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# The Implementation Steps of Advance Passenger Information (API) System



## Why your State should establish an API system?



On the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2178 (2014), 2309 (2016), 2395 (2017), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), as well as ICAO's Standard 9.5 (included in Amendment 26 to Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention and adopted on 23 October 2017), applicable since 23 February 2018.

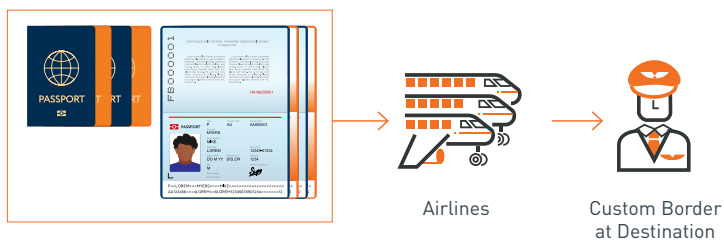
There are many **benefits to an API system**, including strengthening of **border integrity** by helping to improve border control and to combat irregular immigration more effectively. API can generally improve **Facilitation** by speeding up the processing of bona fide travelers and improving citizens' perception of security. API also increases **efficiency** and reduces the workload of border management officers through the use of technology and automated means. API complements existing data vetting processes, including checking passenger passports against watch lists and **INTERPOL databases**.

## What is API?

API consists of biographical data about passengers, plus information concerning the specific flight involved that is transmitted to a border agency before, or as the aircraft departs. The data is generated during airline check-in process by the Departure Control System (DCS). API may apply to airlines operating into a country, in some cases, departing from a country or for flights which overfly a territory but do not depart or arrive in the territory itself. In some cases, the same data is also required for crew members on the flight, crew API is sent separately.

