

# 2013 GATEWAY TO GROWTH

Aiming High: Air Access to Canada



# CONTENTS

<b>TIAC Position on Open Skies Policy in Canada .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Executive Summary: Points of Consideration for TIAC .....	3
<b>TIAC Recommendations: A Multi-Faceted Approach.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Air Service Agreements: A History .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Basis for Negotiations: Nine Freedoms of the Air .....	5
Open Skies Air Service Agreements .....	6
Misconceptions of the Term “Open Skies” .....	7
Positive Outcomes of Liberalization .....	7
<b>Canada’s Current Air Service Agreements: Are Blue Skies Open? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Blue Skies (also referred to as an “Open Skies-type” agreement) .....	8
Overall Principles of Blue Sky Policy.....	8
Criticisms of Canada’s Current ASA Policy “Blue Skies”.....	8
Industry Perspectives .....	9
<b>How is Canada Doing? Ranking Liberalization of Aviation Policy .....</b>	<b>10</b>
World Economic Forum: Competitiveness Ranking for ASAs.....	10
Are Liberalized Air Service Agreements Good for Tourism in Canada? Air Capacity.....	11
Open Skies – Unused Capacity?.....	11
Are Liberalized Air Service Agreements Good for Tourism in Canada? Visitor Numbers.....	12
<b>ASA Impact on International Visitors to Canada .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Beyond Open Skies: Considerations for Canada.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Aviation Cost Structure.....	14
Infrastructure & Logistics .....	14
Domestic Routes.....	14
Border and Security Facilitation.....	15
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Gateway to Growth: TIAC Research Suite .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>19</b>

# TIAC POSITION ON OPEN SKIES POLICY IN CANADA

## Executive Summary: Points of Consideration for TIAC

As Canada is increasingly becoming a fly-to tourist destination, the country's air service agreements (ASAs) policy must reflect the changing global tourism market. We must also keep in mind that a key cause of Canada's declining international visitor numbers is Canada's prohibitively expensive air travel. This paper will examine how much of an impact further liberalization of Canada's ASA policy will have on tourism.

Historically, when airlines were government-owned (i.e. "flag carriers") ASAs were a straightforward bilateral negotiation between two governments. The deregulation of the aviation industry and emergence of Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) has since changed the nature of these negotiations. Led by the US, there has been a world-wide trend towards liberalizing ASAs.<sup>1</sup> This has resulted in pressure on Canada to do the same.

This paper considers all sides of the Open Skies debate while analyzing potential impacts and interactions with the tourism industry. Indeed, evidence shows that in some cases there are clear economic benefits of Open Skies agreements. For example, in its first five years, the European Common Aviation Area saw an economic boost of €6.4-12 billion, 72 000 jobs, and increases in Low Cost Carriers (LCCs).<sup>2</sup>

However, organizations like the WTO, WEF and the ICAO generally rank the openness of Canada's ASAs as middle of the pack or better, suggesting that Open Skies may not be a silver bullet for increased international visitation. In fact, some countries' arrival numbers have declined after Open Skies-type agreements have been signed.

Furthermore, Canada's unique demographic and geographic traits need to be taken into consideration. Research needs to be done on the impact of Open Skies on tourism in secondary cities such as St. John's, Quebec City and Kelowna. Will increased routes to major hubs like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver result in easier and cheaper access to smaller tourist destinations? Or, will airlines have to switch capacity from domestic to international routes to keep up with the competition?

We conclude that it is imprudent to draw a direct correlation between liberalized air policies and tourism growth in Canada as there are various factors in play. Open Skies is a means to an end, not an end in itself. We recommend that more liberalized agreements should be considered on a case-by-case basis after thorough study of all factors that could impact visitation.

---

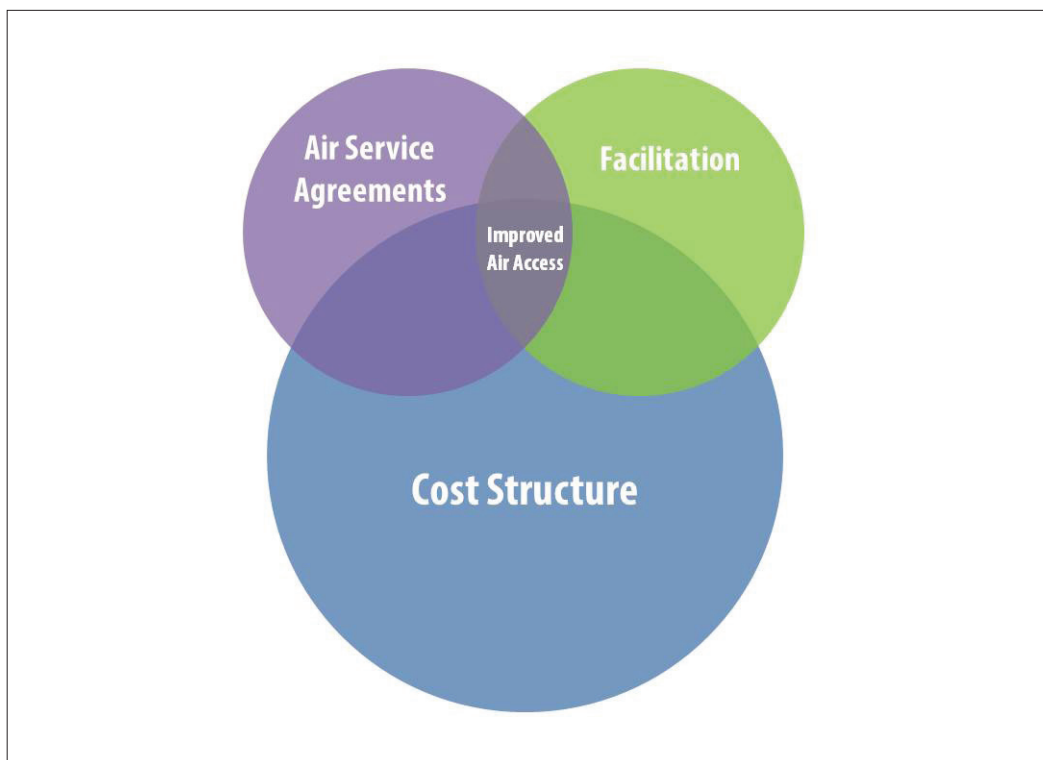
1 Fitzgerald, P. Paul. (2010, May 26). Darkening Skies? Presentation at International Conference on Air Transport, Air Law and Regulation, Singapore Aviation Academy.

