

The Competitive Advantage of ACCS Airports Can No Longer Ignore

Executive Insights from 180 Global Air Cargo Leaders



By Kalé in partnership with Transport Intelligence

August 2026

The Market Has Already Decided.

The Question is: Will Your Airport Lead or Follow?

Airports aren't debating whether to adopt ACCS anymore. They're debating how fast they can catch the ones who already have.

For decades, airports have invested in physical infrastructure to improve cargo throughput. Today, the competitive battlefield has shifted. The airports creating the greatest value are those that connect every stakeholder—airlines, cargo handlers, freight forwarders, trucking companies, customs authorities, and shippers—through a single digital ecosystem.

56% LIVE. 28% READY TO CONVERT. 16% STILL ASLEEP.

The competitive advantage is no longer digitalisation itself. It is how effectively an airport orchestrates an entire cargo community through shared data.



The shift that is reshaping the cargo

YESTERDAY: THE ISLAND	TODAY: THE ORCHESTRATOR
Ground handlers, airlines, forwarders, customs and truckers each ran their own siloed platform.	One shared platform. One version of the truth for every stakeholder.
No shared visibility. Every delay became a phone call.	Real-time milestone visibility replaces the phone call before it happens.
The airport provided the runway, not the coordination.	The airport runs the show — slot management, forecasting, digital documents.

Why ACCS Matters Now?

Commercial Pressure Regulatory Momentum AI & Automation

"The airport was an island, doing its own business. We realised we had a different role to play : if we invest energy, time and money into cargo community work, it will bring business for us too."

— Director of Cargo Development, Major Central European Hub Airport

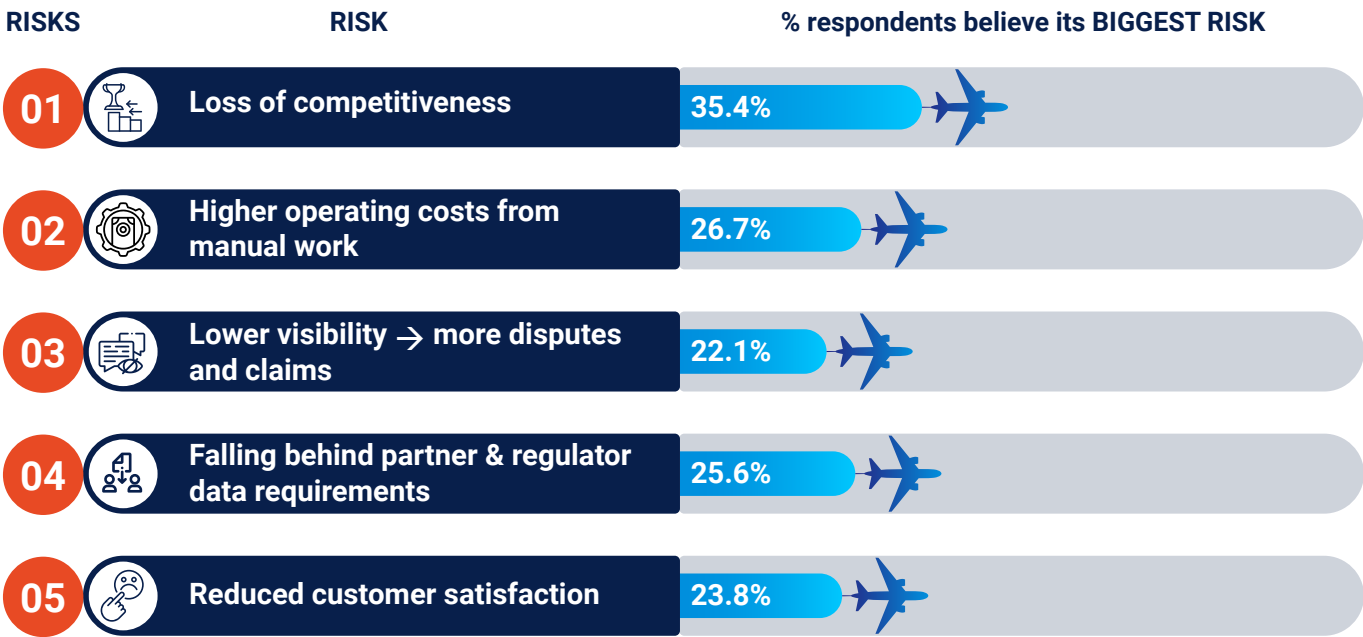
The Real Cost Isn't Implementing ACCS. It's Waiting.

Every board asks what ACCS costs. Almost none ask what NOT adopting it is already costing. That's the question they should be asking first—not last.

