



WORKING PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

ELEVENTH MEETING

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Agenda Item 6: Other matters

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPLIANT PASSENGER DATA PROGRAMS

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA))

SUMMARY

This Working Paper aims at raising awareness of the existing global standards and guidelines on passenger data. An increasing number of States implement passenger data programs to manage, in advance, the cross-border movement of persons and goods. The passenger-related data being used by States is transmitted by aircraft operators. Global standards and guidelines pertaining to passenger data, namely Advance Passenger Information (API), interactive API (iAPI) and Passenger Name Record (PNR), were developed to ensure swift and efficient implementation of those programs, to ease cooperation between States and aircraft operators, to facilitate assistance between States, to increase global interoperability and connectivity, and leverage the automation of passenger-related air transport processes.

Despite the availability of global standards and guidelines, some States design their passenger data program with components that fall outside the internationally agreed-upon standards and guidelines. This not only hampers the international framework set forward by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), but creates additional burden on both authorities and aircraft operators.

Action by the FAL Panel:

The FAL Panel is invited to consider the proposal described in this paper.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 States increasingly implement passenger data programs given the value of API, iAPI and PNR data to support their border controls and security processing, to expedite the movement of legitimate travellers, and to comply with their international obligations set by the United Nations Security Council

and in ICAO Annex 9. Alignment with global standards is a key principle when moving forward with a national passenger data program.

1.2 ICAO Annex 9 – *Facilitation*, Chapter 9 Passenger Data Exchange Systems contains a set of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) that aim at ensuring the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation. ICAO, WCO and IATA have for decades developed and endorsed internationally adopted guidelines that complement these SARPs on API, iAPI and PNR.

1.3 Today, this material is composed of the ICAO Doc 9944 Guidelines on Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data and the WCO/IATA/ICAO Guidelines on API. The three organizations have developed a Toolkit which, further to these guidelines, includes introductory presentations and videos, dynamic checklists and reference material to help States design passenger data programs that are harmonized, efficient and valuable. The API-PNR Toolkit is publicly available at: <https://www.iata.org/publications/api-pnr-toolkit>.

1.4 The importance of standardized passenger data programs is further highlighted by the creation of the WCO/IATA/ICAO Contact Committee on API and PNR Data in 2004. The Contact Committee is mandated to promote the implementation of the Guidelines and such other instruments and tools, consider any measures to secure uniformity in the interpretation and application thereof, monitor the application thereof, and consider any amendment(s) proposed to the Guidelines and other instruments and tools. Indeed, through mechanisms made available by the Contact Committee, the Guidelines have been amended since their inception to ensure they reflect the current requirements of border controls.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The respect of this set of internationally agreed-upon standards and guidelines allows for swift and efficient implementation of passenger data programs. Aircraft operators have acquired great experience through implementation of dozens of such programs around the world. Due to this experience, they can provide advice to States for developing a standard program. A passenger data program adhering to the standards will receive immediate and full support from the industry. Furthermore, international assistance and cooperation between States can be eased when programs are harmonized.

2.2 On the technical side, standard passenger data programs contribute significantly to increase the API data quality, to enhance global interoperability and connectivity, and leverage the automation of passenger related air transport processes. States and the industry are striving to find solutions to accommodate the exponential growth of passengers and standardization is the cornerstone for the essential automation of processes.

2.3 Despite the comprehensiveness of these international standards and guidelines, some States still develop passenger data programs with components that fall outside of this internationally agreed framework. There is still unawareness of this framework, lack of comprehension about the technical details, or limited understanding on how aircraft operator systems work and therefore non-standard components are required from carriers.

2.4 Non-standard requirements can take numerous forms, including but not limited to:

- Data elements that are not part of WCO/IATA/ICAO Guidelines on API, such as emergency contact information or electronic ticket number;
- Message types that do not adhere to PAXLST and/or PNRGOV;
- Transmission methods, such as requiring the data by email;

- Timing of submissions, such as requesting API data well before the time the check-in for a flight has started;
- No adherence to the Passenger Data Single Window Standard 9.1, thus carriers having to send one single set of data to several authorities in the same jurisdiction and/or different sets of data to multiple authorities; and
- Requiring API and PNR data and simply not using it.

2.5 Aircraft operators are supportive of passenger data programs and acknowledge their role in supporting States to enhance their national border security as well as their responsibility in the global fight against terrorism. Aircraft operators are more effective in upholding these responsibilities when passenger data programs are implemented in accordance with the internationally agreed-upon set of rules and when they are released from additional operational, financial, and administrative burdens resulting from these programs.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The FAL Panel is invited to:

3.1.1 Reaffirm the need for adherence to the standardization, harmonization and interoperability of facilitation tools and processes;

3.1.2 Request that the Air Transport Committee (ATC), through the Secretariat, enhance ICAO Contracting States awareness on ICAO SARPs on passenger data and the API Guidelines maintained by WCO/IATA/ICAO, as well as the ICAO Guidelines on PNR;

3.1.3 Request that the ATC, through the Secretariat, promote engagement directly with aircraft operators as early as possible in the consideration of a passenger data program as a key component of the success of this program; and

3.1.4 Request that the ATC, working with the ICAO Secretariat, invite Contracting States to work with the WCO/IATA/ICAO API/PNR Contact Committee to ensure that the respective Guidelines for API and PNR reflect the current needs of States and the functional capabilities of aircraft operator systems.