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ICAO Visible Digital Seals (VDS):

For Travel Related Health Proofs

Executive Briefing

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ICAO Doc 9303 defines global interoperability as:

The capability of inspection systems (either manual or automated) in different States throughout the world to obtain and exchange data, to process data received from systems in other States, and to utilize that data in inspection operations in their respective States...



ICAO seeks to provide specifications to achieve global interoperability among solutions – thereby assuring common performance and security standards.

ICAO is **not** proposing a solution to replace existing tools.

Technical specifications should enhance the tools, just as eMRTD specifications enhance the travel document landscape globally.



- As aviation restarts, States will require health proofs (vaccination and test certificates) from international passengers.
- These health proofs will often be issued in one State but will need to be verified
 - in another State on arrival;
 - and/or by the aircraft operator before departure.



- This additional burden creates a huge Facilitation challenge because no one (States, airlines, airports) can afford an additional layer of inspection.
 - It would be too costly and time consuming.
- At the same time, immigration officers and airline staff have no expertise in assessing health proofs.
 - But in the future everything needs to be automated.



VDS Example



| Proof of Vaccination (EU) | Issued by UTO | Version 1 | |
|---|---|--|---|
| PERSONAL INFORMATION | | | |
| Person Name: Gary West | Person Date of Birth: 1985-03-02 | Passport: P9876543E | ID Card: U1234567A |
| VACCINATION/PROPHYLAXIS INFORMATION | | | |
| Disease or Agent Targeted: COVID-19 | Vaccine or Prophylaxis: COVID-19 mRNA vaccine | Vaccine Medicinal Product: Comirnaty | Marketing Authorization holder: Pfizer BioNTech |
| Number in a Series of Vaccinations/Doses: 1/2 | Batch/Lot Number: VC35679 | Date of Vaccination: 2021-02-01 | Administering Centre: RIVM |
| | | | |



- VDS cryptographically secures non-electronic documents, often issued decentrally.
- Extend ICAO PKI infrastructure for digital signatures (security and authenticity) to 2D barcodes.
- Leverages the global trust framework being deployed by 145 States issuing eMRTDs.
- Allows digitally signed 2D barcodes to be easily read and validated in a similar way as eMRTDs.



- eMRTD model is a distributed Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).
- Each Issuing Authority is an independent root of trust.
- State managed (Sovereign) trust framework – no single root.
- Because the Document Signer Certificate (DSC) is on the chip, the eMRTD can be validated offline.
- Supported by the exchange of root certificates (country-signing certificates).
- ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) – multilateral distribution mechanism.

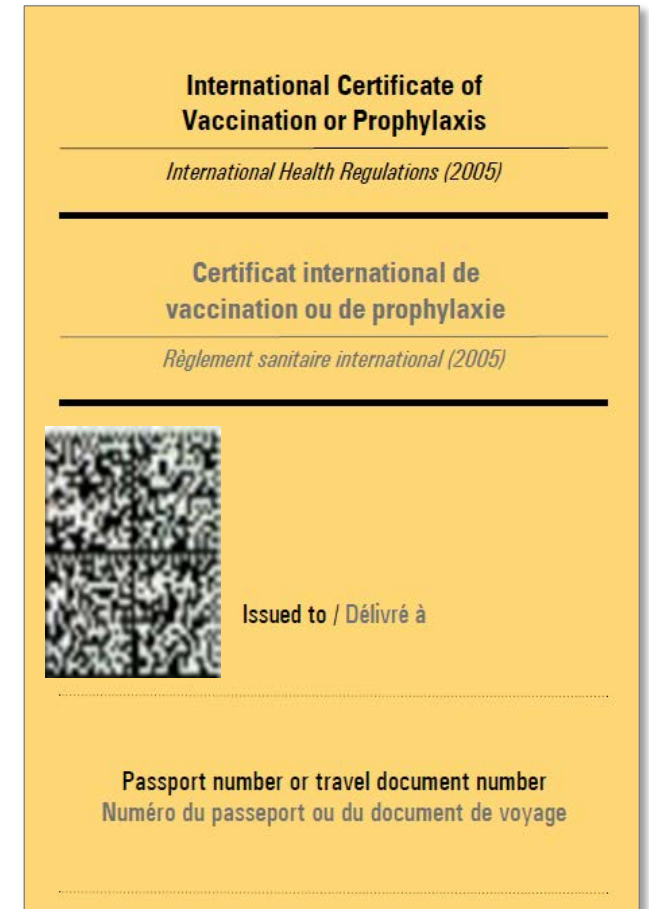


- Apply the VDS for non-constrained environments (VDS-NC) specification to health proofs.
- The VDS-NC contains the data of the document and its digital signature, similar to the eMRTD.
- Authenticity can be cryptographically secured.
- The VDS document can be linked to the MRTD to facilitate and secure international travel.





1. The VDS-NC is **not the primary medical vaccination document**. This function stays within the health-related environment: vaccination certificates will be treated and governed as health documents.
2. The VDS-NC is **not intended to replace any national/ multilateral vaccination document**.





Business processes and needs

1. Globally Interoperable
2. Data stored on VDS only
3. Usable on paper and with digital solutions
 - similar performance/security in both cases
4. Does not necessitate significant process change
5. ICAO specification – respects state sovereignty in issuance and validation



VISIBLE
DIGITAL
SEAL

- Allows unique identification through association with person's ID
- Can be physically printed or shown on a digital screen
- Can be applied to existing paper certificates or digital passes already used
- No storage of data beyond the holder - compliance with data protection



Existing Infrastructure and Systems

1. Cheap to implement (No Country Left Behind / NCLB)
2. Can be validated offline
3. A low-cost solution – signed barcodes emailed/ uploaded to a central repository and printed at home or stored in digital wallet
4. Border authorities can familiarity and connectivity with existing eMRTD trust model – no need to onboard new verification system



VISIBLE
DIGITAL
SEAL

- Readable using existing scanners in airport, e.g. for boarding passes
- On-paper use allows for cost-effective implementation
- No transactional costs following initial implementation
- Technical specifications are already developed, understood and agreed