No classification

Airport Coordination Netherlands (ACNL)
t.av. dhr H. Thomassen
The Base A
Evert van de Beekstraat 1-23
1118 CL SCHIPHOL

Advies slottolerantietijd

02 februari 2026

Geachte heer Thomassen, beste Hugo,

Per brief van 9 oktober 2025 heeft Royal Schiphol Group N.V. (Schiphol), als exploitant van Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AAS), op verzoek van ACNL advies uitgebracht op grond van de Slot Enforcement Code (SEC 2.0) over de te hanteren slottolerantiewaarden. Schiphol adviseert om met ingang van zomerseizoen 2026, de slottolerantie waarde van 60 minuten op Schiphol Amsterdam Airport (AAS) terug te brengen naar 30 minuten en in het kader van de slotmonitoring aandacht te hebben voor structureel afwijkende vluchten, in het bijzonder op operationeel kritieke tijdstippen.

Volgens Schiphol leidt het hanteren van een waarde van 30 minuten tot een betere balans tussen operationele maakbaarheid vanuit het perspectief van de luchthaven en de uitvoerbaarheid van de operatie van luchtvaartmaatschappijen. Schiphol is een super-congested luchthaven. De grenzen van de capaciteit zijn op verschillende momenten van de dag bereikt en het waarborgen van een stabiele, veilige en maakbare operatie vereist een scherpe focus op punctualiteit. Tegen deze achtergrond is er voor Schiphol aanleiding geweest om voor ACNL een advies op te stellen over de te hanteren tolerantiewaarde en welke focus ACNL volgens Schiphol zou kunnen kiezen bij de slot monitoring.

Dit advies is door Schiphol uitgewerkt in een zogenoemde *expert opinion*. In deze *expert opinion* heeft Schiphol op inzichtelijk gemaakt welke implicaties zijn verbonden aan het niet naleven van slottijden, dan wel aan substantiële afwijkingen daarvan. Verder is in deze *expert opinion* opnieuw uiteengezet waar, naar haar oordeel, de focus van slotmonitoring zou dienen te liggen, te weten: tijdens de piekmomenten van de dag en in het bijzonder bij de uitvoering van passagevluchten aangezien deze gebruikmaken van kritieke luchthaveninfrastructuur.

Het voorgenomen advies van Schiphol aan ACNL is meerdere malen gedeeld en besproken binnen het Slot Performance Committee, zodat ook de feedback en input van de sector is meegenomen bij de totstandkoming van het finale advies. De volledige *expert opinion* is geagendeerd geweest op het Slot Performance Committee van 16 december 2025.

In het licht van het voorgaande, vertrouwt Schiphol erop dat het advies voldoende inzicht en onderbouwing geeft voor ACNL om per IATA-zomer 2026 te kunnen overgaan naar een slottolerantiewaarde van 30 minuten.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

Patricia Vitalis
Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Schiphol Operations

Bijlage(n): *expert opinion – slottolerantie advies*

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol
Postbus 7501, 1118 ZG Schiphol, Nederland
020 601 9111
Schiphol Nederland BV
KvK Amsterdam 34166584
NL08 ABNA 0545 6104 78
NL20 ABNA 0486 7493 04

Expert Opinion Schiphol to ACNL to implement a 30-minute slot tolerance and an adjusted monitoring focus at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, effective from Summer 2026 (S26)

What prompted the drawing up of this expert opinion?

The current 60-minute slot tolerance provides insufficient protection to adequately protect Schiphol's operational ecosystem. Slot deviations disrupt gate allocation, runway efficiency, baggage processes, and staffing. In peak hours, even a 15-minute deviation—early or late—can already lead to significant operational issues. Schiphol proposes adopting a 30-minute slot tolerance, combined with an adapted monitoring focus on specific areas, to ensure that slot monitoring remains proportionate, effective, and aligned with operational feasibility.
The aim of providing ACNL with this advice is the following: Optimal and efficient use of the available capacity at Schiphol through better slot performance and in that way protecting the entire Schiphol ecosystem and its stakeholders.

