

**61ST CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

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**AGENDA ITEM 5: AVIATION SECURITY AND
FACILITATION**

**DIGITAL IDENTITY AS A STRATEGIC ENABLER OF
FACILITATION, BORDER SECURITY AND AVIATION
GROWTH IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA)

SUMMARY

Air transport is entering a period in which passenger facilitation, border management and customer experience can increasingly rely on trusted digital identity. Governments are strengthening entry requirements, expanding passenger data obligations and introducing national or regional digital identity schemes. At the same time, airlines and airports are required to process growing passenger volumes within constrained infrastructure and increasingly complex regulatory environments. Digital identity can support States, airlines, airports and passengers by enabling earlier and more reliable verification of traveler identity and admissibility, reducing reliance on manual document checks, improving operational efficiency and strengthening border security. IATA's One ID framework supports this transformation by enabling passengers to use trusted digital credentials and, where appropriate, biometric-enabled identification across the travel journey in a secure, interoperable and privacy-preserving manner. However, successful implementation depends on global interoperability, enabling legal and regulatory frameworks, and alignment with ICAO Digital Travel Credential standards, relevant ISO frameworks and industry interoperability principles. Without coordination, divergent national approaches risk creating fragmented ecosystems, increasing compliance burdens for airlines and airports and reducing the benefits for passengers and States. This paper encourages Asia-Pacific States to establish regulatory frameworks that enable the use of digital identity credentials in air travel, support pilots and trials with industry, align national digital identity initiatives with global standards, work towards mutual recognition of digital identity trust frameworks, and modernize pre-travel verification processes. It also invites ICAO to strengthen coordination with relevant standard-setting bodies and industry, and to advance work with mobile phone and hardware manufacturers to support secure, passenger-controlled digital travel.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The continued growth of international air transport requires States to rethink how passengers are processed, identified, and assessed throughout the travel journey. Border agencies are facing increasing volumes of travelers, evolving security threats, more complex documentation requirements, and growing passenger expectations for efficient travel.

1.2 At the same time, airport infrastructure expansion is becoming increasingly challenging due to financial, environmental, and land-use constraints. As passenger demand grows, technological innovation will play an essential role in enabling capacity growth without corresponding increases in physical infrastructure.

1.3 Digital identity represents one of the most significant opportunities to enhance both facilitation and security. Through trusted digital credentials and secure information exchange, passengers can demonstrate their identity and travel eligibility before arriving at the airport, reducing reliance on manual document checks and paper-based processes.

1.4 The ICAO Digital Travel Credential (DTC) standards are becoming available, while other global standards for digital identity continue to advance. Aligned with these standards, IATA's One ID standards provide an industry framework for leveraging the DTC in airline and airport processes to enable secure, interoperable and passenger-centric travel while maintaining State sovereignty over admissibility decisions and border controls.

1.5 For the Asia-Pacific region, where international connectivity, tourism and economic growth increasingly depend on efficient air transport systems, digital identity offers a significant opportunity to strengthen facilitation while supporting safe, secure and orderly travel.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Digital identity offers benefits across the aviation ecosystem. For States, it supports more effective border management through earlier and more reliable verification of traveller identity and eligibility to travel. For airlines and airports, it can reduce manual document checks, improve operational efficiency, lower costs, and decrease the occurrence of inadmissible passengers. For passengers, digital identity can provide a faster, more seamless, and predictable travel experience. Collectively, these benefits can enhance passenger facilitation, improve the use of airport infrastructure, strengthen data security, and support secure, efficient and interoperable international travel.

2.2 While the potential benefits of digital identity are significant, several challenges must be addressed before widespread adoption can occur.

2.2.1 **Legal and Regulatory Readiness:** In many jurisdictions, legal and regulatory frameworks have not yet evolved to formally recognize digital identity credentials for air travel purposes. This can create uncertainty for airlines, airports and border authorities seeking to integrate digital credentials into passenger processing and border management procedures.

2.2.2 **Interoperability and International Recognition:** The benefits of digital identity will only be fully realized if digital credentials, digital wallets, issuers and verification mechanisms are trusted and recognized across borders. Given the inherently international nature of air transport, global interoperability is essential to ensure that digital identity solutions can be used seamlessly throughout the passenger journey, regardless of the country of departure, transit or destination.

2.2.3 **Fragmentation of Digital Identity Frameworks:** As governments develop national digital identity ecosystems, there is a risk that divergent technical standards, trust frameworks and accreditation requirements could emerge. Such fragmentation could increase implementation costs, create additional compliance obligations and administrative burdens for airlines and airports, and reduce the overall efficiency and scalability of digital identity solutions.

2.2.4 **Legacy Processes and Paper-Based Requirements:** Many travel and border management processes continue to rely on physical documents, in-person inspections and manual verification procedures. Even where digital credentials are available, regulatory requirements may still mandate the presentation of physical documents or paper-based evidence. Modernizing these processes will be necessary to fully unlock the benefits of digital identity and facilitate a more seamless passenger experience.

2.2.5 **Digitization of Travel Requirements:** In addition, airlines continue to face challenges where entry requirements are complex, frequently changing or not available in a machine-readable format. This prevents airlines from digitalizing document checks and requires them to check the documents manually at the airport. The effectiveness of digital solutions in document checks will depend on States' ability to simplify, digitize and standardize admissibility requirements, travel authorizations and related border processes to enable greater automation and pre-travel verification.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) recognize digital identity as a strategic enabler of secure and efficient air transport;
- b) encourage States to establish enabling legal and regulatory frameworks for the use of digital identity credentials in air travel;
- c) support interoperability through alignment with global standards for digital credentials for travel;
- d) promote regional cooperation and mutual recognition of trusted digital identity frameworks;
- e) encourage modernization of pre-travel verification and adoption of the ICAO DTA; and
- f) invite ICAO to continue advancing global standards and guidance to support the implementation of interoperable digital identity solutions for international air transport.

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