



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

**TWENTY-SECOND MEETING**

**Montréal, 21 to 23 May 2014**

**Agenda Item 3: Activities of the ICBWG**

**GUIDANCE FOR CIRCULATING SPECIMEN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

(Presented by Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG))

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper summarises the ICBWG's current activities regarding the provision of guidance on the circulation of specimen Travel Documents.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 As stated in Document 9303 it is recommended that a State launching a new design of MRP inform all other States of the details of the new MRP. States should include information on evident security features and preferably provide personalized specimens for use as a reference by the receiving State's department responsible for verifying the authenticity of such documents.

2.2 Many States are not aware of the options available when considering how they might make specimen documents available to the wider travel document and border control communities,

**3. CURRENT STATUS**

3.1 At the ICBWG meeting in Botswana, producing guidance on the circulation of specimen passports this was raised as a potential work item.

3.2 An initial draft was discussed at our March meeting in the Netherlands and is included as Appendix 1 for information.

3.3 This draft includes a recommendation that specimens are shared with commercial entities that publish on the internet. These commercial databases contain reference images of Travel Document

security features to assist control authorities and other authorised bodies to check documents when no specimen is held.

The ICBWG is yet to reach a consensus on whether specimens should be sent to commercial entities and if so whether these entities with their contact details should be listed within the guidance.

#### 4. **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

4.1 The TAG/MRTD is invited to:

- a) Note the information provided and the approach the ICBWG has taken; and
- b) Advise the ICBWG of whether the TAG thinks the guidance should recommend sending the specimens to commercial entities and should provide contact details of same; and
- c) Endorse the continued development of the guidance.

— END —

**APPENDIX A**  
**GUIDANCE FOR CIRCULATING SPECIMEN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In order to facilitate international travel it is essential that Member States issuing passports distribute specimens to other countries. This should be done as widely as possible and is extremely important when an issuing state introduces a new passport or updates an existing design with new features.

1.2 The purpose of doing this is that the state to which a passport holder travels will have the information with which they can conduct a forensic comparison of the presented passport. This means that a falsified passport would be more easily identified because the border authority has a strong base for comparison. Additionally, there is a huge benefit for the travellers themselves, because their travel should be facilitated by the receiving state having prior knowledge of their travel document.

1.3 This guide sets out process to be followed in order to achieve the minimum standard of communicating the features of a new passport and how this might be achieved as well as an example of best practice.

**2. AIMS**

2.1 The aim of this process is that all receiving states are aware that an issuing state has introduced a new or updated passport, has sight of its design and security features and at least one specimen.

2.2 The location for the specimen(s) to be held will be for each receiving state to decide according to its own internal policies, however - where no policies exist it is recommended that this be the border control authority. This paper also suggests ways in which the distribution might be achieved.

**3. PROCESS**

3.1 Passport specimens are generally distributed via Diplomatic exchange. The methods for achieving this will vary from state to state. A good source for the list of countries to which specimens should be sent is ICAO doc 9303. The list of countries can be found in ICAO document 9303 Part 3 - Specifications Common to all Machine Readable Travel Documents, Chapter 5 - Codes for Nationality, Place of Birth, Location of Issuing State/Authority and Other Purposes. This may be used as a check list, although it should not be taken as an exhaustive list because in many cases dependencies, regions and non-state entities may benefit from having specimens.

3.2 For some Member States this can be achieved by writing to the Embassy or High Commission of each country that is represented in that State. Addresses can be found in a local version of the List of Diplomatic Missions or on the internet on [www.embassyinformation.com](http://www.embassyinformation.com).

3.3 In addition to receiving states, it is a good idea to send specimens to the organisations that offer a secure database of images of passports and their security features and make this available to bona fide bodies with a genuine need to authenticate MRTDs such as border control authorities, other Govt depts., carriers, banks, etc.

