

2026 FTE Global Pioneer Award winners announced in Dallas



The 2026 FTE Global Pioneer Awards in Dallas recognized three airline and three airport winners

[FTE Global](#) kicked off this evening with an exciting Networking Welcome Party, jointly hosted with IFSA EXPO. The Networking Welcome Party, sponsored by [T-Mobile for Business](#), was hosted in a ballroom at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Dallas, Texas, USA, and marks the beginning of the 20th anniversary edition of FTE Global.

The networking and welcome reception was the backdrop for the FTE Global Pioneer Awards ceremony, sponsored by [Assaia](#), which recognized the world's most pioneering airports and airlines with innovation projects prevalent across their entire organizations.

30 airlines and airports were shortlisted, with three airports and three airlines taking home FTE Global Pioneer Awards trophies at the event:

- [International Airlines Group \(IAG\)](#)
- [All Nippon Airways \(ANA\)](#)
- [Turkish Airlines](#)
- [Dallas Fort Worth International Airport \(DFW\)](#)
- [Munich Airport \(MUC\)](#)
- [Japan Airport Terminal Co Ltd.](#)

PAX Tech Managing Editor Jane Hobson presented the 2026 FTE Global Pioneer Award to Turkish Airlines at the event.

Airline winners

The three airlines winners of the 2026 FTE Global Pioneer Awards are International Airlines Group (IAG), All Nippon Airways and Turkish Airlines.



(From Left to Right) Dr. Joe Leader, Group CEO of APEX, FTE & IFSA; Paul Mills, Strategy & Transformation, International Airlines Group; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

IAG was recognized for embedding innovation at the heart of its transformation strategy, using emerging technology, open innovation and Group-wide collaboration to enhance customer experience, improve operational efficiency and support more sustainable aviation. Its initiatives span artificial intelligence (AI), automation, connectivity, baggage, aircraft maintenance and fuel efficiency, creating pathways for technologies to move from experimentation into real-world deployment across its airlines.



(From Left to Right) Dr. Joe Leader, Group CEO of APEX, FTE & IFSA; Hiroki Sato, Assistant Manager,

All Nippon Airways; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

ANA was recognized for taking a pioneering approach to transforming airport and aircraft turnaround operations through automation, AI and human-machine collaboration. At the heart of this journey, FTE cited ANA's participation in the FTE Smart Ramp initiative, which aims to make aircraft turnaround increasingly autonomous, efficient and sustainable.



(From Left to Right) Jane Hobson, Managing Editor, Pax Tech Magazine; Esra Karayaka, Catering Contract Manager, Turkish Airlines; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

Turkish Airlines was recognized for pursuing an ambitious digital transformation strategy with the goal of ranking among the top three global airlines for digital passenger experience. With its centennial in 2033 as a long-term milestone, the airline is investing across AI, airline retailing, fintech, biometrics and connectivity to create a more personalized digital journey while strengthening the resilience of its 24/7 operations. Turkish Technology, its technology-focused subsidiary with more than 1,500 employees, plays a central role in developing the capabilities underpinning this transformation.

Airport winners

The three airport winners of the 2026 FTE Global Pioneer Awards are Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), Munich Airport (MUC) and Japan Airport Terminal Co Ltd.



(From Left to Right) Gina Marie Paquette, Director of Business Development, Synect; Waad Abdullah, Senior Digital Product Manager, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport; Montee Fiely, Head of Strategic Engagement, Synect; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

DFW was recognized for continuing to make digital transformation a central pillar of its "Travel Transformed" strategy, with a clear ambition to reinvent how the airport operates while delivering more seamless, personalized and efficient experiences.



(From Left to Right) Tim Toerber, President – Americas at our awards sponsor, Assaia; Thomas Hoff Andersson, Managing Director & Group Chief Operating Officer, Munich Airport; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

MUC was recognized for strengthening its position as a Premium Innovation Hub, combining advanced

technology with industry partnerships and a human-centred approach to digital transformation. Its strategy focuses on using robotics, automation and AI to empower employees, improve operational efficiency and create a more seamless passenger experience.



(From Left to Right) Stephanie Taylor, APEX Insights Editor; Ryosuke Murashima, Assistant Manager, Japan Airport Terminal; and Max Gosney, Managing Director, Future Travel Experience

Japan Airport Terminal was recognized for being at the forefront of airport innovation through its visionary “terminal.0 HANEDA” initiative. This cross-industry collaboration brings together technology companies, startups and industry stakeholders to reimagine the airport of the future, focusing on technology, sustainability, operational efficiency and passenger experience.

PAX Tech as your trusted source for news and event coverage

FTE Global 2026 officially kicks off tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. local time. *PAX Tech* is proud to be a media partner for this event, providing live updates from Dallas and delivering exclusive post-show interview coverage. Follow *PAX International* and *PAX Tech Magazines* on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date.