

Renowned for its leadership in the global travel industry, SITA is a 2024 Flagship Prism Refractor. Founded in 1949 as the Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautique, the company was initially the product of 11 airlines seeking to improve air travel by providing network and communication services within the industry. In the 75 years since, SITA has evolved to not only improve the way we travel on a global scale, but to help define the world's perception of digital identity in practice. With a presence that encompasses 1000 airports, serving over 200 countries and territories and covering 90% of international travel destinations, the company has led the way in providing seamless guest journeys while collaborating with governments and bolstering national security through the innovative use of biometrics, verifiable credentials, and digital ID technologies. All of this in the name of a sustainable, safe, and easy future for those of us who value safe passage in our era of mass digitization.

An Industry Defining Refractor

As an Identity Titan in the 2024 Flagship Prism Report, SITA stands out thanks to its significant engagement in all areas of the biometric digital identity ecosystem. It shines particularly bright in the areas of core technology, distributed identity, a platform-based approach to orchestration, and targeted solutions. This position in the Prism ecosystem reflects its three-quarter century mission to revolutionize air travel, which itself has grown to encompass other experiences as well. With approximately 5,000 biometric touchpoints globally, SITA is a major contributor to facilitating the kind of comprehensively seamless guest journeys that are setting the groundwork for the next phase of converged physical-digital user experiences in all markets.

The Best Path is the Smart Path

When we talk about orchestration, SITA's SmartPath solution serves as an instructive role model. Leveraging facial recognition for biometric passenger identification at every passenger touchpoint, SmartPath is deployed in 43 airports, including Frankfurt. The German airport, operated by Fraport, serves over 90 airlines and has severe spatial limitations that prevent it from any significant physical expansion. So when passenger volumes began to surge, it implemented SmartPath, which eased throughput, improved operational efficiency, and kept security premium. Passenger processing times from check-in to boarding sped up by 30%. With biometrics at the core, high volumes of traffic can be facilitated without compromise.

Gateway to Better National Security

In addition to airlines and airports, SITA's partner network spans seaports and land borders. The company works with more than 70 governments, putting it in the ideal position to build on its rock-solid foundation in travel and hospitality to government applications. And that's exactly what it's done, leveraging eGates, Automated Border Control Kiosks, and the Digital Travel Ecosystem to provide a trust network for sharing Verifiable Credentials, like its game-chang-ing Digital Travel Credential (DTC). Empowered by technical standards recently released by UN's International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), SITA's DTC has already transformed this island of Aruba's tourism industry for the better, enabling visitors to interact with the island's government from home and receive pre-approval for border control. Now the average border crossing only takes eight seconds and visitor data errors have been eliminated. With plans to expand DTC based on passenger demand, it's clear SITA's industry-shaping presence will continue to guide the way for practical biometric digital identity on a global scale.



In 1949, 11 airlines united around the mission to improve air travel. They created SITA. Initially focused on providing network and communication services between airports and airlines, the company has evolved with the industry to become one of the most foundational players in biometric digital identity for the travel industry. In the 75 years since its conception, SITA has improved the way we travel on a global scale, growing its presence to include 1000 airports, serving over 200 countries and territories and covering 90 percent of international destinations. In addition to its role in the Aviation & Transportation sector, for more than 25 years SITA has also supported governments in improving the security and efficiency of their borders, providing solutions to manage risk & threats while facilitating the movement of legitimate travelers.

An Industry Defining Prism Refractor

A Customer Experience Titan, SITA holds a uniquely definitive position in the Travel and Hospitality Prism. The company shows particular leadership in core biometric tech, biometric identity platforms, targeted solutions, and identity verification, setting SITA apart as a Prism Refractor. Thanks to its significant contributions to biometrics in travel and hospitality, the company defines the way we see the rest of the market. SITA is behind about 5,000 biometric touchpoints globally. Its widely deployed Smart Path solution provides seamless passenger experiences in 43 airports, while its new innovation, Digital Travel utilizing the Digital Travel Credential (DTC)—is enabling pre-clearance for border control, significantly reducing processing times at international arrivals.

