a specific focus on best practices, industry alignment, and collaboration strategies to ensure a successful transition.

2. Recap of the September 2024 Forum

The forum opened with a summary and the key takeaways from the previous meeting held in September 2024. That meeting focused on assessing the industry's progress in digital transformation and identifying barriers to the widespread adoption of ONE Record.

During the September 2024 forum, stakeholders examined the industry's readiness for ONE Record and highlighted the importance of a structured transition plan. Several airlines had reported successful pilot implementations, but concerns remained about integration challenges for ground

handling agents (GHAs) and freight forwarders. The discussion emphasized the need for broader industry engagement, as digitalization efforts were largely being driven by airlines, with limited participation from other supply chain actors.

The forum also addressed regulatory challenges, stressing the importance of aligning digital transformation initiatives with customs and compliance requirements. Participants underscored the need for a clear regulatory framework to support the transition to data-driven operations. Additionally, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and cloud-based solutions were identified as enablers for digitalization, although the industry lacked clear implementation guidelines.

The September 2024 meeting concluded with a strong commitment to collaboration, recognizing IATA's role in facilitating industry-wide adoption of digital standards. Participants agreed that future discussions should focus on practical steps to accelerate adoption and overcome implementation barriers.

3. Key Discussion Points from the February 2025 Forum

Industry Perspectives on ONE Record Readiness

Several stakeholders provided updates on their progress with ONE Record implementation. A carrier reported that while they have allocated sufficient resources, they still face challenges in defining use cases and demonstrating value to key partners. Collaboration with European carriers is improving, but engagement from GHAs and forwarders remains limited. Participants expressed concern that



airlines are still leading the initiative without stronger participation from the wider industry.

A ULD company shared insights into their use of digital tools for tracking unit load devices (ULDs), particularly in the e-commerce sector. While the use case is clear for parcel-level tracking, expanding digitalization to piece-level operations remains a challenge. The company emphasized the need for stronger engagement from forwarders, e-commerce players, and retailers to drive meaningful adoption.

A carrier presented examples of successful ONE Record implementation, showing how shipment data visibility is significantly improved. However, they acknowledged that the industry must first establish solid foundations before unlocking advanced use cases. Similarly, another carrier highlighted that one of the biggest challenges for GHAs is their reliance on third-party IT system providers, which limits their ability to adapt to new digital standards.

Participants noted that while interest in ONE Record is growing, many stakeholders still struggle to grasp the practical benefits. An IT Solution provider pointed out that system providers are already capable of supporting ONE Record, but freight forwarders are not fully utilizing the standard. They emphasized the need to shift from legacy messaging formats to data-sharing frameworks.

ONE Record Coordinated Communication Campaign

Building on the discussions, IATA presented plans for a coordinated communication campaign to accelerate adoption. Participants agreed that a joint commitment from key stakeholders is needed to drive awareness and encourage industry-wide adoption.

Several attendees stressed the importance of extending communication efforts beyond executives, ensuring that operational staff understand the benefits of ONE Record. It was suggested that IATA facilitate industry-wide testimonials to showcase successful implementations.

The campaign should also clarify the role of General Sales Agents (GSAs) and freight forwarders in the transition to ensure their full engagement.

Moreover, the discussion highlighted that while airlines are leading the push for adoption, GHAs and freight forwarders remain hesitant due to IT system constraints and the complexity of integrating ONE Record into their existing processes. To address this challenge, the forum called for the development of a clear roadmap outlining the necessary steps for transitioning from legacy messaging systems to a modern data-sharing framework.

Insights from the Tech Radar

The forum also examined the role of technological innovation in shaping the future of air cargo. Discussions centered around the first (and non-final) findings from the latest IATA Tech Radar survey, which assessed the adoption of emerging technologies within the industry.

Participants acknowledged that while some technologies, such as artificial intelligence and predictive analytics, are gaining traction, others, such as quantum computing, remain in their infancy but could offer significant benefits in the long term.

The debate also covered the categorization of cloud computing, with several attendees arguing that it should be considered an enabling infrastructure rather than a standalone technology.

How Critical Are New Technologies for the Future of Air Cargo?

The discussion centered on how digital transformation is essential for maintaining the competitiveness of the air cargo industry.

Participants recognized that the air cargo industry is lagging years behind and need to embrace new technologies to address the industry challenges, ensure that complex operations can be managed smoothly and to attract the new generation among its workforce.

While some organizations have embraced AI-driven automation and real-time data analytics, others lag due to financial constraints and/or operational resistance. The fragmentation of the industry as well as the network component are additional hurdles



the industry needs to tackle: implementing the same processes / technologies / infrastructure among the entire network is a real challenge, particularly in remote locations where operations are outsourced to GHAs.

Sustainability Pain Points and Challenges – How IATA Can Support

The discussion on sustainability focused on the role of digitalization in reducing the environmental footprint of air cargo operations. Participants explored how transitioning to electronic documentation and digital processes could improve overall efficiency.

The forum also addressed the growing demand for transparency in CO2 emissions reporting, emphasizing the need for standardized methodologies to ensure consistency across the industry. The calculation of CO2 emission as well as the offsetting mechanism remain a big challenge.

The participants discussed how the adoption of the ONE Record standard could enable and facilitate CO2 emission calculation and data sharing, providing more accuracy, transparency and visibility to the entire ecosystem.

4. Actionable Takeaways and Next Steps

ONE Record Implementation

Establish clear milestones for industry-wide adoption, supported by practical implementation guidelines and ideas of use cases for stakeholders.

Tech Radar Enhancements

Refine the classification of emerging technologies and provide more detailed projections on their adoption timelines.

Sustainability Integration

Develop a structured approach to incorporating digital solutions into sustainability initiatives, with a focus on emissions tracking and waste reduction.

Stakeholder Engagement

Encourage airlines to involve freight forwarders and GHAs in future forums to ensure a more inclusive transition to digital cargo standards.

5. Conclusion and Next Steps

The 3rd DLC Forum reinforced the importance of collaboration in achieving a successful transition to ONE Record. Discussions underscored the need for structured implementation strategies, stakeholder engagement, and a clear vision for integrating sustainability into digital initiatives. Looking ahead, the industry must continue to build momentum by addressing remaining challenges, fostering closer collaboration, and leveraging technological advancements to create a more efficient and sustainable air cargo ecosystem.