Introduction

According to the WASG, the primary objective of airport slot coordination is to ensure **the efficient** declaration, allocation, and use of available airport capacity to optimise benefits for consumers, while balancing the interests of airports and airlines. As the efficiency of slot utilisation depends not only on allocation but also on how slots are **used in practice**, the airport has a significant interest in this process. Effective monitoring and enforcement by ACNL are essential to achieving this efficiency.
Being recognized in this interest, ACNL has formally assigned Schiphol a specific ('expert opinion') role in the Slot Enforcement Code (SEC 2.0): **to advise the slot coordinator on appropriate tolerance values and monitoring focus.** For the Summer 2026 season, ACNL has therefore requested Schiphol to provide an advice on both the slot-tolerance level and the corresponding monitoring focus.

In recent years, the slot-tolerance value has received considerable political attention, culminating in an official report by PA Consulting.* Over the course of approximately five years, the slot-tolerance window has evolved from being non-existent, to 'same day,' and subsequently to 60 minutes. The earlier recommendation (2019) to, in the end, move towards a 15–20-minute tolerance—a logical step and appropriate for a highly congested airport—shifted to the background with the onset of COVID-19 and its aftermath.
Schiphol is again reaching pre-Covid numbers when it comes to the total amount of passengers and continues to experience significant congestion, operational bottlenecks, and sustained peak demand on a daily basis. **In the future we foresee that punctuality and slot adherence will become increasingly important**. The recently conducted Traffic and Transport scenarios by SPL indicate that anticipated aircraft upgauging, higher load factors, and essential maintenance activities are collectively increasing pressure on multiple airport operations.
On the other hand, Schiphol sees that it is structurally exposed to external factors such as ATFM regulations due to a congested European network, weather-driven flow restrictions, and turnaround challenges that can cause unavoidable deviations from scheduled slot times.
Schiphol's advice to ACNL for a 30-minute tolerance takes these systemic factors into account while ensuring that slot monitoring continues to safeguard both punctuality and capacity utilization.

Reducing the slot tolerance from 60 minutes to 30 minutes will significantly increase the number of flights to monitor. The objective of monitoring however should, according to Schiphol, be to identify **structural off-slot behaviour** and support operational efficiency, rather than to impose unnecessary administrative burdens on any of the parties involved. According to Schiphol, this would equally apply for any potential enforcement, whether or not at the request of an interested party, in case of non-compliance with the reduced slot tolerance.

*https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20191209/verbetering_van_de_slotnaleving/document

Justification for the recommended 30-minute slot-tolerance value and the proposed adjustment of the monitoring focus

Operating off slot impacts the **parameters** of the capacity declaration **and operational performance** in general in a negative way. The airport capacity outlined in the Capdec and expressed in parameters, reflects optimal use of available resources. Any deviation from this optimal situation immediately impacts performance and is therefore undesirable. At the same time, aviation is a dynamic sector where unforeseen disruptions are unavoidable. A 30-minute slot tolerance accommodates these realities while reflecting Schiphol's operational characteristics, such as taxi times and start-up delays. A 30-minute slot tolerance is also expected to help reduce knock-on delays throughout the day, particularly those triggered by off-slot operations during the morning peak.

In accordance with Article 5a of the Dutch Slot Allocation Decree, coordination parameters are established twice per year in accordance with Article 6 of EU Slot Regulation, taking into account the ATM capacity determined by the air navigation service provider. Operating off slot will impact the parameters in the following way:

Widebody/gate parameter: Gate allocation is less optimal when operating off slot.
Gate allocation is planned around ±10-minute intervals. When flights arrive more than ±10 minutes off schedule, gates may still be occupied by delayed aircraft, causing arriving flights to wait or hold on the apron. Early arrivals may also need to wait 'in the field' for a free gate, leading to suboptimal planning and unnecessary CO_2 emissions. Such off-slot operations trigger ad hoc gate changes, accumulation of aircraft in the field and disrupt the optimal allocation plan, affecting operational performance across airlines.