Many organisations continue evaluating Airport Cargo Community Systems as though implementation is the greatest investment decision. The research suggests the opposite.

The largest costs today are already embedded within fragmented operations—manual coordination, duplicated processes, cargo delays, invoice disputes, limited visibility and inefficient resource utilisation. These costs accumulate every day, even though they rarely appear as a single budget line.

TOP 5 RISKS OF STANDING STILL (NEXT 24 MONTHS)



YESTERDAY: THE ISLAND	TODAY: THE ORCHESTRATOR
Ground handlers, airlines, forwarders, customs and truckers each ran their own siloed platform.	One shared platform. One version of the truth for every stakeholder.
No shared visibility. Every delay became a phone call.	Real-time milestone visibility replaces the phone call before it happens.
The airport provided the runway, not the coordination.	The airport runs the show – slot management, forecasting, digital documents.

BOTTOM LINE The cost of inaction doesn't show up as a line item. It shows up as market share you never share you quietly lose.

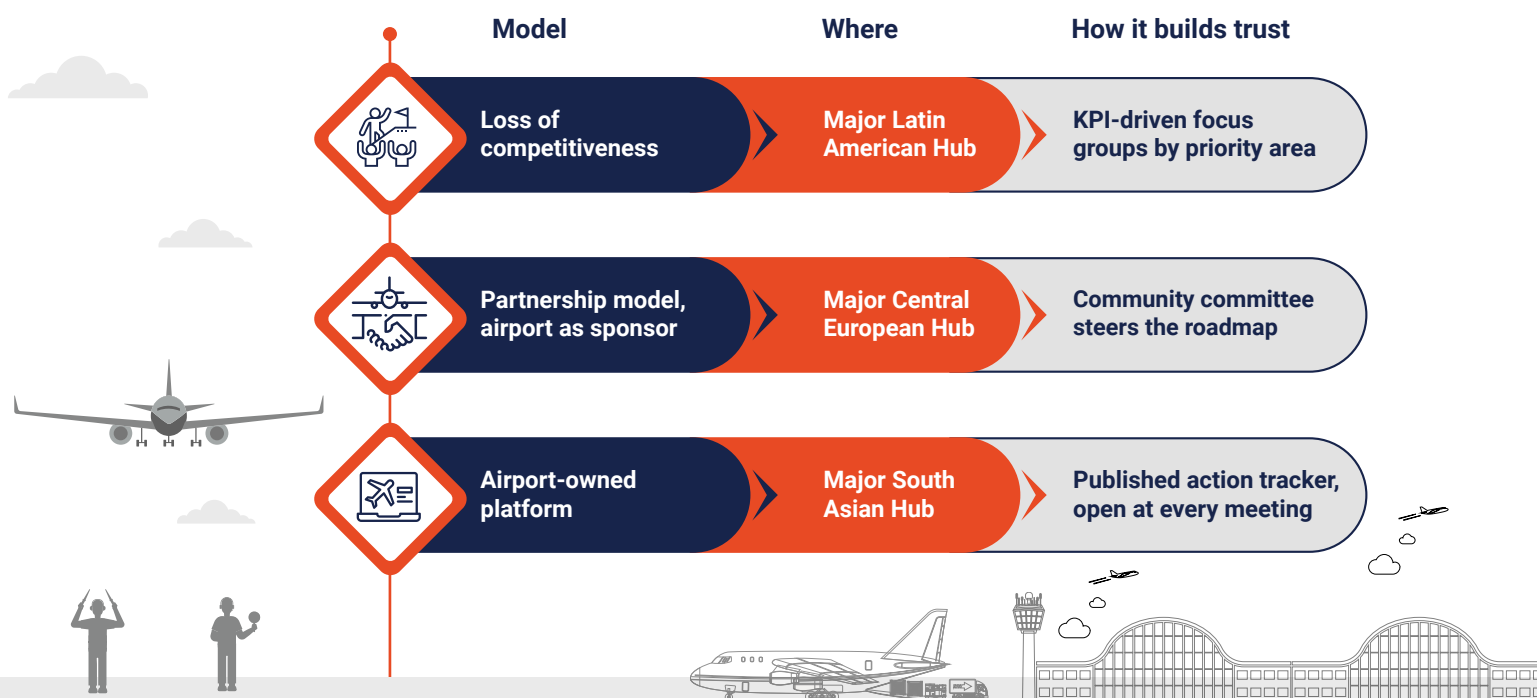
Why Airports Are Becoming Digital Orchestrators

The technology was never the hardest part. The real challenge was getting hundreds of competing organisations to trust and collaborate on a shared platform.

