



WORKING PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP/14)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 20-24 April 2026

Agenda Item 6: Other Facilitation matters

**ENCODING TWIN PASSPORTS WITH AN INTERNATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED IDENTIFIER**

(Presented by the United Arab Emirates)

SUMMARY

Despite advances in identity verification technologies, certain exceptional cases—such as identical twins—still pose challenges at border crossings and airports. Their near-identical facial features and builds can hinder accurate biometric matching, leading to potential errors, travel delays, or the unintentional clearance of the wrong person.

Action by the FAL Panel:

The FAL Panel is invited to consider the proposal described in this paper and agree that “Adding a special, internationally recognized code to the passports of identical twins, indicating the holder has a twin with matching features. A distinct icon (e.g., a double silhouette or 'DNA' symbol) would appear on the passport’s data page, along with an internal system displaying the other twin’s image to support identity verification at border crossings”.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of the joint cooperation and coordination between the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority and ICAO, and stemming from our commitment to contributing to the development of the travel system, the UAE is pleased to present a proposal submitted by the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs & Port Security, aimed at addressing potential challenges related to the data of identical twins .

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Despite advances in identity verification technologies, certain exceptional cases—such as identical twins—still pose challenges at border crossings and airports. Their near-identical facial features and builds can hinder accurate biometric matching, leading to potential errors, travel delays, or the unintentional clearance of the wrong person.

2.2 Potential challenges associated with identical twins:

- Nearly identical personal photos.
- Matching physical characteristics and age.
- Names that may be similar or start with the same letters.
- Identical date of birth.

This similarity reduces the accuracy of both manual and automated matching through currently adopted systems—especially in cases where fingerprints are not available, or when traveling to countries that do not utilize facial or iris recognition technologies.

2.3 The proposal:

Adding a special, internationally recognized code on the passports of identical twins to clearly indicate that the passport holder has an identical twin with matching characteristics. It is suggested that this code be represented by a distinctive icon displayed on the passport's information page (such as a double silhouette symbol or a simple DNA icon).

Additionally, an internal system (linked to passport control systems) should be implemented to display the image of the twin sibling as a supportive reference for officers during the matching process at border checkpoints.

2.4 Proposed implementation mechanism:

- Upon passport issuance in the country, the twins are registered as a case of high biometric similarity.
- The two passports are digitally linked within the main governmental systems.
- A unified icon is placed on the data page of both passports.
- During travel procedures: in the case of partial or questionable photo matches, the system displays the twin sibling's photo for comparison.
- This system is activated in countries that utilize facial or iris recognition, thereby enhancing accuracy during entry and exit procedures.

2.5 Advantages of implementing the proposal:

- Reduces the error rate in both manual and automated identity matching.
- Speeds up travel procedures and minimizes delays caused by doubts about traveller identity.
- Supports security agencies in maintaining border security.
- Protects individuals from the misuse of twin resemblance in cases of forgery, infiltration, or identity impersonation.
- Provides a smoother and more efficient travel experience for travellers in the “identical twins” category.

2.6 Adoption into Passport Standards

- Allocate a “unified international symbol” to indicate the status of identical twins.
- Provide a “technical guideline” to member states on the implementation mechanism and biometric linkage between twin passports.
- Include this update in future editions of ICAO Doc 9303, *Machine Readable Travel Documents*.

