



**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (TAG-MRTD)**

EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 5 to 8 May 2008

Agenda Item: 4: Country reports

Agenda Item: 4.1 Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) Update

REGIONAL MOVEMENT ALERT SYSTEM (RMAS) UPDATE

Presented by Australia

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Regional Movement Alert System (RMAS) is an APEC counter-terrorism initiative that enhances regional border security for air travel through the close cooperation and collaboration of APEC economies.

1.2 RMAS enables participating economies to verify the status of passports in real-time at the source, and alert the relevant agencies if action is required. It provides automated checking of passport data at time of airline check-in against the database maintained by the passport issuing authority.

1.3 In addition to checking for lost, stolen and invalid passports, RMAS is able to determine whether a passport is recognised by its issuing authority as having been validly issued.

1.4 The capacity for passport validation makes RMAS a powerful tool for detecting lost, stolen and counterfeit passports and removing them from circulation. Accurate and up-to-date passport data is also a valuable tool for governments in combating terrorism, illegal migration and trans-national crime.

2. RMAS ARCHITECTURE AND OPERATION

2.1 RMAS currently operates between Australia, the United States of America and New Zealand. RMAS also has the capacity to expand its membership to include additional APEC economies.

2.2 At time of check-in, RMAS runs a check of all Australian, United States and New Zealand passports where there is travel to one of those three countries (see diagram at Appendix).

2.3 A key feature of the business process supporting RMAS is the contact and cooperation between participating economies' 24x7 operational support offices in order to resolve hits. When a lost, stolen or invalid passport is detected, the relevant offices are automatically notified.

2.4 Where necessary, these offices also communicate with airlines to ensure that appropriate action is taken and genuine travellers are not inconvenienced.

3. RECENT ENHANCEMENTS

3.1 RMAS was upgraded in June 2007 to enable the positive validation of passports issued by participating economies. In addition to detecting lost, stolen or otherwise invalid passports, RMAS is now able to confirm that a passport is recognised as validly issued by its document issuing authority, and alerts the relevant agencies if it is not.

3.2 Positive validation of Australian passports commenced in June 2007. The United States and New Zealand are working towards implementation of this functionality later in 2008.

4. BENEFITS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

4.1 Collaborative efforts in international data validation between governments are an effective means of improving domestic security and international travel security, offering:

- enhanced security: enabling border authorities to confirm the validity of passports and detect lost, stolen and invalid passports before the person using the passport travels to or enters the country.
- passenger facilitation: providing facilitation of genuine travellers by enabling border authorities to focus their resources on passengers whose travel documents or information have not been checked.
- verification of accurate and up-to-date information: accessing passport or other data in real-time without the necessity of pooling data in a central database.
- protection of privacy: system architecture exists where information is accessed and validated without being exchanged.

4.2 Possible future enhancements under consideration for RMAS include:

- integration with visa systems: providing benefits through integration with visa processing systems, e.g. for use at time of visa application, visa grant or change of status.
- validation of biometric data: enhancing existing systems to provide access to more comprehensive data on a traveller, including biometric information and person alerts.

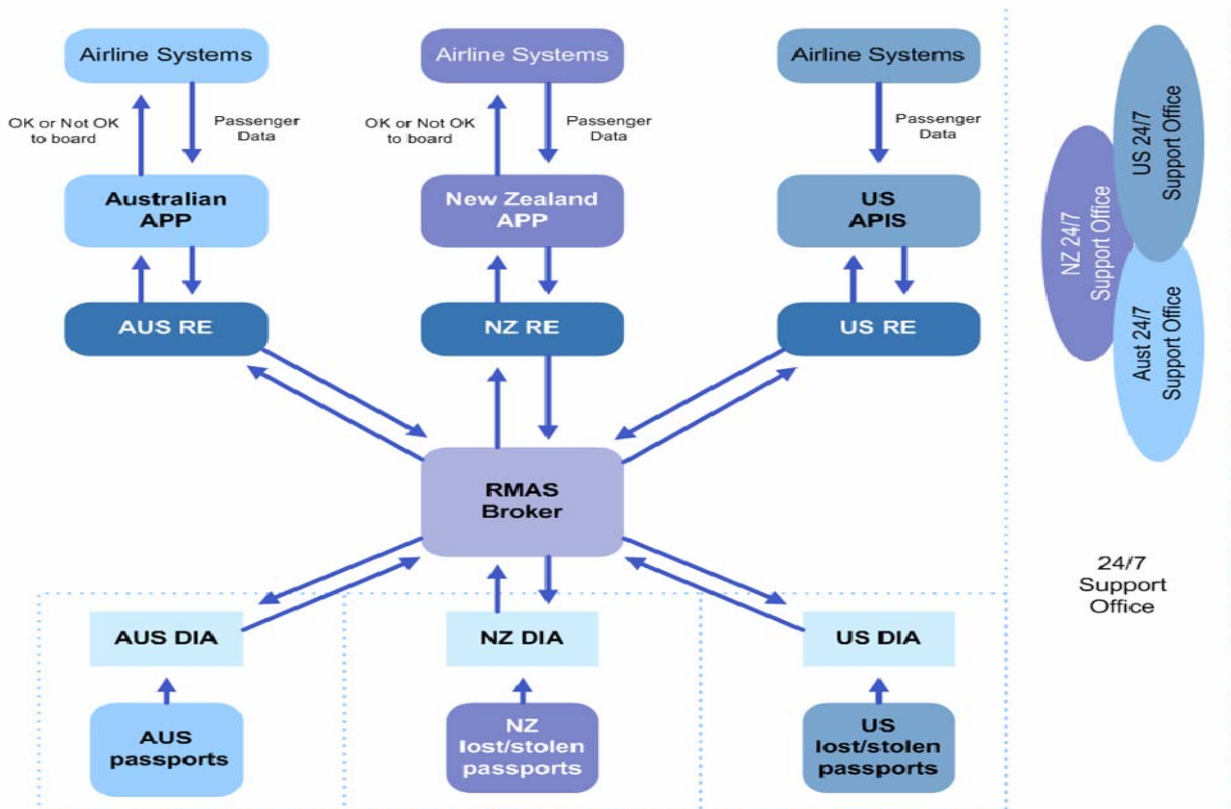
5. ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD

5.1 The TAG/MRTD is invited to note the progress made in the implementation and enhancement of RMAS as a means to detect the attempted use of lost, stolen, invalid and counterfeit passports.

APPENDIX

RMAS DIAGRAM

A key component of RMAS is the RMAS Broker. The Broker acts as a switchboard between participating economies, routing queries and answers to and from economies' border systems and passport databases.



APP: Advance Passenger Processing. An interactive version of Advance Passenger Information operated by Australia and New Zealand. The APP system allows airlines to verify, at check-in, that passengers and crew members have authority to enter that country.

APIS: Advance Passenger Information System. A non-interactive Advance Passenger Information system operated by the United States.

RE: Requesting Economy. The RE is the system component that performs the function of requesting information about a passport.

DIA: Document Issuing Authority: The DIA is the system component that performs the function of checking a passport against a database.

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