



FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026

Agenda Item 1 : Recent Facilitation developments in ICAO

UPDATE ON THE ICAO FACILITATION PROGRAMMES

(Presented by Secretariat)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This information paper highlights recent developments pertaining to ICAO Facilitation Programmes, since the Thirteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/13), held in Montreal from 26 February to 1 March 2024.

1.2 The International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) work in the field of Facilitation is composed of three separate but interrelated programmes, Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) with the main objective to facilitate efficient management of border control processes to expedite clearance of aircraft, passengers, crew and cargo in line with relevant articles of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

1.3 Annex 9 — *Facilitation* is based on 10 Articles of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) which require Member States to comply with laws governing the inspection of aircraft, cargo and passengers by authorities concerned with customs, immigration, agriculture and public health in order to minimize operational delays. As the means of carrying out this mandate, the Facilitation regulatory framework builds on Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as maintained in Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, designed to help States achieve maximum efficiency in their border clearance operations.

1.4 The ICAO TRIP Strategy establishes a comprehensive framework for Member States to build a robust traveller identification process and is composed of five elements related to identification management, namely: Evidence of Identity (EoI); Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs); Document Issuance and Control (DIC); Inspection Systems and Tools (IST), including the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD); and Interoperable Applications (IA).

1.5 The ICAO PKD is an integral component of international infrastructure supporting use of electronic MRTDs (eMRTDs), facilitating the sharing of public key certificates necessary as part of the global eMRTD ecosystem.

2. DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO ANNEX 9 — FACILITATION

2.1 The Thirteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/13), convened from 26 February to 1 March 2024, proposed new and revised definitions, Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for inclusion in Amendment 30 to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Proposed new and revised SARPs relate to matters such as travel documents, entry and departure of persons and their baggage, international airport – facilities and services for traffic, passenger name record (PNR) data, and advance passenger information (API), as well as the relocation of health related SARPs to Chapter 10 of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. The ICAO Council, during the Seventh Meeting of its 233rd Session on 5 November 2024, adopted Amendment 30 (Seventeenth Edition) to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, which became applicable on 18 July 2025.

2.2 ICAO, to assist Member States in implementing the provisions of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, developed the Second Edition of Doc 9957, *The Facilitation Manual*, which provides detailed explanation of Annex 9 SARPs up to Amendment 29 that included new and/or revised guidance throughout, and Guidelines on Advance Passenger Information. Additionally, ICAO published revised Doc 9944, *Guidelines on Passenger Name Record (PNR)*, and new guidelines on Advance Passenger Information. Further, to assist Member States develop capacity, ICAO developed specialized training course titled Managing Air Transport Facilitation that provides comprehensive knowledge of the provisions of Annex 9, and tools to manage Facilitation programme and related oversight activities to facilitate compliance with Annex 9 provisions. Additionally, ICAO has developed two new Facilitation-focused iPacks, namely “Establishing National Facilitation Oversight Mechanisms” and “Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families (AAAVF)”. The iPack on “Implementing the ICAO TRIP Strategy Roadmap” is currently under development.

2.3 The Air Transport Committee, during its 232nd Session in considering a recommendation of the Facilitation Panel regarding the interaction of international carriage by air with data protection laws, reinstated the Passenger Name Record Task Force (PNR-TF). The mandate of the Task Force includes, reviewing States’ implementation of the existing passenger data SARPs found in Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Chapter 9 and assess any gaps in implementing the API and PNR provisions; and to prepare guidance material to help States develop their legislation or regulations concerning passenger data, including PNR data, API and how these data sets are collected, used, processed and protected. The Panel’s working groups continue to undertake work aimed at and accomplishing their mandates.

2.4 The Council, during the Third Meeting of its 230th Session, reaffirmed the importance of air transport Facilitation, and in this context, declared 2024 as the Year of Facilitation (FAL2024) and approved activities to showcase the progress made in air transport Facilitation and to emphasize its importance. The year 2024 also marked the 75th Anniversary of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, as the first Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) on Facilitation became effective on 1 September 1949. States were encouraged to actively participate by providing Facilitation-related promotional materials, toolkits and videos, and to express interest in hosting a global event.

