



**WORKING PAPER**

**FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)**

**SIXTH MEETING**

**Montréal, 10-14 May 2010**

**Agenda Item 8: Other matters**

**WCO/IATA/ICAO API GUIDELINES  
AND THE PAXLST MESSAGE: AN UPDATE**

(Presented by the Secretary)

**SUMMARY**

The WCO/IATA/ICAO Guidelines on Advance Passenger Information address the technical aspects of API, the operational costs and benefits, as well as the factors relevant to planning an API system. The PAXLST message implementation guide is appended to the Guidelines. The API Contact Committee keeps the Guidelines current and reflective of the needs of States and of industry. It also manages requests for amendments to the PAXLST message. In November 2009, its third meeting, the Committee agreed to update the Guidelines, reviewed DMRs for inclusion in the PAXLST message and agreed that new Guidelines on API could be developed for general aviation.

**Action by the FAL Panel:**

The Panel is invited to:

- a) consider, and comment on, the information presented in this paper; and
- b) as a result thereof, agree that any planned work in the API/PNR WG on API and iAPI should be postponed, pending conclusion of the work on these matters in the API Contact Committee.

**1. DISCUSSION**

1.1 In the early 1990s, in response to growing concerns that API systems might be developed without the aid of internationally agreed standards, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and, later, ICAO joined in an effort to develop and agree a set of best practice guidelines that could assist States seeking to implement their own national API programmes. The formal joint CCC (WCO)/IATA Guideline on Advance Passenger Information was adopted in July 1993. Later ICAO endorsement led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> version being published as a tri-organizational document in March 2003.

1.2 The WCO/IATA/ICAO Guidelines on Advance Passenger Information address the technical aspects of API, the operational costs and benefits, as well as the factors relevant to planning an API system. These guidelines ask States to limit personal data requirements to the minimum required to conduct pre-arrival checks, and in any event, to those data elements found in machine readable form of travel documents.

1.3 For API to function successfully and on a widespread basis, it is essential that there be a strict limitation and a very high-degree of uniformity in relation to the data required by the Border Control Agencies which will receive and process that data. With respect to the message format for data transmission, it is recommended that the UN/EDIFACT standard should be used to ensure that global interoperability is achieved and avoid difficulties caused by the use of local national standards.

1.4 A standard electronic message was developed specifically to handle passenger manifest transmissions. This is the PAXLST message. The WCO, IATA and ICAO have jointly agreed on the maximum set of API data that should be incorporated in the PAXLST message to be used for the transmission of such data by the carriers to the Border Control Agencies in the destination country. The PAXLST message implementation guide is appended to the Guidelines.

1.5 The SARPs of Annex 9 require that States standardize their API requirements. Standard 3.47.1 obliges States to require only biographical data found in Doc 9303-compliant MRTDs. Standard 3.47.2 obliges those States wanting additional biographical and other information to restrict their requirements to the data elements listed in the PAXLST message. In either case, the data format is to conform to the PAXLST message.

1.6 In 2004, the WCO established the “Contact Committee for the WCO/IATA/ICAO Guidelines” on API (hereafter, “API Contact Committee”) to deal with issues arising from the application of the Guidelines and, in particular, to keep the Guidelines current and reflective of the needs of States and of industry. The API Contact Committee also manages requests for amendments to the PAXLST message.

1.7 Any State or Organization can submit “Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs)” for changes to the PAXLST message to the API Contact Committee. The Committee reviews these, and any approved changes are then subsequently forwarded to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, (UN/CEFACT), the body that manages the UN/EDIFACT, for inclusion in the UN/EDIFACT directory. The Centre is a subsidiary body of the UNECE Committee on Trade (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe).

## 2. UPDATE OF GUIDELINES AND PAXLST MESSAGE

2.1 In November 2009, the third meeting of the API Contact Committee was convened to: a) address DMRs from the United States and the United Kingdom to update the PAXLST message; b) initiate an update the 2003 version of the API Guidelines; c) examine issues relating to Passenger Name Record (PNR) data *vis-à-vis* API; and, d) consider development of an addendum to the Guidelines to respond to interactive API (iAPI) systems.

2.2 With regard to the API Guidelines, the Contact Committee agreed that the Guidelines are out-of-date and need to be revised urgently. This would enable the airline industry to request States to set up their API systems along the lines described in the Guidelines, as required under the relevant SARPs of Annex 9.

2.3 The Contact Committee also discussed the increasing worldwide interest in “interactive-API” (iAPI) systems. The airline industry is keen that international, uniform standards and guidelines be adopted for iAPI, as well. The most important single issue is the “board/no board” functionality that iAPI enables and that leads to better efficiency and control. The Committee agreed that iAPI would require its own set of guidelines, so as not to cause confusion between the two systems. It therefore decided to begin work on developing these guidelines, with IATA taking the lead.

2.4 On the issue of the expansion of the API Guidelines to general aviation, the Contact Committee agreed that new Guidelines could be developed, not only for general aviation, but also for small (sea) craft such as yachts. This raised the question of whether similar Guidelines should be developed for maritime transport, as well. The WCO Secretariat has agreed to examine this, in detail, and get back to ICAO with a proposal.

2.5 With regard to the PAXLST message, the Contact Committee reviewed DMRs submitted in 2008 and approved most of them for inclusion in the PAXLST message.

### **3. IMPACT OF WORK OF API CONTACT COMMITTEE ON API/PNR WG'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

3.1 Under its Terms of Reference, attached to this paper for ease of reference, the API/PNR Working Group is expected, *inter alia*, to “consider the applications of Advance Passenger Information (API) and interactive API (iAPI) systems for international civil aviation, with a particular view on general aviation.” This task resulted from the presentation made by IBAC in FALP/5-WP/23, “Proposed application and implementation of APIS and eAPIS to international general aviation operations.”

3.2 However, as a result of the work accomplished so far by the API Contact Committee and considering its future work plans, perhaps the task relating to API and iAPI found in the terms of reference of the API/PNR Working Group need not be taken up presently, in order to avoid duplication of effort and to await the results of the work of the Contact Committee.

3.3 Therefore, the Secretariat suggests that any planned work in the API/PNR WG on API and iAPI should be postponed, pending conclusion of the work on these matters in the API Contact Committee.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Terms of Reference for the FAL Panel Working Group on API/PNR**

The FAL Panel Working Group on Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Record (API/PNR) would:

- a) consider the applications of Advance Passenger Information (API) and interactive API (iAPI) systems for international civil aviation, with a particular view on general aviation;
- b) revise, as appropriate, the ICAO Guidelines on Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data, published as Circular 309-AT/131, in light of recent global developments on this issue;
- c) take into consideration, in accomplishing the tasks set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) above, the proposals and comments presented during the Fifth Meeting of the FAL Panel (FALP/5); and,
- d) develop, as appropriate, recommendations for additional Standards and Recommended Practices for Annex 9, as well as guidance material, intended to foster global harmonization on such passenger data exchange programmes.

26 September 2008

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