2 Booz Allen Hamilton, and Campbell Hill Aviation Group. (January 2007). The economic Impacts of an Open aviation area between the EU and the US. Paper prepared for Directorate General Energy and Transport, European Commission. Retrieved from: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/international\\_aviation/country\\_index/doc/final\\_report\\_us\\_bah.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/international_aviation/country_index/doc/final_report_us_bah.pdf)

## TIAC RECOMMENDATIONS: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

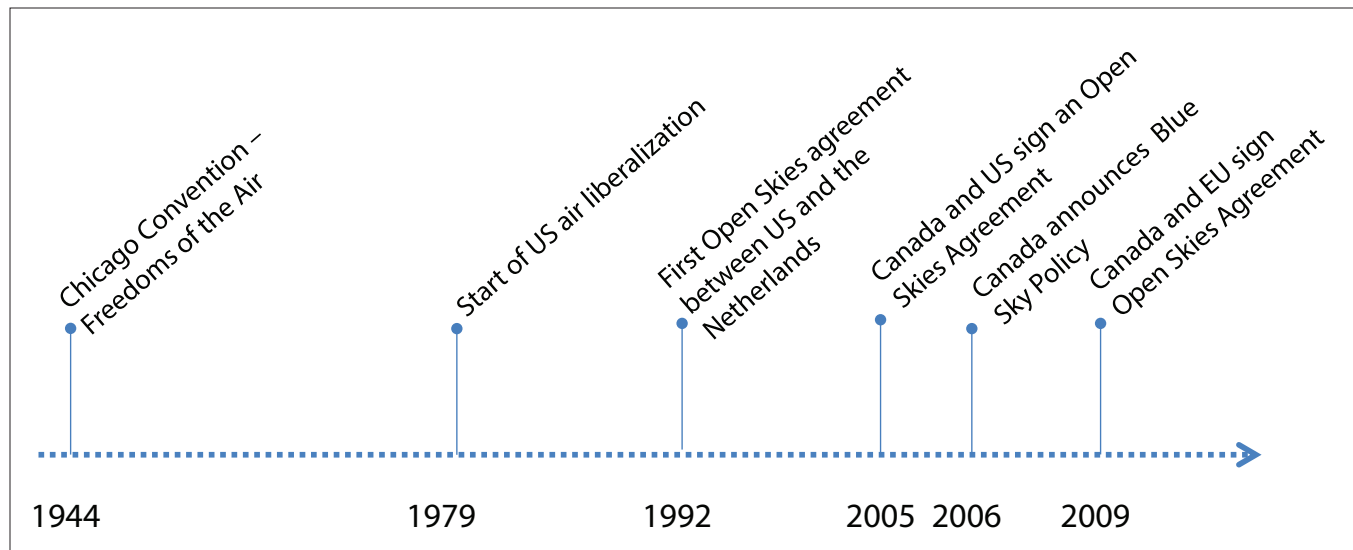
Air access is essential for tourism growth in Canada but Open Skies agreements may not address all access concerns outright. Like all issues affecting tourism, air agreement policy must not be implemented piecemeal. TIAC supports the whole-of-government approach of the Federal Tourism Strategy (FTS) and encourages the same approach for its air policy. Improvements in air access should be tackled from three interrelated perspectives:

1. **Cost Structure:** Even with a liberal air access agreement, Canada's prohibitively expensive aviation cost structure will continue to dissuade foreign carriers from doing business with Canada and international visitors considering Canada as a destination;
2. **Facilitation:** Canada must be able to meet increased demand by ensuring that visitors are facilitated through documentation requirements and capacity to be processed by CBSA. Passengers who transit through Canada help sustain flights for visitors to Canada. Programs such as Transit Without Visa (TWV) for emerging economies like Asia and Latin America will stimulate incremental flights and increase competition, giving Canada greater access to these growing tourism markets;
3. **Air Service Agreements:** Open Skies policies alone will not increase international visitation. However, with the right aviation policies in place (#1 and #2) Canadian tourism may benefit from more liberalized ASAs in specific cases.





