



Female aircraft crew member NICHOLAS JEFFRIES/UNSPLASH

The battle for new talent

The Tomorrow's Voices initiative was created to attract students and young professionals to the aviation and more specifically Air Traffic Management (ATM) industries

The initiatives inspire and support the next generation of professionals in aviation industries

Aviation industries are at the forefront of innovation and progress, and this spirit of advancement is calling out to the dynamic leaders shaping the skies of tomorrow. In this context, Tomorrow's Voices was created as a collaborative initiative between CANSO, the SESAR Engage 2 project, and Firstfruits, aimed at inspiring and empowering the next generation of leaders in aviation.

Launched at Airspace World 2024 and returning for 2025, Tomorrow's Voices is a key part of the Complete Air Traffic System (CATS) Global Council

initiative to foster a more inclusive and future-ready aviation community. Through panels, workshops, tours and interactive activities, the programme showcases emerging talent, explores career paths and identifies the competencies the industry needs from tomorrow's workforce. This year's programme is organised in collaboration with SESAR Engage 2, Firstfruits, and our sponsors: EUROCONTROL, Skyguide, CAAS and Viasat. Young professionals and students will be invited to take part, with travel expenses partially supported.

CANSO is leading the initiative through the CATS Global Council. Firstfruits brings expertise in engaging

next-generation talent and Engage 2 aims to influence the future of ATM by building bridges between academia and industry. Engage 2's activities include co-funding PhD programmes, supporting catalyst fund projects, organising hackathons and open days, and developing knowledge-sharing tools such as a Wiki and a matchmaking app to connect academia with the ATM ecosystem.

The Engage 2 matchmaking app, officially launching at Airspace World 2025, will include a description of possible careers and a list of relevant companies and university programmes in aviation, as well as job opportunities in the field and the possibility to get in touch with relevant stakeholders further enhancing industry-academia engagement.

Students and young professionals' response to Tomorrow's Voices 2024

Last year's edition brought together students and young professionals, receiving very positive feedback from both participants and industry stakeholders. There was strong enthusiasm and active participation in Engage 2 activities. Eleven PhD applications were received, with seven successfully funded. The first Engage 2 hackathon gathered over 40 participants across 13 teams from various countries. Twelve Catalyst Fund project applications were submitted, with seven projects now underway.

Main challenges in attracting new talents in the ATM industry

One of the biggest challenges is a lack of awareness of the diverse career opportunities available in the ATM sector and the range of skillsets required. To assist students in understanding the various types of career paths and needed competences, Engage 2 has mapped more than 30 roles in ATM, highlighting not only technical roles but also opportunities in fields like psychology, design, and communications.

Another challenge is the under-representation of women in many of these roles. Engage 2 is addressing this through a sector-wide survey, an awareness



campaign targeting female participation from the university level, and broader outreach starting during early education.

Tomorrow's Voices contributes by shining a spotlight on inclusive pathways, showcasing diverse talent, and creating more visible entry points into the industry.

Making the ATM industry more appealing to those considering a career in ATM

Tomorrow's Voices was created precisely to make the aviation and ATM sectors more inclusive, engaging and appealing to young professionals. The 2025 programme will include:

- **CEO Breakfast:** An informal opportunity for young professionals to connect directly with aviation leaders and hear about their career journeys
- **Thematic Panels and Workshops:** Covering topics such as the future workforce, career pathways, next-generation aviation and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in onboarding
- **Inspirational Tours:** Guided visits to selected exhibitor booths, designed to expose participants to real-world career opportunities, innovations and technologies across the aviation ecosystem. With the support of Engage 2 job cards, participants can personalise their tour based on their interests, gaining direct insight into the roles, skills, and operations that are shaping the future of the industry
- **Scavenger Hunt:** An interactive and playful way for participants to explore the Airspace World exhibition while learning about the sector and networking with peers.

These activities are designed to spark curiosity, build connections and offer practical guidance for navigating a career in aviation and ATM.



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