Today, cargo owners, airlines and logistics partners evaluate airports on a different metric: how efficiently information moves alongside cargo. The airport is no longer simply a location where cargo changes hands. It is becoming the digital orchestrator of an interconnected community, coordinating every stakeholder through shared data, real-time visibility and standardised digital workflows.

Airports that lead their cargo community don't just deploy software – they build trust infrastructure. That's the part competitors can't copy overnight, and it's the part CXOs need to personally own.

THREE GOVERNANCE MODELS THAT WORK



The digital leadership advantage

Airports that embrace ACCS today are building capabilities that extend far beyond operational efficiency. They are creating:

- ✓ Connected cargo communities
- ✓ Faster decision-making
- ✓ Stronger stakeholder trust
- ✓ Improved commercial attractiveness
- ✓ Foundations for AI-enabled operations

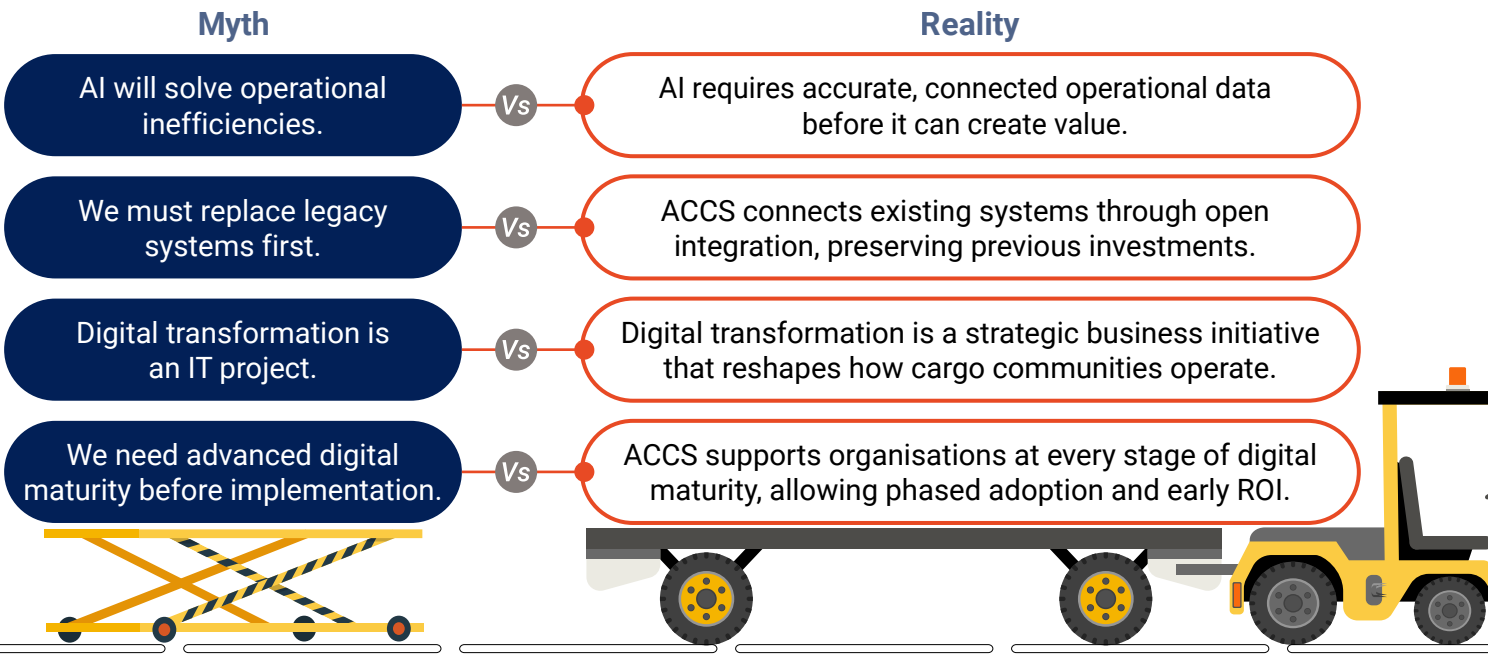
Bottom line ACCS pays for itself commercially, not just operationally. Airport reports that faster, simpler, streamlined processes attracted more cargo customers – driving higher tonnage and higher revenue. This is not a cost play. It's a growth play.

AI Won't Fix Broken Data. ACCS Will.

Every airport wants predictive load forecasting and automated dispatch. Almost none of them have the data foundation to make it work.

AI in air cargo is only as good as the data it runs on — and right now, for most of the community, that data is fragmented, delayed, and inconsistently formatted. Supply chain and operations is already the top function for AI adoption industry-wide (18%). That number will keep climbing. The bottleneck isn't the AI model. It's what feeds it.