# AIR SERVICE AGREEMENTS: A HISTORY



## Basis for Negotiations: Nine Freedoms of the Air

Disagreements over aviation liberalization, and subsequent negotiations, stemming from the 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation (aka Chicago Conventions) resulted in (now nine) “freedoms of the air.” These freedoms are a set of commercial aviation rights that provide a basis for negotiation of bilateral air service agreements (ASA) between governments:

	Description	Example	Notes
<b>1st</b>	The right to fly over a foreign country, without landing there	Air Canada flies Toronto - Mexico City, passing over the US.	Generally a given, but Russia, Canada and Brazil have not ratified and negotiate this for each bilateral
<b>2nd</b>	The right to refuel or carry out maintenance in a foreign country en route to another country.	British Airways flies Toronto - London, refuelling in Gander, NL	Usually considered a given
<b>3rd</b>	The right to fly from one's own country to another	Air Canada flies Toronto - Chicago	Negotiated individually
<b>4th</b>	The right to fly from another country to one's own	Air Canada flies Chicago - Toronto	Negotiated individually
<b>5th</b>	The right to pick up passengers in a second country and fly on to a third country	Air Canada flies Toronto-Atlanta-Mexico City	“Beyond Rights”; Negotiated individually
<b>6th</b>	The right to stop in one's own country en route from and to a foreign country	Air Canada flies London - Toronto - Atlanta	Rare; Negotiated individually
<b>7th</b>	The right to fly between two foreign countries overpassing one's own	Singapore airlines operate from London, flies London - New York	Rare for passenger agreements; Negotiated individually

<b>8th</b>	The right to fly between two or more airports in a foreign country while continuing service to one's own country;	Air Canada flies Toronto -Chicago - New York	"Fill up cabotage"; Rare for passenger; negotiated individually
<b>9th</b>	The right to offer domestic flights inside a foreign country	American Airlines flies Montreal-Vancouver	"Cabotage", Very rare; EU Single Aviation Market

## Open Skies Air Service Agreements

Open Skies is an aviation policy championed by the US that aims to liberalize international aviation agreements. Currently, negotiations occur between governments rather than individual airlines. Most of the existing civil agreements are based on US DOT Order 92-8-13 and include:

1. **Free market competition:** No restrictions on international route rights; number of designated airlines; capacity; frequencies; and types of aircraft;
2. **Pricing determined by market forces:** A fare can be disallowed only if both governments concur — "double-disapproval pricing";
3. **Fair and equal opportunity to compete:** Countries can establish sales offices in the other country, carrier can provide its own ground-handling services; guaranteed access to customs services; non-discriminatory user charges;
4. **Cooperative marketing arrangements:** Designated airlines may enter into code-sharing (assignment of one airline's code, i.e. AC, to a flight operated by another airline) or leasing arrangements with airlines of either country;
5. **Provisions for dispute settlement and consultation;**
6. **Liberal charter arrangements:** Carriers can operate under charter regulations of either country;
7. **Safety and security:** Set standards and provide assistance when necessary;
8. **Optional seventh freedom all-cargo rights:** The airline of one country can operate all-cargo services between the other country and a third, via flights that are not linked to its homeland.<sup>3</sup>

3 International Institute of Transport & Logistics and Ward, D. (December 2008). Appendix in Analysis of Canada's Bilateral Air Services Agreements: Policy Focus on Asia Pacific Region. A study for the Ministry of Transportation, Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from: [http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/OpenSkies/documents/081227\\_IITL\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/OpenSkies/documents/081227_IITL_Appendix.pdf)

## Misconceptions of the Term “Open Skies”

Open Skies is generally defined as unrestricted air service to, from, and beyond the partner’s territory, without restrictions on frequency, aircraft type and prices. However, a closer look reveals that it is a vague term that can change over time and depending on the countries between whom the agreement is made. For example, Open Skies as defined by the US is not specific on the 6th Freedom, 7th Freedom (for passenger operations), 8th Freedom (consecutive cabotage), 9th Freedom (pure cabotage) and airline ownership issues. Therefore, technically, even the US does not practice pure Open Skies. It is dangerous to discuss the merits of Open Skies policies without all parties being clear on the definition.

## Positive Outcomes of Liberalization

There are many examples in other countries of how liberalized air access agreements have had a positive effect on the local economy. Among them:

- » Competition from multiple carriers, facilitated by Open Skies agreements, has been proven to have an effect on airline fares (ex. Economy class fares in the E.U. decreased 30% after liberalization);<sup>4</sup>
- » Liberalized agreements and increased volume has resulted in more aviation hubs (e.g. spoke and hub cities such as Charlotte, NC) which boost the economy of these secondary cities.

In fact, some research suggests that an Open Skies policy may also have a positive effect on the Canadian economy. For example, a study from the BC Open Skies conference in 2009 estimated that each new Trans Pacific wide body flight to Canada would inject approximately \$213 million in economic activity per year.<sup>5</sup> However, as we will see, other circumstances such as cost and ease of travel also have impacts on increased visitation.