3.4 Some of these are commercial organisations and some are more Government based. This list is not exhaustive and should not be viewed as being a recommendation from ICAO but the commercial sites include Keesings in the Netherlands ([www.documentchecker.com](http://www.documentchecker.com)) and Regula in Latvia ([www.regula.lv](http://www.regula.lv)).

3.5 Other databases of this type are Edison TD ([www.edisontd.net](http://www.edisontd.net)) and PRADO (<http://prado.consilium.europa.eu>). Both are maintained by Government officials from several countries so they should receive the specimens via the diplomatic exchange process.

3.6 This will vary from state to state, but for many countries distribution will be the responsibility of the Department for Foreign Affairs, since it is this department that is most likely to have representation in other member states,

3.7 Other routes through which distribution might be achieved is through regional bodies such as the European Union, CARICOM, OAS, ASEAN, etc or through representatives of the issuing state assigned to ICAO in Montreal.

3.8 Ideally the specimens will be received by the Government Departments responsible for border control, but as stated previously this may not be the case in every country.

#### **4. SPECIMENS PACK**

4.1 It is useful to receiving states, if the issuing state provides details of the security features of their new or updated passport with the specimens. This need not be an onerous task, a simple one page leaflet introducing the key features would be sufficient in some cases. However, some states may wish to produce a detailed brochure containing images of many of the security features with pouches into which the specimens may be inserted.

4.2 With the global introduction of eMRTDs the exchange of the certificates required to reliably authenticate travel documents came in as a new element that must be considered when information on travel documents are exchanged. Country Signing Certificates (CSCA), Certificate Revocation Lists (CRLs) and Document Signer Certificates (DSC) must be made available to control authorities. The ICAO Public Key Directory (ICAO PKD) is a cost effective, reliable and efficient system to get access to Certificates, including Master Lists issued by PKD Participants containing validated CSCAs. The Certificate exchange and the participation in the ICAO PKD is the modern day addition to the traditional specimen exchange. Therefore ICAO urges Member States in the Council resolution A38-16 Consolidated statement of continuing policies related to facilitation to join the PKD if they issue

eMRTDs (Appendix B, Doc 10022), and included the use of the PKD in its new Traveller Identification Program (TRIP).

4.3 Several examples of the way issuing States are shown in the images below.

***IMAGES TO BE ADDED HERE***

**5. MINIMUM STANDARD**

5.1 As a minimum, issuing states should send one example, personalised with ‘specimen data’ of their new ordinary passport together with a letter detailing the introduction date of the new passport. Where the new passport is an e-passport the chip should be personalised and the data should match that reproduced on the biodata page. The chip data should be signed by the Issuing State’s CSCA.

5.2 The accompanying letter should identify the variants of this passport design, such as Diplomatic, Service, Official, Emergency, etc. that are to be issued and their date of introduction.

5.3 Issuing states should provide information about their personalisation processes identifying whether all passport are issued centrally or via a distributed solution and include reference to overseas issuance. This should be accompanied by at least one specimen from each process if they differ – for example laser toner personalisation centrally and inkjet in regional offices.

5.4 Where the new documents are eMRTDs, the issuing country should take the opportunity to join a CD with its CSCA-certificate and any DS-certificates already issued.

**6. BEST PRACTICE**

6.1 Production and distribution of specimens can be expensive for many countries, but it is a vital part of introducing a new or updated passport design.

6.2 A brochure detailing the key security features of the passport with images and description should be distributed with an example of each passport variant. The brochure or the accompanying letter should also indicate the e-mail address or the government website, if available, where additional information (like CSCA certificate’s fingerprint) can be retrieved.

6.3 Ideally several sets of these specimens should be sent to each receiving state and furthers sets should be made available on request. The number of sets required will vary from state to state depending upon the number of international crossing points.

6.4 It is vital that specimens are representative of the actual issuance procedures that are used by the issuing state. If different processes are used for those passports that are produced centrally, those that are produced in a distributed issuance process and those that are produced in a Consular office overseas, this should be made clear and specimens from each process should be distributed.

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