



New ICAO VDS delivers important benefits for secure and efficient COVID-19 testing and vaccination validation

For immediate release

Montréal, 9 June 2021 – Delivering another important contribution to the international community’s efforts to realize a responsible and sustainable air transport recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ICAO has announced the publishing of new technical specifications for a [Visible Digital Seal \(VDS\) for non-constrained environments](#).

The ICAO VDS stores datasets for test and vaccination certificates in a two-dimensional barcode which can be paper- or screen-based. Border control and other receiving parties can verify the data against established requirements efficiently and seamlessly, including through the use of traveller self-service kiosks and processes.

The VDS barcode is digitally signed for security, with the signature being based on the same public key cryptographic infrastructure principles already used to support ePassport issuance and authentication by more than 145 countries globally.

“As States attempt to reopen their borders for air travellers, they are frequently requesting passengers to present proof of COVID-19 vaccination or testing as a prerequisite for entry,” commented ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu.

“A lack of international standardization to-date has meant that reading and validating these proofs is frequently challenging, and these new VDS specifications will help make the related processes and documents much more efficient and less vulnerable to fraud. The VDS solution also makes use of already-established infrastructure and procedures, meaning States can implement VDS barcodes quickly, and at minimal cost,” she underscored.

The publication of the new VDS specifications follows the approval of [Guidelines for the use of VDS for Travel-Related Health Proofs](#) by ICAO’s Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), in March 2021.

They’ve benefitted from the comprehensive inputs of States and industry through the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), providing an important basis from which the aviation and border control communities can move forward with solutions that are simultaneously novel yet globally interoperable.

“ICAO will deliver a series of regional webinars over the coming weeks to enhance awareness of the VDS solution and provide initial guidance for State-by-State implementation,” Dr. Liu noted.



Resources for Editors

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially-recognized air transport stakeholders.

[ICAO Council States: 2019-2022](#)

General Contact

communications@icao.int

Twitter: [@ICAO](https://twitter.com/ICAO)

Media Contact

William Raillant-Clark

Communications Officer

wraillantclark@icao.int

+1 514-954-6705

+1 514-409-0705 (mobile)

Twitter: [@wraillantclark](https://twitter.com/wraillantclark)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/)