---

4 International Civil Aviation Organization. (December 2011). State Responses: European Liberalization. Retrieved at: [http://www.icao.int/sustainability/CaseStudies/StatesReplies/EuropeLiberalization\\_En.pdf](http://www.icao.int/sustainability/CaseStudies/StatesReplies/EuropeLiberalization_En.pdf) Also see: IATA. (April 2007). Airline Liberalisation. Retrieved at: [http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/Documents/economics/IATA\\_AirlineLiberalisation.pdf](http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/Documents/economics/IATA_AirlineLiberalisation.pdf), 17.

5 Steinberg, Andrew B. (2009). Open Skies The United States Experience. Presentation from Jones Day at 2009 British Columbia International Open Skies Summit. September 24th and 25th 2009 at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

# CANADA'S CURRENT AIR SERVICE AGREEMENTS: ARE BLUE SKIES OPEN?

**Blue Skies** (also referred to as an “Open Skies-type” agreement)

In 2006, Canada introduced the Blue Sky policy to modernize its international air transportation policy (previously all agreements were more conservative bilateral treaties). The aim was to bring it in line with the Open Skies regime led by the US. Blue Skies policy ensures market forces should determine price, quality, frequency and range of air services so long as foreign and Canadian carriers can compete on equal levels.

## Overall Principles of Blue Sky Policy

Any ASA that is signed should have a net benefit for Canada. Canadian carriers should have opportunity to compete on reasonably level playing field meaning<sup>6</sup>:

- » Likelihood and extent of new Canadian and foreign carrier services;
- » Canada's trade objectives, foreign relations and consideration of bilateral disputes;
- » Inability to operate in a partner's market due to discriminatory airport /facility access;
- » Unfair logistics (transfer of funds, double taxation etc);
- » Unlevel playing field (irrational business principles or protection from market disciplines);
- » Foreign carrier offering a level of service that would reduce/eliminate Canadian routes.

## Criticisms of Canada's Current ASA Policy “Blue Skies”

- » Is only a modest improvement; still protectionist with little consideration for consumers;
- » “Net benefit to Canada” test should focus on equal opportunity rather than equal outcome
- » Blue Skies policy is not truly “open” if there are barriers imposed on visas (timely issuance of visas, transit without visa) and inability to meet demand (CBSA resources, hours of operations);
- » Restrictions may benefit third country carriers rather than domestic airlines (i.e. before US/China Open Skies, most American passengers did US->Korea->China on Korean Air);
- » Negotiations are done in secret and, even once signed, agreements are not widely available.

6

Transport Canada. (November 2006). Blue Sky: Canada's New International Air Policy. Ottawa, Ontario. p.3. Retrieved from: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/ace-general-policies-menu-760.htm>



## Industry Perspectives

**IATA:** Supports full Open Skies. Believes flag carriers are out-of-date and agreements should be business-to-business rather than bilateral agreements between governments. "The bilateral system turned commercial opportunities into national rights. This made some sense when governments owned airlines [but now] it prevents meaningful consolidation and perpetuates inefficiency."<sup>7</sup>

**Canadian Airports Council:** Supports liberalization when it is in the best interest of Canada.

**National Airlines Council of Canada:** Strongly supports Blue Skies as balanced liberalization policy framework, emphasis on maximum added-value for all stakeholders.

**Air Canada:** Support Canada's Blue Sky policy and general liberalization provided reciprocal benefits are a guiding principle of negotiation; high aviation costs in Canada tend to put Canadian airlines at a disadvantage during bilateral Open Skies agreements.<sup>8</sup>

**Alberta and B.C.:** Aggressively pursuing Open Skies to encourage more growth from Asia.



7 IATA. (April 2007). Airline Liberalisation. Retrieved at: [http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/Documents/economics/IATA\\_AirlineLiberalisation.pdf](http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/Documents/economics/IATA_AirlineLiberalisation.pdf), p. 17.

8 Bilateral air negotiations consistent with Blue Sky Policy: Air Canada.(2010, Nov 6). Financial Post. Retrieved at: <http://business.financialpost.com/2010/11/06/bilateral-air-negotiations-consistent-with-blue-sky-policy-air-canada/>

# HOW IS CANADA DOING? RANKING LIBERALIZATION OF AVIATION POLICY

## World Economic Forum: Competitiveness Ranking for ASAs

The WEF looks at the weighted average openness of all ASAs, with information from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and from International Air Transport Association (IATA). They consider the following factors:

1. Grant of Rights (i.e. air freedoms)
2. Capacity clause (restrictions on volume of traffic, frequency of service or type of aircraft)
3. Tariff Approval (do fares need to be approved by both countries? aka dual approval)
4. Withholding (defined conditions for foreign carrier like ownership rules etc.)
5. Designation (number of airlines allowed to serve market)
6. Statistics (requires exchange of operational data between countries and airlines)
7. Cooperative arrangements (regulation of cooperative marketing agreements between airlines)

**Air Liberalization Index:** Experts assign weights to difference aspects of ASA, countries are indexed on a 0-50 scale with 50 being the most liberal agreement.