2.5 Some key Year of Facilitation activities included inter alia, the ICAO Facilitation Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 21-22 May 2024, hosted by Saudi Arabia, the ICAO Facilitation Global Forum in Bogotá, Colombia from 21-23 October 2024, hosted by Colombia, the Second Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families in Haarlem, Netherlands from 26-28 November 2024, hosted by Netherlands, the ICAO/ACI/IATA Symposium on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation in Montréal, Canada from 2-3 December 2024, hosted by ICAO in collaboration with Airports Council International (ACI) and the International Air Transport Association; and the Facilitation Regional Forum in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 3-4 March 2025, hosted by Cameroon.

2.6 The Intersessional Meeting of Facilitation Panel, which was preceded by the Facilitation Conference (FALC 2025), held on 12 and 13 April 2025, built on inter alia, the outcomes of FALP/13, the Terms of Reference of its working groups and collaborating with ICAO's Technical Advisory Group on Traveller Identification Programme (TAG/TRIP) and Public Key Directory (PKD) Board. The meeting progressed work emanating from FALP/13 and provided oral updates on matters relating to recent facilitation developments in ICAO, relevant United Nations (UN) organizations, and international organizations; TAG/TRIP programme and PKD programme. The Panel received updates from its working groups and those of the TAG/TRIP and PKD Board.

2.7 The Year of Facilitation activities culminated with the Facilitation Conference (FALC 2025) under the theme "Facilitating the Future of Air Transport: Collaboration, Efficiency, Inclusivity" in Doha, Qatar, from 14 to 17 April 2025, hosted by Qatar. FALC 2025 included a Ministerial Segment on 17 April 2025, attended by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Heads of Delegations and senior officials of international organizations that considered the draft Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport. The Ministerial Segment concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of Air Transport, reaffirming States' commitment to enhance air transport Facilitation. The Doha Declaration addresses seven pillars – Global Facilitation Governance, Facilitating the Passenger Journey and Protecting Rights, Allocation of Sufficient Resources, Data, Innovation and Skills, International and Regional Coordination, No Country Left Behind, and Health. Some operative clauses of the Doha Declaration are incorporated in Appendix E – *Global commitment to ensure that aviation delivers reliable, accessible and seamless mobility for all* of the Assembly Resolution A42-17: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*.

2.8 The Forty-Second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) was held from 23 September to 3 October 2025. The Assembly considered facilitation-related matters under Agenda Item 12 — Facilitation Programmes. Discussions under this agenda item were organized into seven thematic batches covering air transport facilitation strategic matters, Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), accessibility in international civil aviation, assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families (AAAVF), oversight and capacity building in facilitation, and trafficking in persons and irregular migration. The outcomes of these discussions were submitted to the Panel for consideration.

2.9 The Assembly adopted a series of resolutions related to facilitation, namely: A42-13, *Strategy on disaster risk reduction and response mechanism in aviation*; A42-14, *Accessibility in international civil aviation*; A42-15, *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families*; A42-16, *Development and implementation of facilitation provisions — combatting human trafficking*; and A42-17, *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*. The Assembly also endorsed the Annex 9-related priorities for the 2026-2028 triennium that includes a consolidation of its work, examining issues relating to non-compliance with the Annex 9 — *Facilitation* SARPs, the development of strategies to assist States in implementing the provisions of Annex 9, engagement with advances in technologies pertaining to the work of the FAL Programme, including the preparation of responses to new and emerging facilitation-related issues. Additionally, the Executive Committee of the Assembly in considering several Facilitation-related working papers, recommended the Assembly refer a number of actions contained in some working papers to the Council, with the involvement of relevant technical bodies for further study and a proposed way forward. These actions are presented to the Panel under separate Secretariat working papers, for its consideration.

3. DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE ICAO TRAVELLER IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME (TRIP) STRATEGY

3.1 This section highlights developments related to the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) including outcomes from the Fifth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on TRIP (TAG/TRIP/5) and ongoing and future developments as points of discussion. This work supports the priorities and outcomes for the ICAO TRIP Strategy endorsed by A42 in September 2025 for the 2026-2028 triennium.

3.2 The ICAO TRIP Strategy establishes a comprehensive framework for Member States to establish a robust traveller identification process and is composed of five elements related to identification management, namely:

- a) foundational documents, tools and processes required to ensure **Evidence of Identity (EoI)**;
- b) the design and manufacture of standardized **Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs)**, especially ePassports, that comply with ICAO specifications defined in Doc 9303;
- c) processes and protocols for **Document Issuance and Control** by appropriate authorities to authorized holders, and controls to combat theft, tampering and loss;
- d) **Inspection Systems and Tools** for the efficient and secure reading and verification of MRTDs at borders, including use of the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD);
- e) **Interoperable Applications** provide for timely, secure and reliable linkage of MRTDs and their holders to available and relevant data in the course of inspection operations.

3.3 The Forty-Second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42), held in September 2025, endorsed the TRIP Strategy priorities and objectives for the 2026–2028 triennium.

3.4 Consistent with the ICAO Business Plan for 2026–2028, the Assembly emphasized enhancing States' capabilities to facilitate air travel while uniquely identifying individuals through robust and innovative solutions. Focus and priorities will include, inter alia:

- a) developing and maintaining MRTD specifications in Doc 9303, in particular those relating to the Digital Travel Credential (DTC);
- b) harmonizing terminology between Doc 9303 and Annex 9;
- c) supporting the global expansion and strengthened implementation of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems;
- d) enhancing awareness of and promoting the TRIP Strategy through global and regional engagement initiatives;
- e) promoting coordination and cooperation among States, regional and international organizations, and the private sector to ensure the provision of appropriate expertise in TRIP-related matters; and
- f) providing assistance to States, as required, through webinars, workshops, and training activities to enhance TRIP-related capacity-building, under the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative.

3.5 Two Assembly working papers were of particular relevance to the Facilitation Panel and TAG/TRIP. Working paper 325, presented by Airports Council International (ACI), highlighted the role of digital identity and biometric technologies in improving security, efficiency and passenger experience, and called for accelerated deployment of interoperable DTC frameworks and enhanced industry engagement. The Assembly agreed that the issues raised should be referred to TAG/TRIP for further consideration.

3.6 Working paper 285, presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and supported by a related Canadian working paper on crew identification, addressed the limited effectiveness of the Crew Member Certificate (CMC) as a facilitation document. The Assembly endorsed the papers and requested ICAO to initiate a comprehensive review of the relevant Annex 9 provisions. In view of the technical and historical aspects of the CMC, the Assembly noted that TAG/TRIP input, particularly with respect to Doc 9303, *Machine Readable Travel Documents*, would be instrumental in supporting Facilitation Panel deliberations on the future treatment of crew identification SARPs.

3.7 TAG/TRIP/5, held from 12 to 14 November 2025, was attended by 65 TAG/TRIP members and advisers from 26 Member States, as well as 9 observers from 5 international organizations. Mr. Darryl Lee Brile, TAG/TRIP Member from the United States, was elected Chairperson of the TAG/TRIP.

3.8 TAG/TRIP/5 endorsed significant technical progress related to Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), including the continued maintenance of ICAO Doc 9303 and the structured development of a Ninth Edition. This work ensures that ICAO specifications remain responsive to technological change, including biometrics, inspection system requirements and emerging document formats, while preserving global interoperability and trust. The meeting also supported the development of an ICAO-managed framework to assist States in verifying adherence to Doc 9303 specifications and mitigating the risks associated with non-compliant documents. This included endorsing the development of testing specifications and methodologies for Doc 9303.

