

CANSO Person of the Year 2026

Nominee: Ahmed Al Jallaf, Assistance Director General – Air Navigation Services, UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA)

Description of why they should be nominated

- Ahmed Al Jallaf has delivered measurable, system-level advancement in airspace performance, sustainability, and regional harmonization during one of the most accelerated periods of aviation growth in the Middle East. Aviation contributes approximately 18.2% of the UAE's GDP, generating nearly USD 92 billion in economic value, making resilient and scalable air navigation services a national strategic priority.
- As Assistant Director General for Air Navigation Services in the UAE — serving as Chairman of MIDANPIRG, Chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Air Navigation Committee, Chairman of the National Airspace Advisory Committee (NASAC), Chairman of the Airspace Restructuring Program Steering Group, and CANSO Board Member — Ahmed has ensured the UAE's airspace system evolves ahead of demand rather than reacting to congestion pressures.
- In 2025, UAE airspace managed nearly 1.1 million flights (+6.8% YoY) within a 124,000 km² Flight Information Region at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa — averaging more than 3,000 daily movements in a peak-driven, hub-concentrated, civil–military integrated environment. Sustaining this traffic intensity while maintaining safety and operational performance reflects disciplined national oversight and forward-looking capacity planning.
- Under his direction, higher-level Free Route Airspace (FRA) above FL355 delivered measurable environmental and operational gains. In 2025 alone, FRA supported 116,438 flights (+9.7% YoY) and generated 1,418,545 kilograms of fuel savings and 4,468,415 kilograms of CO₂ reduction (+10.1% YoY), translating into lower airline operating costs, improved trajectory efficiency, and tangible sustainability benefits.
- Ahmed continues to lead national airspace transformation through Phase 4 of the UAE Airspace Restructuring Programme (ARP4), which he governs as Chairman of the Steering Group. ARP4 aligns aviation authorities, defense entities, airports, and airspace users under a unified framework to optimize capacity and strengthen civil–military integration. Through NASAC, he ensures coordinated policy alignment between regulators, airlines, airports, and defense stakeholders, directly supporting national aviation growth and competitiveness. This builds on the structural

foundation established through ARP3 (2017), which positioned the UAE to absorb subsequent traffic expansion.

- Regionally, Ahmed is leading the Gulf Cooperation Council Upper Flight Information Region (UFIR) initiative, advancing harmonized upper airspace governance across the Arabian Gulf States to reduce fragmentation and strengthen cross-border predictability.
- In parallel, under his chairmanship of MIDANPIRG, the region has progressed implementation of priority Air Navigation Strategy elements, including advancement of key Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBU) threads and coordinated airspace planning aligned with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan.
- Globally, as a Vice President of the Emirates Aviation Association and a CANSO Board Member, Ahmed contributes to shaping international air navigation strategy. In 2025, he played a key role in hosting the IFATCA Conference in the UAE, where the Declaration of Cooperation between IFATCA and CANSO was formally signed, reinforcing collaborative solutions to global air traffic controller shortages.
- Measurable 2025 impact highlights include: 1.1 million annual flights managed in a high-density FIR, 116,438 FRA-supported flights, 1.4 million kg fuel savings and 4.46 million kg CO₂ reduction, Governance leadership of ARP4 and national alignment through NASAC, Regional leadership advancing GCC and regional harmonization
- Through strategic foresight and measurable delivery, Ahmed Al Jallaf has strengthened national resilience, advanced regional integration, and contributed meaningfully to global aviation collaboration.