**Factor Analysis Index:** Using factor analysis technique relies on statistics rather than expert opinion.

Country	Air Liberalization Index	Factor analysis	WEF "Openness" of Bilateral Air Service Agreements
Canada	101/184 (83rd best in world)	97/184 (87th best in world)	14/139
Australia	117/184 (67th best in world)	84/184 (100th best in world)	78/139
Brazil	112/184 (72nd best in world)	103/184 (81st best in world)	38/139
China	5/184 (179th best in world)	13/184 (171st best in world)	116/139
UAE	127/184 (57th best in world)	128/184 (56th best in world)	46/139
UK	158/184 (26th best in world)	157/184 (27th best in world)	40/139
US	168/184 (16th best in world)	176/184 (8th best in world)	8/139

This chart shows the ranking of certain countries' openness of bilateral Air Service Agreements according to three models, Air Liberalization Index, Factor Analysis and World Economic Forum. As the chart indicates, Canada's openness is ranked as middle-of-the pack according to the ALI and Factor Analysis and as very competitive according to the WEF. These rankings indicate that the Blue Skies policy is more competitive than its critics are implying.

## Are Liberalized Air Service Agreements Good for Tourism in Canada? Air Capacity

To evaluate the impact of liberalized Canadian ASAs on tourism's bottom line we have measured inbound seat capacity before and after liberalized agreements were signed. It has been argued that further liberalization will increase load factors and drop prices. However, as the chart below demonstrates<sup>9</sup>, liberalization is no guarantee of capacity growth.

Seat Capacity to Canada	Growth of Capacity after Agreement	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Brazil (August 2011)</b>	0%	77,898	80,378	N/A	N/A	93,000	93,000
<b>South Korea (July 2009)</b>	-10%	259,100	245,400	217,200	N/A	280,000	222,000
<b>Mexico (December 2007)</b>	-73%	470,000	556,000	623,000	N/A	207,000	172,000
<b>Japan (April 2009)</b>	-2%	406,100	367,200	313,200	N/A	204,000	360,000
<b>China (February 2011)</b>	+77%	443,000	430,000	396,100	N/A	682,000	703,000
<b>UK (December 2009)</b>	0%	2,167,000	1,996,000	1,825,000	N/A	1,764,000	1,824,000
<b>France (December 2009)</b>	0%	948,000	1,013,000	1,031,000	N/A	1,130,000	1,024,000
<b>Germany (December '09)</b>	+5%	882,000	957,000	983,000	N/A	1,077,000	1,037,000
<b>USA (March 2007)</b>	+8%	15,453,000	15,833,000	15,150,000	N/A	15,787,000	16,735,000

Liberalized agreements do not seem to have much impact on air capacity to Canada as seen in the 0% growth of Brazil, UK and France. In fact, it seems that other policies may have more of an impact (imposition of visas on Mexicans resulted in 73% decrease and ADS agreement with China resulted in 77% increase). The data above indicates that there is no clear correlation between the signing of a liberalized ASA and increased seat capacity from that country.

## Open Skies – Unused Capacity?

Furthermore, according to Transport Canada, there is unused capacity (i.e. landing slots) for three of Canada's top ten inbound tourism markets: China, India and Australia<sup>10</sup>.

9 Canadian Tourism Commission. (August 2012). Canada's Scheduled Seat Capacity 2012. Retrieved at: [http://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/canada\\_seat\\_capacity\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/canada_seat_capacity_2012_en.pdf).

10 <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/air-bluesky-2987.htm>

## Are Liberalized Air Service Agreements Good for Tourism in Canada? Visitor Numbers

To evaluate the impact of liberalized Canadian ASAs on tourism's bottom line we have measured international visitation before and after an agreement was signed. The charts below graph the increase or decline of visitors from certain countries. There is no clear correlation between the signing of a liberalized ASA and increased visitors from that country.<sup>11</sup>

Country <sup>4</sup>	Type of Agreement	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Brazil</b> (August 2011)	Open Skies Type	66,682	72,126	62,243	80,776	88,489	94,555
<b>South Korea</b> (July 2009)	Open Skies Type	212,602	196,564	144,141	169,953	155,683	150,611
<b>Mexico</b> (December 2007)	Expanded	250,633	270,828	172,006	123,763	136,931	147,698
<b>Japan</b> (April 2009)	Expanded	343,451	287,198	205,639	243,040	218,813	240,025
<b>China</b> (February 2011)	Expanded	155,753	165,823	166,192	200,033	248,888	298,070
<b>UK</b> (December 2009)	Canada-EU Open Skies Type	925,566	869,926	724,470	727,496	694,581	671,485
<b>France</b> (December 2009)	Canada-EU Open Skies Type	379,268	379,268	425,409	411,741	464,569	461,919
<b>Germany</b> (December 2009)	Canada-EU Open Skies Type	318,165	318,165	332,008	318,844	342,002	322,380
<b>USA</b> (March 2007)	Open Skies Type	13,376,000	12,503,000	11,667,000	11,749,000	11,500,000	11,853,000