Customs parameter: Staffing customs (100% parameter) will be affected when operating off slot.
The customs parameter allows for two arriving flights per rolling hour, aligned with available processing capacity. Delays disrupt the planned arrival pattern and can create peak loads that strain operational balance and exceed customs capacity, affecting passenger flow and overall operational stability.

Runway parameter. Runway occupancy will be strained when operating off slot
Runway planning at Schiphol is organized in 20-minute time brackets. When flights operate more than 5 to 10 minutes early or late, they can shift into a different bracket, disrupting the planned balance and creating excess demand in another bracket. Besides, non-punctual flights can cause the end of an arrival peak to overlap with the start of a departure peak, further straining runway capacity and causing undesirable overdemand.
The capacity of the runway in the Capdec is based on 2+1 runway usage and cannot accommodate such an overdemand. One way to adequately mitigate such an unplanned situation is by deploying the 2+2 system. But this mode falls outside the standard preferred runway system and should be used only scarcely.
Another way to manage excess demand is for ATC to implement flow regulation for all inbound flights to rebalance demand—an overly heavy measure, affecting the entire European network, for issues caused by only a few off-slot flights, resulting in unnecessary impact on other airlines.

The Schiphol operation benefits from a more narrow slot tolerance and better adherence.

Even if not taking the Capdec parameters into account it can be stated that the operational system at an airport benefits from a better slot performance. Operating off slot can cause reduced service levels and passenger satisfaction. Whenever overly concentrated peaks in demand occur in one or more passenger processes, this has a negative effect on passenger satisfaction and company reputation due to perceived crowdedness, longer queuing times and suboptimal passenger routings. Furthermore, it leads to suboptimal use of terminal capacity, as passengers occupy the terminal longer.
Operational resilience is built into any well-performing business, the same is true for Schiphol. This resilience is for unexpected variations in operations, such as weather, strikes, asset malfunctions, etc., as well as for planned maintenance to assets. Whenever this resilience is used to accommodate off-slot operations this leaves less (or no) room to cope with these other unexpected variations in operations. Operating off slot can furthermore affect the critical bus process, disrupt the PRM process and put unnecessary strain on ground (handling) staff.

A European benchmark shows that Schiphol is an outlier with a slot tolerance value of 60 minutes.

Another consideration supporting a 30-minute tolerance is that, within the European network, Schiphol is an outlier with its current tolerance value of 60 minutes.
As part of the European network, it is appropriate for Schiphol to align its slot tolerance with other (congested) European airports. Benchmark shows that slot tolerance values at European airports vary between 30 minutes and 0 minutes. Peer airports apply a slot tolerance of either 15 minutes or even 0 minutes.
The slot tolerance value of 60 minutes at SPL creates a risk of airlines 'exporting' their delays to SPL, since there is a more generous slot tolerance time. This is not only bad for the operational running of the airport, but also for passengers. As a key player in the European aviation network, Schiphol aims to be a reliable partner and to contribute to overall network efficiency by adhering to improved performance standards, including and promoted by a narrower slot-tolerance value.

Prioritizing monitoring at critical times of the day and usage of critical infrastructure is needed when moving towards a 30 minute tolerance.

Arguments for prioritizing monitoring at critical times of the day primarily concern mitigating the expected increase in workload resulting from a narrower tolerance window, combined with the intention to particularly focus on flights that are **structurally off-slot** and those that have the **greatest operational impact**.

