



WORKING PAPER

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON AVIATION SECURITY (HLCAS)

Montréal, 12 to 14 September 2012

Agenda Item 7: The role of the Machine Readable Travel Document (MRTD) Programme, Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR)

**TRAVELLER IDENTIFICATION AND THE
MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENT PROGRAMME**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

ICAO, through the Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents (TAG/MRTD), develops technical specifications for machine readable travel documents (MRTDs), published as Doc 9303 — *Machine Readable Travel Documents*, Parts 1, 2 and 3. In recent years, the Organization, with the help of the TAG/MRTD and in collaboration with interested States and international organizations, has provided assistance to Member States in support of their issuance of passports that comply with the specifications of Doc 9303. The TAG/MRTD has recently shifted its focus from developing specifications and guidance material on document security to identity management, a component of which relates to securing the integrity of the documents that are used to issue MRTDs.

This paper proposes that the mandate of the ICAO MRTD Programme be expanded to mirror the work of the TAG/MRTD.

Action: The High-level Conference on Aviation Security is invited to endorse the conclusions and recommendations in paragraph 6.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 For nearly forty-five years, ICAO has been developing technical specifications for machine readable passports, visas and official travel (card-sized) documents. These are published as Doc 9303 — *Machine Readable Travel Documents*, Parts 1, 2 and 3. Since 1986, this work has been done through the TAG/MRTD, composed of experts nominated by States and the industry, which reports to the Air Transport Committee. The TAG/MRTD New Technologies Working Group (NTWG), in addition to drafting specifications, researches and reports on new and emerging technologies for use in MRTDs. The Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) assists in implementation, education, promotion, assistance and capacity-building matters.

1.2 The ICAO Secretariat (Aviation Security Branch) supports the meetings of the TAG/MRTD and its working groups. With the help of experts from the TAG/MRTD and interested States, the MRTD Programme undertakes numerous, wide-ranging implementation and capacity-building activities. These include: organizing annual MRTD Symposia in Montréal and seminars and workshops in the Regions; conducting State-specific assistance missions; publishing the MRTD Report three times per year; maintaining a dedicated MRTD website; conducting activities jointly with international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organization of American States (OAS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), various bodies in the United Nations (UN) family and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (the ISO endorses Doc 9303 as ISO Standard 7501).

1.3 Standard formats for MRTDs in Doc 9303 allow for automated clearance systems, facilitating the clearance of persons at border controls. Additionally, the physical characteristics and security features of the documents themselves offer a defence against alteration, forgery or counterfeit. The enhancement of the integrity of travel documents serves, in turn, to strengthen aviation security, as MRTDs can be used as an information tool to add a layer of protection to the international civil aviation system, *inter alia*, to detect terrorists and illegal migration and prevent acts of unlawful interference.

1.4 The development of MRTD specifications and guidance material and the associated implementation and assistance activities are appropriately complemented by the adoption, as required, in Annex 9 — *Facilitation* of relevant Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Relevant security-related provisions of Annex 9, including the secure production and issuance of MRTDs, are included in the scope of the second cycle of audits of the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 The current generation of ICAO-compliant travel documents is the most secure the world has known. The introduction of new security features, production methods and personalization techniques has made the latest generation of identification documents very difficult to forge. Furthermore, improved border control staff training can increase the likelihood of a forged or counterfeit identification document being detected.

2.2 The increasing use by States of biometrically-enabled machine-readable passports (ePassports), can help to further enhance travel document security and border integrity. Thus, recent activities of the Secretariat have included a greater number of capacity-building activities related to ePassports, in addition to a focus on assistance to States that are experiencing difficulty with MRTD implementation generally.

2.3 However, in spite of the current high level of travel document security, there yet remains a vulnerability regarding identity management that can undermine this effort and that affects virtually all issuing authorities. As a result, in 2009, the TAG/MRTD expanded the scope of its work to the field of identity management, generally the examination and validation by national authorities of breeder documents and other basic documents that determine the identity of a person. Breeder documents are those documents (such as birth certificates) that form the basis of passport issuance. These documents, along with the underlying civil and administrative systems and processes used to issue them, are security vulnerabilities that can compromise MRTDs. As the latter have become more difficult to forge, identity fraud has become more prevalent. This can result, for example, in ‘genuine’ travel documents being issued to persons with false identities, thereby undermining the benefits that such documents have for the security of civil aviation.

2.4 The 37th Session of the Assembly, in 2010, endorsed this work, and urged Member States to intensify their efforts to safeguard the security and integrity of breeder documentation and, in this regard, requested the Council to take appropriate measures to develop guidance on such documents. This work is presently underway.

2.5 Finally, to strengthen document security, border integrity and aviation security, the Secretariat plans to propose, at the seventh meeting of the Facilitation Panel (Montréal, 22 to 26 October 2012), that the existing Annex 9 provision, which recommends that States incorporate biometric technologies in their machine readable passports, be upgraded to a Standard, thereby mandating the universal issuance of ePassports. The development of such a Standard is also justified by the fact that more than 100 ICAO Member States issue ePassports or are planning to do so in the near future, and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) provides a platform for real time verification of ePassports at borders.