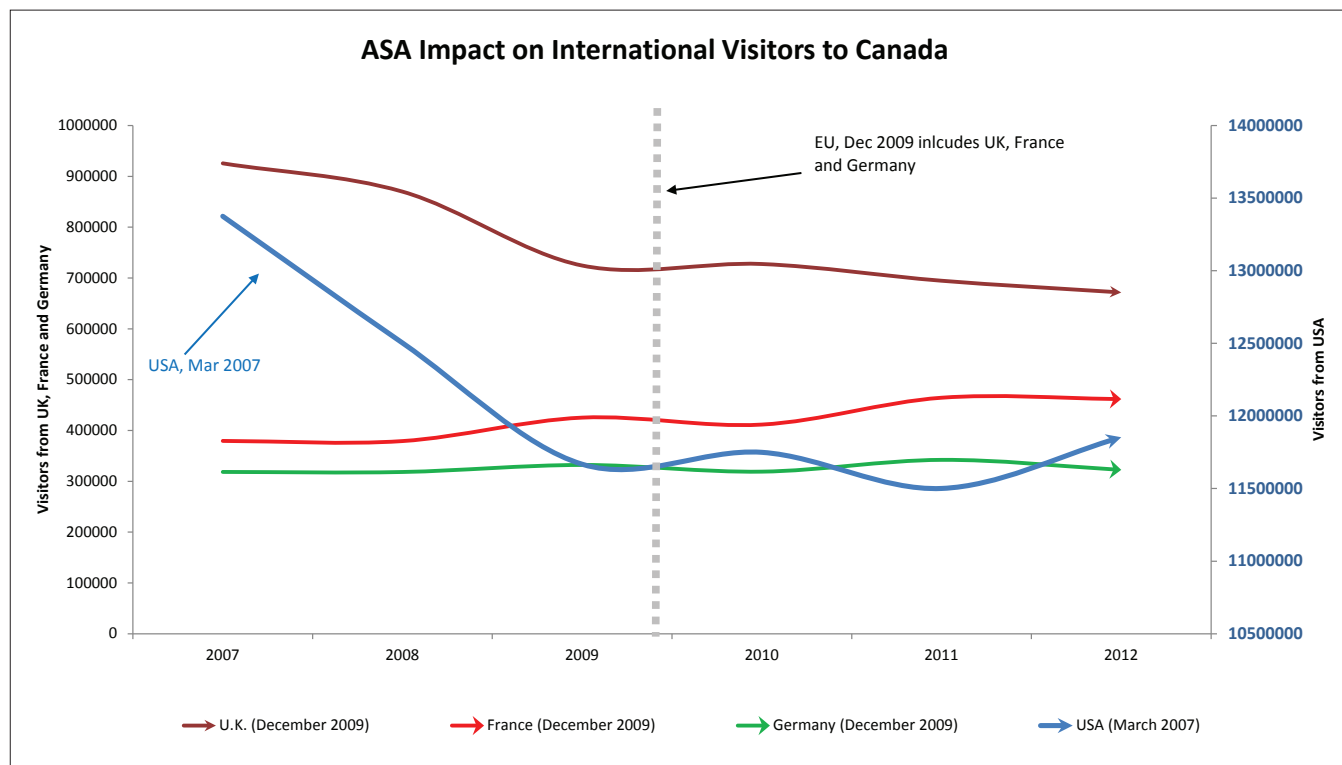
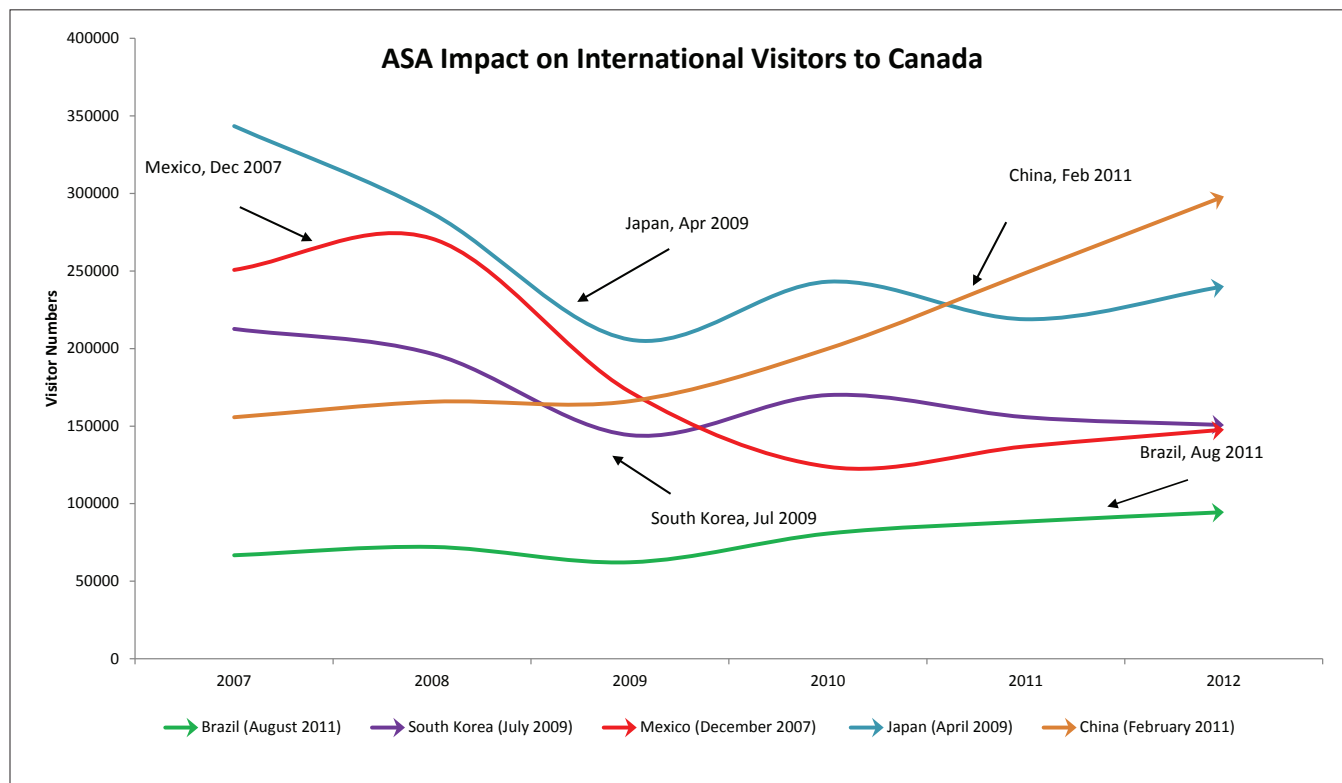
In fact, visitation from some countries declined after the deal was signed:

