



International Civil Aviation Organization

South American Regional Office

**Seventh Virtual Meeting of the South American Region Strategic Group
in Response to COVID-19 – GESAM7**

(Zoom Platform, 21 July 2021)

GESAM7 - WP/04

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FACILITATION OF AIR TRANSPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This working paper presents considerations regarding the impact that the actions to confront COVID-19 have had on the facilitation of air transport, such as the resolutions and orientations to the States by different multilateral agencies, and the challenges of implementing the measures between the States in a harmonized manner.

Suggested actions: Please refer to Section 3 of this working paper.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the entire aviation sector, with an important reduction in air traffic. The duration of the reduction in traffic should bring serious difficulties in the aviation sector in the coming years. In addition, many procedures aimed at applying passenger and cargo controls have been affected by new measures to deal with the pandemic, directly affecting the facilitation of air transport.

1.2 The search for efficiency in all air transport operations becomes even more important, which is why the elimination of any unnecessary control as well as the optimization of the use of resources is important for the sustainability of air transport at the critical moment that we are undergoing. The guiding principles of the SAM Strategy ¹in response to COVID-19 have been essential fundamentals in guiding the safe and orderly reactivation of air operations. Coordination between all entities, the adoption of simple measures and effective communication, and effective communication of measures to the industry and travellers are principles related to facilitation.

1.3 ICAO, other multilateral agencies and representative organizations of the Industry have worked to find solutions for the recovery of civil aviation. Among these initiatives, the organization of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) and the development of the sanitary measures presented in the orientation document entitled *Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis, as well as WHO/PAHO document entitled Considerations for implementing a risk-based approach to international travel in the context of COVID-19 can be named.*

1.4 The role of state entities in the implementation of measures to confront COVID is essential to ensure the recovery and resumption of aviation in a sustainable way.

¹ <https://www.icao.int/SAM/eDocumentsrestore/Marco%20estrategico%20SAM%20ES%20Completo.pdf>

2. CHALLENGES FOR HARMONIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES

2.1 Coordinate the implementation of measures to ensure the sustainability of a sector seriously affected by a pandemic in a scenario where the priority of the States is to ensure the health of their citizens is, in itself, a great challenge for the States. The collaboration of stakeholders in the aviation sector and the ongoing coordination and justification of the actions taken are guiding principles of the SAM Strategy in response to COVID-19 and remain necessary for the orderly reactivation of aviation.

2.2 Since the first edition of the CART, ICAO has highlighted the importance that harmonization of procedures on a global and regional scale is key to strengthening the confidence of the aviation user public.

Recommendation 4 - Global and regional harmonization of procedures is essential to strengthen public and passenger confidence in air travel. To that end, Member States should establish aviation public health procedures aligned with the guidance in the Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis.

2.3 Likewise, the CART recommended that States should establish a national committee for Air Transport Facilitation (or equivalent) in accordance with the provisions of the Annex 9, in order to deepen national intersectoral coordination.

Recommendation 6 - Member States that have not done so should immediately establish a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (or equivalent) as required by Annex 9 to increase national level cross-sectoral coordination.

2.4 CART Recommendation 20 Phase III encourages States to have State Administrations consider the ICAO CART guidance in decision-making processes on national recovery planning.

Recommendation 20 - Member States should ensure that ICAO's CART guidance is taken into consideration by the wider State administration in the decision-making processes on national recovery planning.

2.5 At the 6th Meeting of the SAM Strategic Group in Response to COVID-19² (8 April 2021), the working group recognized the difficulty of uniform application of the measures, and recommended that States consider taking actions to improve communication of the CART measures at all levels in the State.

2.6 The group also identified an opportunity to improve coordination between the multilateral agencies that support the Member States (ICAO, WHO/PAHO, UNDP, ILO, etc.) in order to convey the same message to the high-level State entities and avoid contradictory messages.

2.7 State entities, despite having implemented important actions during the pandemic, have different agencies or organizations as points of reference and, in many cases, their own committees for organizing the aviation sector. In this sense, and considering that the issue of facing COVID-19 has been a priority, there is the possibility of conflicting guidance that makes it difficult to harmonize measures for the air transport sector.

2.8 In order to deal with COVID-19, several States have created emergency committees with the participation of different sectors, different from the committees already existing in the State. The

² https://www.icao.int/SAM/Documents/2021-VS6-SF/Informe_6ta_Reuni%C3%B3n_GESAM_esp.pdf

participation of the air transport sector in these committees is essential to seek the harmonization of measures and the promotion of discussions and exchange of experience.

3. **SUGGESTED ACTION**

3.1 The Seventh Meeting of the GESAM strategic group is invited to:

- a. Take note of the importance that the representatives of the air transport sector be present in State decisions regarding COVID-19 that may affect the facilitation of air transport.
- b. Comment on the experience and perception of the States on the level of coordination between multilateral agencies for the issuance of joint resolutions and guidelines on COVID in aviation for the different State entities.

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