3. A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE MRTD PROGRAMME

3.1 The growth of the work of the TAG/MRTD from, *inter alia*, securing the integrity of MRTDs to securing the basis on which such MRTDs are issued, has resulted in the need to consider a similar orientation for the work of the MRTD Programme, in parallel with that of the TAG/MRTD.

3.2 Therefore, a new strategy for the MRTD Programme is under development. It is anticipated that this strategy will be submitted to the ICAO Council for approval at its 198th Session in 2013. The principle underlying this strategy is that as the focus of the TAG/MRTD has evolved beyond the development of specifications for MRTDs to that of identity management, the focus of the MRTD Programme should similarly evolve. The Programme would, consequently, take on a more holistic approach to travel documents, and recognize the users of such documents. Therefore, the MRTD Programme could be re-named the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (ICAO TRIP) (to distinguish it from the UN Department of Safety and Security Travel Information Processing (TRIP) system). The Secretariat is assessing the merits of such re-naming, taking into consideration such factors as the positive 'brand recognition' associated with MRTD.

3.3 Recognizing the benefits of identification management to aviation security, the *mission* of the Programme would be to contribute to the capacity of Member States to uniquely identify individuals. Its *aim* would be to provide appropriate authorities worldwide with the relevant tools to confirm the identity of travellers. Such confirmation would assist Member States to:

- a) facilitate the clearance of persons across international borders;
- b) prevent the movement of persons such as terrorists and illegal migrants across borders; and
- c) enhance aviation security.

3.4 Short-term (2014-2016) objectives would include, *inter alia*:

- a) finalizing and implementing the strategic framework for the Programme;
- b) identifying priorities, initiatives and outcomes for the 2014-2016 triennium, in collaboration with the TAG/MRTD; and
- c) strengthening international partnerships.

3.5 To achieve the goals listed in paragraph 3.3, the programme would need to engage in the delivery of the following five mutually complementary *identification management activities*:

- a) *Evidence of Identity (EOI)*: verification of identity against breeder documents;
- b) *MRTDs*: design and manufacture of standardized MRTDs that meet internationally-accepted standards and practices;
- c) *document issuance and control*: concerning controls over the issuance of travel documents, document security, dissemination of information on the validity or otherwise of MRTDs, etc.;
- d) *inspection systems and tools*: including the technologies and infrastructure required to read MRTDs and verify their validity, the inspection of MRTDs at departure points and border controls, and arrangements among Member States to verify the authenticity and validity of travel documents, by means including the PKD; and
- e) *interoperable applications*: including the use of systems or schemes such as trusted or known traveller programmes that provide relevant information about a traveller to border control and intelligence agencies.

4. ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES: 2014-2016

4.1 In order to conduct the identification management activities listed above, the Secretariat would: provide support to the TAG/MRTD and its working groups; publish Doc 9303 specifications, best practices and associated technical reports and guidance material developed by the TAG/MRTD; and assist States in implementing relevant Annex 9 SARPs and Doc 9303 specifications.

4.2 Additional deliverables foreseen include:

- a) the development (through the NTWG) and publication of new or revised *best practices and guidance material* on topics such as:
 - i) identity management, initially on EOI;
 - ii) the use of identification (ID) management for border controls;
 - iii) the control and issuance of MRTDs; and
 - iv) lost and stolen travel documents;
- b) *assessment activities* (through the ICBWG) such as:
 - i) monitoring compliance with specifications and SARPs on MRTDs; and
 - ii) identifying deficiencies in MRTD issuance and traveller ID management;
- c) *assistance/capacity-building activities* (in cooperation with the TAG/MRTD and partner organizations) such as:
 - i) vocational training programmes;
 - ii) communications programmes; and
 - iii) the universal issuance of MRTDs, with a focus on ePassports; and
- d) in cooperation with the TAG/MRTD and partner organizations, activities to promote the development of best practices and information exchanges, such as:
 - i) symposia, seminars and workshops; and
 - ii) websites.

5. RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The ICAO MRTD Programme is supported directly by a team comprising 4.5 staff posts per year. Of these, 1.5 are funded by the ICAO regular programme budget and three are funded by extra-budgetary resources. This funding formula does not provide sufficient long-term stability for the Programme and, therefore, the Secretariat intends to propose that the posts supporting MRTD (ICAO TRIP) activities be funded by the regular programme budget in the 2014-2016 triennium.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The High-level Conference on Aviation Security (HLCAS) is invited to conclude that:

- a) with the development of progressively secure travel documents that are increasingly difficult to forge, security vulnerabilities in identity management pose a threat to the integrity of travel documents;
- b) the related expansion of the focus of the TAG/MRTD from document fraud to identity fraud is welcome; and
- c) it has become necessary to expand the mandate of the existing MRTD Programme.

6.2 The HLCAS is invited to recommend that the Secretariat:

- a) seek the Council's approval for the proposed new strategy for the MRTD Programme; and
- b) propose that MRTD (ICAO TRIP) activities be funded by the regular programme budget in the 2014-2016 triennium.