- » South Korea (2008 to 2012): **-23.5%**
- » USA (2007-2012): **-11%**
- » UK (2009-2012): **-7.3%**
- » Germany (2009-2012): **-3%**

11 Statistics Canada (Various editions). International Travel: Advanced Information.

12 India and Canada signed a bilateral agreement in 1982; it has been liberalized piecemeal since then. As such, it would be too difficult to assign correlation between a single instance of liberalization and tourism volume.

# ASA IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO CANADA





## BEYOND OPEN SKIES: CONSIDERATIONS FOR CANADA

As the international visitor data shows, the mere signing of an Open Skies agreement does not guarantee increased tourism. In order to benefit, a country must have an adequate aviation system in place that will attract and accommodate new routes<sup>13</sup>. Specifically:

### Aviation Cost Structure

Can international airlines afford to fly to the country? *The “club sandwich” of taxes and fees makes flying to Canada prohibitively expensive – currently Canada ranks 136/139 in the world on aviation costs. High costs are often cited as reasons for not entering the Canadian market by American LCCs despite the liberalized ASA signed by the two countries*

### Infrastructure & Logistics

Are there landing slots available? *Over-crowding of airports in Brazil, USA and the EU undermine the unrestricted capacity promised by Open Skies agreements. Canada may not be able to obtain the same level of access in a partner country as an opens skies partner would get here.*

Is there adequate customs and security staff? Can they accommodate passengers 24 hours? *Recent cuts to CATSA suggest Canada will have difficulty processing existing levels of passengers<sup>14</sup>.*

Do immigration policies welcome travellers (i.e. Transit Without Visas, ease of visitor visa application, etc.)? *While progress has been made, there are still significant barriers to entry for certain countries.*

### Domestic Routes

While studies have indicated that Open Skies agreements have little impact on domestic routes – there is little information on how such an agreement would impact Canada in particular. Canada’s proximity to such a large competitor, its geographic and population characteristics, and high aviation costs may have consequences not considered by other studies. Furthermore, if domestic routes continue to be over-priced, Open Skies agreements will only help tourism in hubs such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Secondary cities may still be too costly to visit via air.

13 Silverberg, Goldman & Bikoff Law Firm. (n.d.). Beyond Open Skies: After its 100th Open Skies Agreement, Where Does the US Go From Here?. Washington, D.C.: Goldman, Michael. Retrieved from: [http://www.sgbdc.com/Beyond\\_Open\\_Skies.pdf/](http://www.sgbdc.com/Beyond_Open_Skies.pdf/)

14 MacLeod, Ian. Funding cuts could lead to drop in service, warns federal agency. (2012, Nov 7). Vancouver Sun. Retrieved at: <http://www2.canada.com/vancouversun/news/archives/story.html?id=e5e75def-d36b-4ddb-ba16-4a32d56a8a79>

## Border and Security Facilitation

If there are no measures taken to facilitate passengers through border and security processes, traveller growth to Canada will continue to be stunted regardless of ASA policy. Specifically:

- » Traveller documentation processes need to be welcoming and easy to use;
- » The proposed electronic travel authorizations (eTAs) should be expanded to cover visa-required countries and replace the need for visitor visas;
- » The Transit Without Visa and the China Transit programs need to be expanded to help grow new routes to Canada;
- » New models are needed to ensure an appropriate level of service is provided at security screening.