Monitoring and enforcement should focus on flights that use the most critical infrastructure during the most critical periods of the day, while normal operational variations require less attention.
SPL would support an approach by ACNL by **prioritizing non-performance monitoring during congested periods rather than off-peak hours**. Most issues arise when flights operate off-slot in the morning peak, when system capacity is already stretched and disruptions quickly generate knock-on delays for the rest of the day.
Schiphol proposes defining the morning peak as **07:00–12:00 LT**, covering the first inbound and outbound waves.
In the future, Schiphol may designate any additional 'critical times of the day' based on developments such as further maintenance activities, infrastructure availability, stakeholder staffing levels, and airline schedules.

Critical infrastructure consists mainly of gates, runways, and border-control facilities. As these elements primarily serve passenger operations, Schiphol would support an approach by ACNL by which less emphasis is placed on full-freighter flights in the monitoring process, given the fact that - by nature - their use of critical infrastructure beyond runway capacity is limited. Data analyses confirm that the number of full-freighter movements during peak hours is limited.

The value of 30-minute tolerance reflects key operational factors and offers a balanced compromise between protecting the airport ecosystem and giving airlines sufficient flexibility.

The 30-minute tolerance applies to both arrivals and departures. According to Schiphol, the proposed 30-minute value for now strikes a balance between operational needs and system protection, and takes the following variables into account:

- *Arrival*: Possible inbound ATFM delays affect European flights but not ICAs. **When airlines plan for these delays but they do not materialize, flights may arrive significantly earlier.** Schiphol therefore proposes to account for this uncertainty.
- *Arrival*: Strong winds: Aircraft may arrive earlier than scheduled due to **strong tailwinds or built-in buffer time**. Data shows that 25 minutes is already a generous estimate for WiBo operations. The proposed value therefore includes an additional margin to account for en-route uncertainty.
- *Arrival*: Taxi-in time: When block times are planned assuming use of the Polderbaan (a preferential runway), but an aircraft lands on **a closer runway, it may reach the stand roughly 7 minutes earlier**. The 30-minute tolerance value also sufficiently accommodates the variation in taxi times between the Polderbaan and the closer runways.

- *Departure*: **Start-up delay**: due to local start-up and ATFM delays, an additional 30 minutes above the SOBT is advised for departure flights. Departure performance does not differ significantly between WiBo and NaBo aircraft, so no differences are made.

Taking these combined operational factors into account, Schiphol advises applying a slot-tolerance value of 30 minutes for both arriving and departing flights. At this stage, a 30-minute tolerance for departures is considered appropriate given the frequency of CTOTs; however, future circumstances may require a further reduction of the tolerance to 15 minutes

Within the WASG one of the key principles of slot monitoring is to ensure a smooth operation.

Chapter 9 describes the principles for slot monitoring. “The key principles of slot monitoring are as follows: a) Slot monitoring is intended to:

i. Ensure that operations at a Level 3 airport are in accordance with the slots as allocated;
ii. Ensure that slots are used in line with the Use It or Lose It rule;
iii. Help ensure scarce capacity is not wasted;
iv. Help ensure the smooth operation of airports for all stakeholders; and
v. Prevent the misuse of slots.

Slot monitoring and enforcement can therefore serve as instruments to safeguard smooth airport operations for all stakeholders. The proposed 30-minute tolerance value was presented to the sector during the Slot Performance Committee meetings held on 3 April and 3 September.
Schiphol now aims to take the next step by formally advising ACNL to apply a slot tolerance value of 30 minutes (combined with a revised monitoring focus) in order to make slot monitoring the valuable tool it can be in promoting airport performance and capacity utilization.

The aim of the expert opinion is to contribute to a process and slot monitoring (and ultimately enforcement) through which the airport operation can be managed more effectively and efficiently, with a focus on flights that **operate structurally off slot**, while at the same time keeping the administrative workload for all parties involved in balance.

Based on the WASG, and in view of the advisory role assigned to SPL under the Slot Enforcement Code (SEC), Schiphol has submitted its advice to ACNL regarding the appropriate slot-tolerance level and monitoring focus for SPL airport.