3.9 In line with the Assembly's emphasis on digitalization and innovation, TAG/TRIP/5 reaffirmed the strategic priority of DTCs. The Group agreed to prioritize the development of a standardized and secure transmission protocol for the DTC Virtual Component (VC), building upon the existing ICAO eMRTD trust framework. This work reflects growing interest from States and industry in trusted digital credentials and aims to ensure that future implementations remain globally interoperable, secure and aligned with ICAO SARPs and specifications

3.10 Recognizing emerging technological risks, TAG/TRIP/5 also supported preparatory work to facilitate the long-term transition of electronic MRTDs to Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC). This forward-looking initiative is intended to safeguard the integrity and durability of travel documents against future cryptographic threats, while allowing States to plan transitions in a structured and coordinated manner

3.11 TAG/TRIP/5 further reinforced the importance of capacity-building as a cross-cutting enabler of the TRIP Strategy. The Group endorsed the work of the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), including the development and revision of ICAO guidance material covering evidence of identity, document issuance and control, border management practices and DTCs. In addition, TAG/TRIP supported the development of proposals for new and revised Annex 9 SARPs related to DTCs and Digital Travel Authorizations (DTAs) to promote global interoperability for digital travel tools supporting contactless passenger processing.

3.12 Finally, TAG/TRIP/5 emphasized the need for enhanced coordination across ICAO facilitation-related bodies, including TAG/TRIP, its working groups and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) governance structure. Given the expanding scope of work under the TRIP Strategy and the limited availability of expert and Secretariat resources, the meeting highlighted the importance of sustained

collaboration, aligned planning and common strategic roadmaps to ensure coherent and efficient delivery of TRIP-related outcomes for Member States.

3.13 To provide further coordinated support to States implementing Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data capabilities, ICAO continues to partner with the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)-led United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CT Travel Programme) to assist Member States in building their capacities to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist offences and other serious crimes, including their related travel, by collecting and analyzing passenger data, both API and PNR data, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 2178, 2396 and 2482, ICAO Annex 9 SARPs, as well as other international law obligations.

3.14 The UN CT Travel Programme is currently engaged with 80 States in various capacities to provide assistance in developing the necessary legal, operational and technical framework to build their capacities to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist offences and other serious crimes through the collection and processing of API and PNR data. According to information held by IATA and made available on their API-PNR World Tracker, there are currently 107 States with API requirements and 68 States with PNR requirements in force.

3.15 Through collaboration with the UN CT Travel Programme, ICAO has been made aware that some States are using information collected from travellers through visa and travel authorization applications as a substitute for implementing passenger data systems. Such practices do not fulfil States' obligations under Annex 9 to establish API and PNR programmes. In addition, many of these travel authorization systems deploy non-interoperable barcodes based on national-specific trust frameworks. In this context, raising awareness of the global interoperability provided by the ICAO Data Structure of Barcode (IDB) specifications would help mitigate the proliferation of non-standardized barcodes. Furthermore, ICAO has issued State letter EC 6/3-26/8 on 6 March 2026, requesting States – a) Implement and comply with Annex 9 Standards for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data systems; b) ensure that the issuance of any DTA system is aligned with ICAO Doc 9303 specifications and c) circulate this letter to all relevant national entities responsible for the issuance and verification of travel documents such as travel document issuing authorities, border authorities, customs, immigration, law enforcement, as well as foreign and interior affairs. . Complementing this action, the introduction of a new Annex 9 Recommended Practice encouraging States to make use of DTA when issuing travel authorizations with barcodes would further enhance global interoperability through adherence to Doc 9303.

4. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ICAO PUBLIC KEY DIRECTORY (PKD) PROGRAMME

4.1 The ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) programme is focussed on delivery of a large-scale IT system that connects governmental entities globally to facilitate sharing of the data needed for the verification of the digital signatures applied to ICAO-specified electronic and digital travel documents.

4.2 The PKD programme was established in 2007 as an opt-in programme that States and other document issuing entities could choose to join based on the benefits to be obtained. The delivery of the programme is based on the payment of fees by those who choose to participate based on their cost-benefit assessment.

