



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 16: Facilitation and Machine Readable Travel Documents**

**TRUSTED TRAVELLER PROGRAM**

(Presented by the United States)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The objective of this paper is to achieve the full facilitation and security benefits of trusted traveller programs by using and enhancing existing tools like passports and their features. The matters raised in this paper relate to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, the Standards and Recommended Practices framework for travel documents and Doc 9303 (Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD) specifications). The United States supports improving facilitation in air transport while assuring robust security measures.

The United States proposes steps to develop and adopt enhanced biometric and international travel standards, in order to facilitate greater interoperability of national trusted traveller programs. These ideas will create more consistency for travellers and industry, facilitate entry and exit of low risk travellers, and provide greater security in the air transport system. The recommendations in this paper focus on establishing guidance for trusted traveller program while using Machine Readable Passports (MRP). The MRP is among ICAO's most notable contributions to travel facilitation.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the relevance of trusted traveller programs to improve facilitation and security.
- b) recommend ways and means by which ICAO supports the development of trusted traveller programs, and the interoperability and harmonization thereof.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives B — <i>Security</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	There are no financial implications for ICAO as a body; however, States electing to enhance travel document standards may want to conduct a cost analysis related to the objectives they seek to achieve in strengthening their country's travel document.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Doc 9303, <i>Part 1-Machine Readable Travel Documents, Volume 1 and Volume 2</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper seeks to enhance facilitation and security through trusted traveller programs. These are government-sponsored programs aimed at enhancing travel facilitation and security. They often are supported by rigorous and objective application and adjudication processes (and they are not to be confused with frequent flyer programs, run by airlines to provide additional privileges to regular passengers). Trusted traveller programs provide tangible benefits for travellers by, for example, facilitating arrival or departure immigration processing. In order to determine which travellers are eligible for participation in such a program, a government authority responsible for the program's management accepts applications from travellers. That authority in turn might check criminal or other databases to verify that the applicant meets the program's admission standards.

## 2. MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND TRUSTED TRAVELLER PROGRAMS

2.1 In order to identify that a particular traveller has qualified for and is a member of a trusted traveller program, authorities sometimes issue an identification card or other token to the traveller. This paper seeks to leverage modern travel documents, i.e., the MRP, to enhance trusted traveller programs.

2.2 The United States estimates that twenty-three countries currently operate expedited entry schemes for either their own citizens or foreign nationals that utilize the MRP (although some, such as the United States, rely primarily on the machine readable zone of the MRP) as the identification card or token. However, in other instances, countries or multilateral organizations (sometimes including the United States) follow different policies, and issue a unique token to individuals qualified to use the expedited entry program. A proliferation of cards, issued with different standards but all to be used for international travel, creates a number of risks.

2.3 Risks: First, some traveller program cards may not be as secure as the passport and not as valuable in confirming an individual's identity or the level of risk they present. Second, to the extent that cards are biometric, ICAO has already established biometric travel document standards in the MRP and so any different standard undercuts the work of ICAO in this area. Different credentials will also increase the cost of establishing mutual recognition regimes by requiring one-by-one solutions to allow cards issued under different programs to be read and accepted by other countries. Third, a new control regime would be required to monitor the loss or theft of such cards, lest a high-risk individual be treated as low risk because they illicitly acquired a card.

2.4 Opportunity: Rather than Member States issuing a diversity of additional travel cards, the preferable solution would be for all States establishing such programs to rely on the existing passport as a token because it already represents a trusted and globally acknowledged identity solution. If States do issue a unique token, it should adhere to the MRP standard for security and include an ICAO machine readable zone and chip. In addition, States issuing unique tokens should report known lost and stolen cards to the INTERPOL Stolen and Lost Travel Document database.

## 3. ADDITIONAL AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONSIDERATION

3.1 Governments should benefit from this type of program since a layered security approach allows the ability for security and border officers to focus on the unknown travellers who could be a

potential risk while expediting known vetted travellers. Immigration, Border Control, and Passenger Screening Officers can effectively deploy resources towards potentially higher-risk passengers and provide a maximum efficiency in airport operations.

3.2 Although ICAO Annex 9 acknowledges that Contracting States may use automated processes to undertake checks on travellers and their documentation, no specific recommended practice exists for trusted traveller programs. Such guidance could improve facilitation and enhance security while harmonizing interoperability. Rather than Member States issuing a diversity of additional travel cards, the preferable solution could be for all States establishing such programs to rely on the existing passport because it already represents a trusted and globally acknowledged identity solution.

#### 4. **ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY**

4.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the relevance of trusted traveller programs to improve facilitation and security.
- b) recommend ways and means by which ICAO supports the development of trusted traveller program, and the interoperability and harmonization thereof.

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