



ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Agenda Item 52: Facilitation

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLER SCHEME (ITS)

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association¹)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper outlines the approach taken by the International Air Transport Association's Passenger Facilitation Working Group (IATA PFWG) to develop an International Traveller Scheme (ITS). The Scheme aims to bring national, bilateral and multilateral registered travellers schemes together under one overall program. It is recognised that each state will remain bound by its own national laws, procedures and risk-assessments. The Scheme will account for these when developing common best practices to facilitate the interoperability that should underpin the International Traveller Scheme.

The paper highlights the benefits the ITS brings to governments, airlines, airport operators and passengers. It also outlines the key elements and the cross-cutting issues that will be addressed by the Working Group as well as the next steps for development of the Scheme.

These next steps include conducting a feasibility study to gain an understanding of the eligibility criterion required in order to establish an ITS and secure a necessary level of commitment from States. Upon implementation of the ITS, the way States conduct border clearance can change significantly – by having a scheme in place to vet their own nationals and/or known travellers through pre-enrolment with a registered biometric and through the sharing of data amongst collaborating governments.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective B – Security, <i>Enhance global civil aviation security</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	No financial implications
<i>References:</i>	No references

¹ Language versions prepared by IATA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A number of states world-wide have established, or are in the process of establishing national, bilateral and multilateral registered traveller schemes. At the first meeting of the new International Air Transport Association's Passenger Facilitation Working Group (IATA PFWG) in February 2010, a new subgroup was formed to develop an International Traveller Scheme (ITS) with the vision to create a single foundation that can accommodate these schemes together under one overall initiative fostering interoperability.

1.2 For the purposes of the ITS, a registered traveller programme is a programme that allows travellers expedited passage through automated border control systems following successful background checks and the recording of biometric data.

2. BENEFITS TO STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 The purpose of any International Traveller Scheme is to expedite passenger movements of identified, pre-screened and assessed as low-risk passengers through all border controls, including immigration and customs. The eventual aspiration of International Travellers Scheme may be that high volumes of passengers will utilise the Scheme. A brief non-exhaustive list of the benefits to the respective stakeholders is listed below.

2.2 Governments should benefit from the Scheme in a number of ways such as enhancing border security through use of biometrics, reducing illegal immigration, allowing more effective deployment of resources towards potentially higher-risk passengers and being able to obtain additional advanced information on travellers.

2.3 Airlines should benefit from streamlined procedures with passengers being encouraged to travel through the creation of a more seamless journey within the Scheme. The additional vetting of passengers within the scheme offers a greater security on the identity of the passenger and their admissibility by the border control authorities at their destination.

2.4 Airport operators should expect a reduction in queue lengths and times which will facilitate a more efficient use of space and a deferment of infrastructure requirements and costs.

2.5 Passengers should find their travel experience enhanced by gaining access to a range of registered traveller programmes operated by participating states where access would be otherwise unavailable. Passengers should benefit from a standardised application process and access to expedited, automated border crossing.

3. KEY ELEMENTS

3.1 The Scheme will develop agreed criteria for the potential disqualification of participants including agreement on the eligibility and status of passengers who apply to multiple states within the Scheme but are not accepted by all the states to which they have applied.

3.2 States participating in the Scheme should capture the biometrics they require for their own purposes. However, it is recognised that capturing the maximum number of internationally recognised biometric identifiers (fingerprints, face and iris) supports the goal of interoperability.

3.3 A single common application form containing all the information required by all participating states will be developed and accepted by all participating states.

3.4 The Working Group developing the Scheme will agree on a set of minimum vetting standards, including the types of database against which criminality and identity background checks should be made. The Scheme should operate as high a threshold as possible in relation to background checks which will need to be transparent.

3.5 Each participating state should be responsible for regular checks of their own nationals who have been accepted into the Scheme to ensure that they continue to be eligible for participation.

3.6 Governments should liaise as far as is practical on the operation of the scheme with all parties who have a vested interest or input into the Scheme, including airlines, airport operators and technology suppliers.

3.7 States may charge a non-refundable initial fee for processing applications from passengers to participate in the Scheme. National legislation may prohibit some states from charging a fee for any service that constitutes an expedited crossing of their national borders.

4. **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

4.1 States in the International Traveller Scheme should share biometric and biographic information about participating passengers subject to conditions laid down by national and international data control laws, protection laws and regulations.

4.2 Applicants should be clearly and accurately informed beforehand about the terms and conditions of their application and enrolment in the Scheme. Those enrolling in the registered traveller schemes within the International Traveller Scheme should be able to do so on a voluntary basis. Applicants should be informed about which aspects of their personal data will be shared, processed and stored.

5. **NEXT STEPS**

5.1 A dedicated subgroup is currently working to agree on the initial concept paper which will capture the key principles of the Scheme. This paper will cover a range of issues, including those outlined in this paper.

5.2 Following agreement on the initial concept paper, the subgroup will obtain further input from governments using an agreed questionnaire. Findings from the questionnaire will be used to develop a feasibility study outlining options for the Scheme. The current aim is for the feasibility study to be developed during the first months of 2011.