5. DISCUSSIONS

5.1 The PKD has grown in terms of participation since its establishment, with 107 States and document issuing entities having joined. Twenty-nine participants have joined since the Twelfth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/12) and twelve since the FALP/13 meeting, highlighting the quite rapid growth in recent years. Participants are drawn from all ICAO regions and include States of various sizes and at a variety of different stages in their projects in issuance and/or verification of eMRTDs and investment in air transport facilitation measures.

5.2 The scope of PKD services have expanded. In 2021, a new service was introduced based on the signature of an agreement with the United Nations Office of Operational Support that allows global sharing of the trust anchor certificates that are vital for document authentication for the first time. The capability to share data needed to verify digitally signed barcodes applied to Visas, Digital Travel Authorizations and Emergency travel documents was introduced in 2023.

5.3 The ICAO Health Master List was introduced in 2021 to facilitate sharing of data needed for verification of digitally signed barcodes being used to attest vaccination and test status during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was introduced as a Global Public Good based on an innovative partnership between the ICAO PKD Secretariat and INCERT Luxembourg. Inclusion of data on the list was open to all, free of charge. The Health Master List continues to be maintained based on the same operational model, providing an important resilience measure for international aviation.

5.4 As PKD participation has grown, capacity building and implementation support has grown in importance within the programme. Since 2021, the community delivers workshops annually alongside its Board meetings. Dedicated workshops have been hosted at various international locations based on identified regional needs. A coaching/mentoring initiative (the “Data Quality Coach programme”) was also launched in 2021 to facilitate pairing of a community expert with countries in need to provide direct bilateral support to their PKD-related activities through remote engagement and an on-site visit funded by the ICAO PKD. Countries including Mongolia, Barbados, Uganda and Cameroon have benefited from this programme hitherto. Instructional documentation for PKD usage has been improved while guidance documents on PKD-related activities have been disseminated and published on the PKD webpage. Foundational materials such as the PKD Frequently Asked Questions have been improved. A Cost Benefit Analysis tool for assessing investment in Automated Border Control (ABC) was also developed and is available, along with guidance documentation, on the PKD website.

5.5 While data in the PKD is available for public download, the use of that data is limited to non-commercial activities. A pilot was launched in 2021 to assess the possible relaxation of this rule for authorized private sector entities that sign an agreement with ICAO. 50 companies currently participate in the pilot. The PKD Board has approved the rollout of a permanent, fee-based programme for private sector users in 2026. Use of PKD data by private sector parties is intended to enhance international trust in the use of travel documents and advance possibilities for innovation, particularly with the rollout of the ICAO Digital Travel Credential (DTC).

5.6 The current contract for delivery of the ICAO PKD system expires on 31 March 2026. A new system will come into operation at this time. The new system further expands the scope of data contents. The Health Master List function is embedded into the service. More intuitive interfaces are offered with a view to providing more convenient and user-friendly connectivity and use and supporting usage by participants who might struggle with the existing setup. An improved conformance checking service is offered to assist participants in assuring compliance to ICAO Doc 9303, *Machine Readable Travel Documents*. More advanced statistical monitoring and reporting is offered for users and for the ICAO Secretariat with the Secretariat also having more oversight capabilities that can help feed governance and community discussion. Services for private sector users are also included.

5.7 The ICAO PKD programme provides important infrastructural support for secure and efficient cross-border travel, supporting document issuance in line with ICAO specifications, enhancing verification capabilities and advancing air transport facilitation.

5.8 The introduction of a new PKD system and evolution of the programme provides opportunities for enhanced service delivery, improved data and knowledge acquisition and sharing and further advanced contributions to the traveller identification ecosystem.

5.9 FALP members and observers are invited to support and contribute to the work of the PKD as it continues to seek positive impacts across all dimensions of its work in support of ICAO Facilitation objectives. The PKD stands ready to cooperate in all possible ways with the various Facilitation Panels and Working Groups, offering knowledge, expertise, and an active community of practice.

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