Myth Vs Reality



WITHOUT ACCS VS. WITH ACCS + AI

TODAY: REACTIVE	TOMORROW: PREDICTIVE
Load planning: handlers get cargo data too late to optimise resources.	AI forecasts inbound volumes hours or days in advance.
Customs clearance: manual review, sequential bottleneck, no pre-arrival risk scoring.	Risk-scoring engines profile cargo before the aircraft lands. Trusted traders pre-clear.
Exceptions: delays and discrepancies are discovered late — often by the customer.	Anomaly detection flags disruptions before they cascade through the network.

The first question should no longer be: "When should we invest in AI?" It should be: "Do we have the connected data foundation that AI requires?" For most airports, that foundation begins with ACCS.

BOTTOM LINE Airports investing in ACCS today aren't just fixing today's operations. They're deciding what AI is even allowed to do for them in 24 months.

Winning the next decade of Air Cargo

The platforms are proven. The ROI is documented. What's left is execution — and execution is a leadership decision, not an IT ticket.

The 5 moves every airport CEO should make

01

Make ACCS a Business Strategy, Not an IT Project

Put ACCS on the airport's strategic transformation agenda. Define success through business outcomes—cargo throughput, dwell time, truck turnaround, stakeholder participation, visibility, customer experience and compliance—not simply system deployment.

CEO question: What business problem are we solving first?

02

Start With the Ecosystem, Not the Technology

An ACCS delivers greater value as participation increases. Bring airlines, ground handlers, freight forwarders, truckers, customs, warehouses and other critical stakeholders into the transformation from day one.

CEO question: Which five stakeholders must be connected first to unlock network value?

03

Build Around High-Value Use Cases

Do not attempt to digitise everything simultaneously. Prioritise workflows where fragmentation creates the greatest cost or delay: Truck appointment → Cargo acceptance → Document exchange → Customs → Status visibility → Exception management

CEO question: Where does one digital connection remove the most friction?

04

Make Data the Foundation for AI

AI should be the destination—not the starting point. First establish trusted, standardised, real-time operational data across the ecosystem. Then layer predictive analytics, intelligent alerts, optimisation and AI on top.

CEO question: Can our AI initiatives access trusted ecosystem-wide data today?

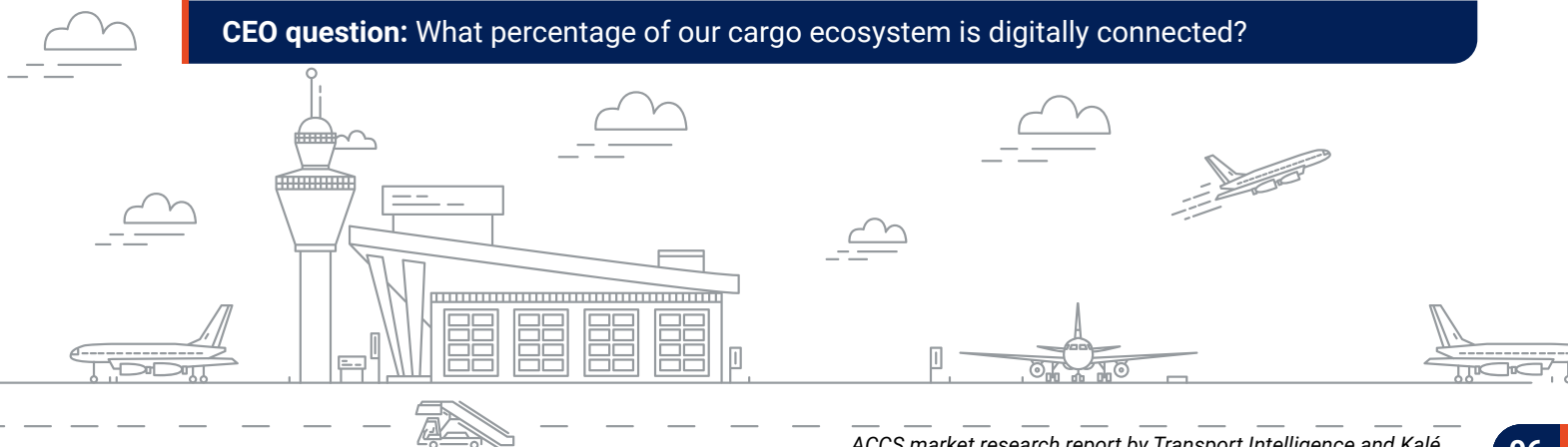
05

Measure Adoption, Not Just Implementation

Going live is not the finish line. The real measure of transformation is how much of the cargo community actually uses the platform and how much operational value it creates.