The Smart Path Through Frankfurt

When Frankfurt Airport (operated by Fraport) was experiencing rapid increase in passenger volumes, it needed a solution to manage guest flow that fit a very specific profile. The facility had space restrictions, meaning it couldn't simply expand its physical footprint. And because Frankfurt serves over 90 airlines, whatever digital solution it picked would have to be suited for common use. Fraport selected SITA's Smart Path, which met all the selection criteria and enabled the deployment of facial recognition at every passenger touchpoint, from check-in though security to boarding, speeding up passenger processing by 30%. SITA's success at Frankfurt is just scratching the surface—2653 Smart Path devices are already deployed worldwide, with 2216 planned for deployment in the next 12 months.

Better Vacations With Biometrics

Customer experience is at the heart of Caribbean tourism, so much so that Aruba named its seamless travel program after happiness. Aruba Happy One Pass (AHOP) leverages the Digital Travel Credential developed by SITA and its co-innovator Indicio, allowing travelers to receive pre-approval for border control before they even leave home. Visitors simply scan their passport with their phone to create a DTC, then share it with the Aruban government for approval. They are then issued a Verifiable Credential that lets them enter the country by simply looking at a biometric Facepod once they arrive. The success has been massive, with Aruba committed to expanding AHOP to hospitality and events on the island, while the vast majority of passengers surveyed through SITA's own research are expressing a desire to have DTC-driven experiences on other passenger journeys. An exemplary force in travel, SITA's success in meeting customer demands and pleasing passengers indicates clear skies ahead for the market.



Founded in 1949 by a consortium of airlines seeking to improve air travel, SITA began its existence focused on providing network and communications services between airports and airlines. In the 75 years since its creation, the company has grown and evolved to become not just a titan of the travel industry—facilitating more than 2.2 billion travel journeys every year and operating with over 700 airlines across 200 countries—but also a trusted partner to governments across the globe. Border control is inextricably linked to travel, especially at the scale on which SITA operates, and over the past quarter-century, the firm has been delivering cutting-edge solutions to dozens of governments, including all G20 nations. Using Al, biometrics, and other identity management technologies like verifiable credentials, SITA is solving significant data challenges for governments before travelers even leave their homes.

The Government Side of Travel

When we take an international view of government services, our eyes necessarily turn to travel, and we must focus on the border. Governments benefit from visitors. Tourism, visa-based education, and work, legal immigration—each of these reasons for citizens from abroad to enter a country offers opportunities for national prosperity. At the same time, the channels used for legitimate entry can be exploited by bad actors. Terrorism, human trafficking, and other types of international transgressions exploit every effort to make the travel experience easy for legitimate travelers. Government agencies must, therefore, strike a balance between attracting visitors with seamless border experiences and keeping their nations safe with strong identity controls. It's a tall order, which can only be fulfilled by a Solutions Titan with a long legacy of expertise and proven biometric digital identity technology.

Blending Security with Optimal Experience

Thanks to its partner network that spans airlines and airports, seaports, and land borders and includes over 70 governments, SITA is in the ideal position to ensure each stakeholder—from the government agencies to the travel companies to the citizens in motion—gets what they want at a border crossing. With its Digital Travel Suite comprising over 5,000 biometrically enabled touchpoints worldwide, SITA is leveraging eGates, Automated Border Control Kiosks, and the Digital Travel Ecosystem to provide a trust network for sharing Verifiable Credentials, like its game-changing Digital Travel Credential (DTC). Empowered by technical standards recently released by the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), SITA's DTC has already transformed the island of Aruba for the better.

Prime Time for Digital Travel Credentials

The story of SITA's Digital Travel Credential solution exemplifies the company's ability to pivot into success when faced with dynamic market conditions. During the pandemic of 2020, the government of Aruba was seeking solutions to resolve fraudulent COVID certificates that were required for visiting the island. Now that those credentials are no longer needed, and Aruba is back to competing with other vacation destinations to safely facilitate visitors, the DTC allows travelers to receive pre-approval for border control before leaving home. A traveler scans their passport with their phone to create a DTC, shares it remotely with the Aruban government, and are then issued a Trusted Travel verifiable credential while the government creates an arrival gallery for their visit. The result: the average border crossing takes only eight seconds and visitor data errors have been nearly eliminated. Thanks to DTC, Aruba is meeting its visitors with a friendly face while protecting its borders. And with SITA's Passenger Trends data showing that 85% of respondents believe this technology would be useful on their travel journeys, we see just how powerful a good user experience can be when it comes to driving the adoption of biometric digital identity for government services.