## CONCLUSION

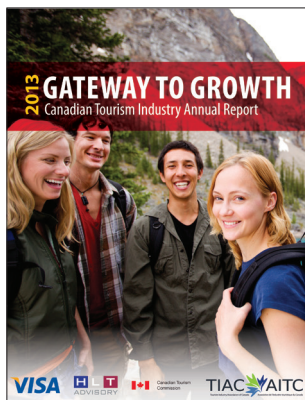
In order to see real benefits for the tourism industry, Canada's air policies must take into consideration the entire aviation system. TIAC supports the Federal Tourism Strategy (FTS) and its whole-of-government approach and encourages government to address its air policy decisions in the same way.

Considering the various elements discussed in this paper, our initial view is that while there may be room for liberalization in some cases, it is not the key barrier to a more competitive tourism industry. Improvements in air access must be considered on multiple levels taking into account cost structure, facilitation and, finally, air service agreements.



## GATEWAY TO GROWTH: TIAC RESEARCH SUITE

As one of the fastest growing industries in the world, travel and tourism is constantly evolving. Beyond the impressive contribution to employment levels, GDP and our country's export economy, travel and tourism stakeholders know instinctively that this industry impacts the country's economy on a basic, structural level. During the past year, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) has developed a suite of research papers to empirically explore the industry's deeper impact.



### Canadian Tourism Industry Annual Report

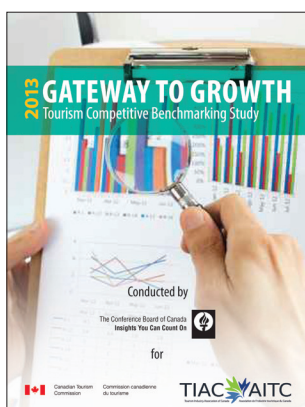
This year's version of the Annual Report on the Tourism Industry will feature a new focus on tourism's role in Canada's overall economy. TIAC has worked in partnership with the CTC, Visa Canada and HLT Consulting to create this at-a-glance collection of industry statistics. As in previous years, this document can act as a reference piece for industry, key decision makers, business media and politicians.



### Aiming High: Air Access to Canada

TIAC has produced a white paper on how the government's air access policies may or may not affect tourism. This paper considers all sides of the Open Skies debate while analyzing potential impacts and interactions with the tourism industry.

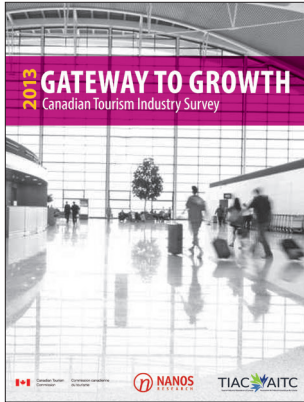
We conclude that it is imprudent to draw a direct correlation between liberalized air policies and tourism growth in Canada as there are various factors in play. We recommend that more liberalized agreements should be considered on a case-by-case basis after thorough study of all factors that could impact visitation.



### Tourism Competitive Benchmarking Study

In recent years, the CTC commissioned The Conference Board of Canada to undertake a Tourism Competitive Benchmarking Study. This year CTC and TIAC partnered on an updated version for 2013. The study compared the performance of 11 sectors and 48 industries, including the travel and tourism sector and tourism industries, to each other and to the overall economy.

Compared with the results from 2011, the latest benchmark study shows that the tourism sector improved on its economic performance but slipped slightly on its financial performance, specifically, investment. In fact, investment in the tourism sector is currently down 30 per cent compared with the years leading up to the recession. At its current level, it is likely that investment will be one of the areas that restrict tourism demand growth in the future.



### Canadian Tourism Industry Survey

TIAC and CTC worked together to conduct an industry survey. This past spring, 16 open-ended and multiple-choice questions were distributed to industry professionals and businesses. Respondents were asked about their objectives, priorities and concerns surrounding the tourism industry in Canada. The results of this survey provide a frontline perspective on the health of the industry. According to the survey findings:

- » While the respondents were optimistic about the strength of the industry; only 24% indicated that they would invest in upgrading their product in the next year.
- » The U.S. was identified as the top priority for both marketing and growth. The Chinese market was the second most important for respondents.
- » International marketing funding and the high cost of flying are tied for the policy issues of most concern to the industry.



### Progress Report on Canadian Visitor Visa Process

TIAC and the CTC have worked closely with Citizenship and Immigration Canada over the past few months to address industry concerns with travel documentation identified in TIAC's 2011 whitepaper "Modernizing Canada's Visitor Visa Process." TIAC has written a progress report on how travel documentation issues are affecting the industry today. TIAC recommendations included the following:

- » Red tape reduction measures including: granting visa waiver status for Brazil and Mexico, expanding electronic Travel Authorization (eTAs) to cover visitor visas, and granting visa transferability from expired passport to a new passport.
- » Optimizing existing security measures, including: implementing a Canada/US Reciprocal Visa Program, expanding the Transit Without Visa program to more countries.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TIAC would like to acknowledge the research and data contributions to these projects by the international team at the Canadian Tourism Commission, The Conference Board of Canada, HLT Advisory, Nanos Research and VISA Canada.

TIAC gratefully acknowledges the principle author Adrienne Foster, M.A. of the following papers: *Aiming High: Air Access to Canada*, *Canadian Tourism Industry Survey*, and *Progress Report on Canadian Visitor Visa Process*.