Track: Participation | Digital transactions | Processing time | Dwell time | Exceptions | Customer satisfaction | ROI

CEO question: What percentage of our cargo ecosystem is digitally connected?

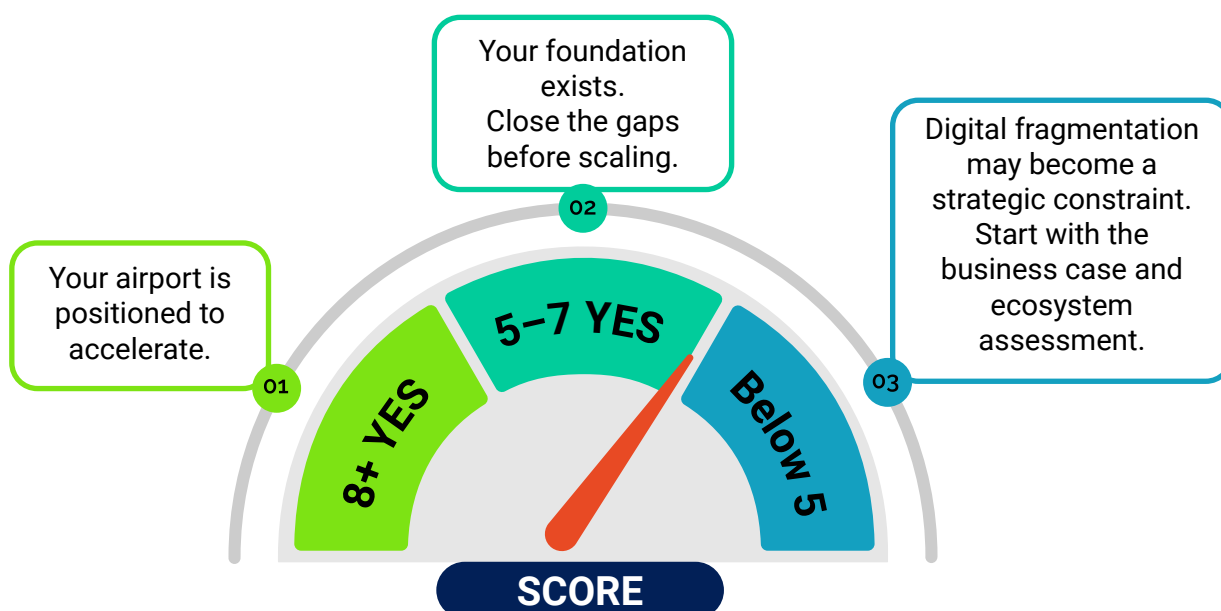


Boardroom Checklist

Is Your Airport Ready for ACCS?



- ☐ Do we have an executive owner for cargo digitalisation?
- ☐ Have we quantified the cost of today's manual processes?
- ☐ Do we know where cargo information gets fragmented?
- ☐ Have we identified our critical ecosystem stakeholders?
- ☐ Can our existing systems exchange data through APIs or standard interfaces?
- ☐ Do we have measurable cargo-performance baselines?
- ☐ Is there a governance model for the cargo community?
- ☐ Do we have a clear stakeholder adoption strategy?
- ☐ Is our AI powered by trusted operational data?
- ☐ Can we demonstrate measurable ROI within the first phase?



About Kalé

Kalé is a global vertical SaaS company, providing a suite of software solutions for the logistics industry. It counts several Fortune 500 companies including large airports and seaports as its customers. Kalé has offices in India, UAE, Kenya, Netherlands, Australia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Benin, Ivory Coast, Republic of Congo, Colombia, Japan, Canada and USA. Engaging with 5500+ clients in 50 countries, Kalé is a major player in the logistics industry. Kalé has been the champion and flag-bearer of paperless trade in the logistics industry with initiatives like the world's most comprehensive cargo community systems for both Air (Airport Cargo Community System) and Maritime (Port Community System).

About Ti

Transport Intelligence (Ti) is one of the world's leading providers of expert research and analysis dedicated to the global logistics industry. Utilising the expertise of professionals with many years of experience in the express, road freight and logistics industries, Transport Intelligence has developed a range of market-leading web-based products, reports, profiles and services used by many of the world's leading logistics suppliers, consultancies, banks and users of logistics services.

Kalé

9th Floor, Thane One Corporate Business Park, Majiwada, Thane (W), Maharashtra, INDIA - 400 610.

+91 22 4113 4113

info@kalelogistics.com

www.kalelogistics.com

