



International Civil Aviation Organization  
South American Regional Office

**Fifth Virtual Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the South American (SAM) Region on the Response to COVID-19**

(Lima, Peru, 11 August 2021)

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**Agenda Item 3: Innovation in Aviation Facilitation and Security aspects in the recovery framework**

**EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON LABORATORIES AUTHORISED TO APPLY PCR TESTS**

(Presented by Venezuela)

**SUMMARY**

This working paper presents a proposal for the creation of regional mechanisms for the exchange of communication and information related with the laboratories authorised or certified by States to perform PCR tests to diagnose COVID-19, which must be presented by passengers upon entry or exit from a State, in accordance with the requirements of the health authorities of the States that so require, in order to contribute to the unification of efforts and criteria for effective border health risk management.

**1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 Following the declaration of the pandemic related to the new SARS-COV2 (COVID-19) by the World Health Organization (WHO), States have developed various processes and methods to enable the safe transport of passengers by air, ensuring that such movements do not pose a greater risk of spreading COVID-19 among States.

1.2 One such process involves requesting passengers to undergo reliable and standard screening according to WHO parameters, which must be presented, with a negative result, both prior to air transport and upon arrival at the airport of destination.

1.3 In order to meet the requirements imposed by most States, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests are applied by laboratories throughout the world, and cases arise in which the certificates issued by these laboratories do not present uniform data to facilitate verification of the information contained in these certificates, both prior to the flight and in the State of destination, and in some cases even the authentication of these documents.

1.4 It should be noted that this initiative was presented at the sixth meeting of the Strategic Group of the SAM Region in response to COVID-19 (GESAM/6), held on 8 April 2021, where, in view of the dynamic sanitary scenario, the exchange of information on national testing laboratories was suggested as one possible solution.

## 2. **CERTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION MEASURES**

2.1 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in Doc 10152 – *Testing and Cross-border Risk Management Measures Manual* (2nd Ed., 2021), established the basic criteria for the standardisation and validation of diagnostic test certificates, in order to facilitate the mutual acceptance of these documents among States. Despite ICAO's efforts, many of the certificates issued in relation to COVID-19 screenings do not fully meet the aforementioned basic criteria.

2.2 In this regard, some States have taken steps to certify laboratories authorised to perform the PCR tests that passengers are required be present when travelling by air to other States.

2.3 Accordingly, it would be of great help to aircraft operators, which apply the first control of authentic and validated negative PCR certificates before the flight, and to State health agencies upon arrival of these passengers, to have updated information on laboratories authorised to apply PCR tests.

## 3. **SUGGESTED ACTION**

3.1 The Fifth Virtual Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the South American (SAM) Region on the Response to COVID-19 is invited to:

- a) take note of the information presented in this working paper;
- b) analyse the effectiveness of establishing a mechanism for communication and exchange of information between State health authorities and other related regional authorities laboratories authorized or certified to perform PCR testing; and
- c) support States of the SAM Region in the presentation of a working paper on this subject at the next High-level Safety Conference on COVID-19 (HLSC 2021).

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