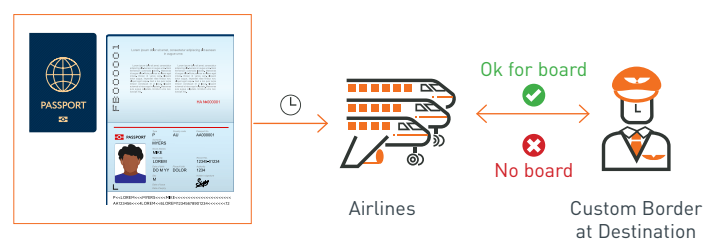


### Batch API

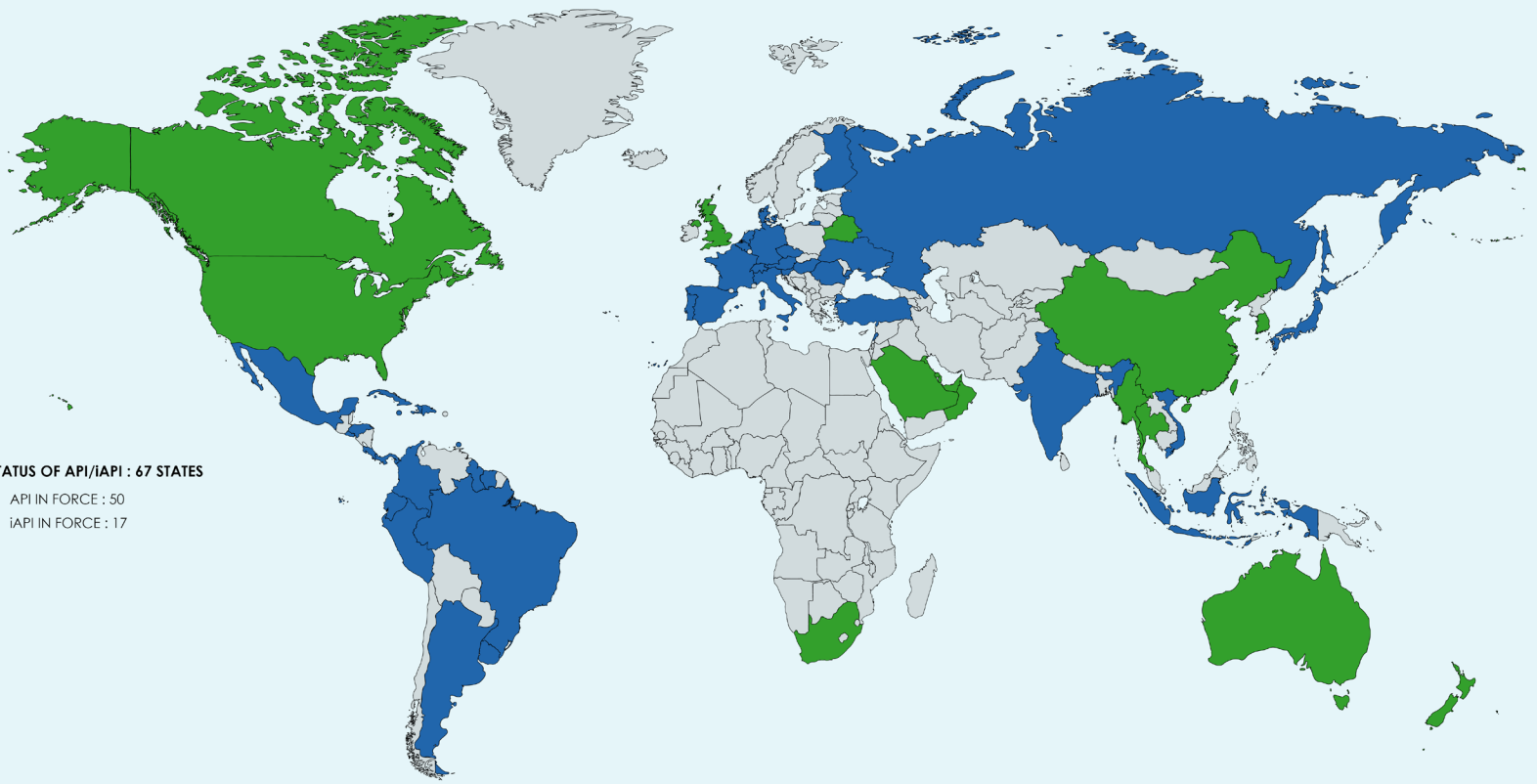


**Batch API** is the simplest form of API to implement and was designed originally for the control of arriving passengers by the destination or transit country. In a Batch API programme, all passenger details for a particular flight are transmitted together, usually upon closure of the flight boarding process, limiting government intervention to the time of arrival. Validation of data quality is limited, and no-real time correction can be requested.

### Interactive API (iAPI)



**Interactive API (iAPI)** is more complex and costly form to implement and passenger details are transmitted in real-time to requesting States on a per passenger basis as they check-in. An iAPI system allows for real-time document validation against databases and watch lists, but also requires a real-time response to the airline providing a Board/No-Board response after national authorities have determined if any issues are preventing the passenger from entering the destination country, leaving the origin country and to deny boarding.



Status of API/iAPI - September 2019

## 2 Initial Steps for a State to implement an API System



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A State should determine which agencies will make use of API data, such as Border Police, Customs, Intelligence, INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB), including through the National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC). The State needs to set a strong legal basis for requesting API, defining data elements and allowing for inter-agency and international police cooperation, through a **Passenger Data Single Window** (an inter-agency targeting bureau) to facilitate data sharing, systematic checking of API data against both national and INTERPOL databases. The best API implementation programmes are developed by States who involve stakeholders early in the process. Communication between State authorities and stakeholders, particularly airlines, leads to better initial structural decisions and to a better final system design. By engaging early with airlines, your State will **be able to know what can and cannot be accomplished** with airlines' existing systems. For example, in terms of timing, it is easier for airlines to comply with API systems that are in alignment with international standards (compliance within 3-6 months) than with those who are not (compliance within 24-36 months).

To seek technical and financial support, States can turn to the United Nations (UN) Countering Terrorist Travel Programme and the "goTravel" software solution, the World Customs Organization (WCO) Global Travel Assessment System (GTAS), the United States Automated Targeting System - Global (ATS-G) Programme and European Union (EU) Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II).

## What is a Passenger Data Single Window (PDSW) facility?

The PDSW is a baseline requirement to make effective law enforcement use of passenger data. When States require the transfer of passenger data from airlines it serves the interest of a number of border security agencies within one State. Thus, data should be received by a single data entry point within a State and not by multiple security agencies within a State. The advantage to a PDSW is that this single-entry point facilitates border integrity because it allows various Government agencies with legal remit to access passenger data to make use of the data in an efficient manner resulting in enhanced facilitation and border clearance processes for low-risk travelers.



For more information on the international regulatory framework and API and PNR message guidance materials please consult <https://www.icao.int/Security/FAL/ANNEX9/Pages/Publications.aspx>



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