

Travel Bubbles, Risk Assessment Framework and Testing



Travel Bubble – What and why

Travel Bubble is a State level agreement that enables international air travel between 2 (or more) countries based on a mutually agreed set of public health mitigation measures. Its purpose is to **facilitate the reopening of as many bilateral travel markets as possible.**

The only basic condition for an effective travel bubble is the **elimination (or at least reduction) of the need for quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days.**

The measures applied in a given bubble can be tailored so as to **effectively equalize infection risk** between origin and destination countries.

Risk Assessment

There is currently no harmonized methodology for risk measurement, but **the following elements** should be taken into account:

- Current infection rates, relative to population size;
- Trend in infection rates (decreasing, stable, increasing) compared to a previous time period;
- Effectiveness of overall public health response to COVID-19 in each country.

IATA's '**A COVID Risk Assessment Framework Paper**' reviews some of the risk metrics that are currently being deployed and recommends that ICAO to formulate guidance for a common risk assessment framework.

Risk Assessment Framework

Three alternative methodologies that are being used to assess COVID risk:

- 14-day infection rates (ECDC)
- Nature of Transmission (WHO)
- Points-based metric (China)

The development/adoption of **a universally accepted metric** would be a helpful element of efforts to reopen borders. It would facilitate [a] implementation of CART guidance and [b] development of a less binary response by States in the event of localized rebounds in numbers of new infections.

Travel Bubble key principles

For bilateral travel between countries **with similar levels** of epidemiological risk, a stable or declining trend in new infections and an effective public health response **the basic mitigation measures** should be sufficient.

Where **a significant risk differential** exists between origin and destination markets and/or if infection rates are increasing, then **additional measures** (specifically **testing**) can help equalize risk levels and enable the markets to reopen.

Three types of travel bubbles

Basic Travel Bubble (BTB)

the standard set of public health risk mitigation measures

Limited Travel Bubble (LTB)

the standard set of public health risk mitigation measures with an additional requirement for a test within 24-48 hours of departure

Extended Travel Bubble (ETB)

the standard set of public health risk mitigation measures with a requirement for a test within 24-48 hours of departure and a second test within 24-48 hours of arrival

Testing – risk equalization tool

ACI-IATA joint proposal on travel industry restart: COVID-19 testing

Testing for COVID-19 should NOT be a necessary condition for reopening borders and/or resuming air service operations where infection rates between two countries are similar and stable or decreasing.

Where the rate of new infections in the origin country is significantly higher than in the destination country and/or where the rate of new infections in at least one of the countries has not peaked, **testing can be an effective risk equalization tool.**

A test prior to departure could reduce the risk of importation by up to 90%, enabling air travel to be opened up between a large number of countries without a quarantine requirement.

Key Considerations: When to Test?

On arrival

- Risks unexpected quarantine for traveler and companions

On departure (at airport)

- Risk last minute cancellation for traveler and companions
- Time, space and performance constraints

Prior to departure

- Allows a period of incubation beyond: ~10%
- Removes complications at the departure airport
- Relies on:
 - Mutual recognition between origin and destination countries
 - Secure protocol for data transfer between governments

Basic Travel Bubble (BTB)

- **No quarantine or self-isolation** requirements on arrival
- **No specific testing requirements** on arrival or departure
- Basic screening on departure and arrival (during the active phase on this pandemic)
- Contact tracing and health declarations in line with ICAO standards
- Aircraft and crew operations in line with ICAO CART guidelines

Limited Travel Bubble (LTB)

- **No quarantine or self-isolation** requirements on arrival
- **Testing requirements 24 – 48 hours prior to departure**
- Basic screening on departure and arrival (during the active phase on this pandemic)
- Contact tracing and health declarations in line with ICAO standards
- Aircraft and crew operations in line with ICAO CART guidelines

Extended Travel Bubble (ETB)

- **No quarantine or self-isolation** requirements on arrival
- **Testing requirements 24 – 48 hours prior to departure**
- **Additional testing requirements within 24 – 48 hours after arrival**
- Basic screening on departure and arrival (during the active phase on this pandemic)
- Contact tracing and health declarations in line with ICAO standards
- Aircraft and crew operations in line with ICAO CART guidelines

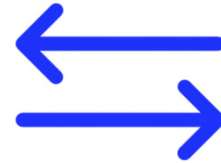
Additional Considerations for Travel Bubble



Mutual recognition
of measures



Multilateral travel
agreements



Transit traffic



Duration and
reviews

Thank you

