

**55<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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AGENDA ITEM 5: AVIATION SECURITY AND  
FACILITATION

**KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PASSENGER DATA (API / PNR)**

Presented by the International Air Transport Association

**SUMMARY**

Adoption of passenger data programmes is accelerating. This paper highlights the critical need for States to work collaboratively with industry to align passenger data programmes with global Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and guidelines, according to a number of key principles described below, requiring both international and inter-agency co-operation. Passenger data programmes can greatly impact airlines operations and costs. At the same time these programmes can enhance facilitation as well as the travel experience for passengers. This paper highlights the importance for States to follow ICAO Annex 9 - *Facilitation* SARPs as well as some key principles such as States' responsibility for funding.

## KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PASSENGER DATA (API / PNR)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In order to address the evolving threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF), the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 (2014) called upon States to require Advance Passenger Information (API) from airlines operating in their territories and UNSCR 2396 (2017) mandated States to require API and to develop capability to collect, process, and analyze Passenger Name Record (PNR) data.

1.2 Aligned with this development, Annex 9, Chapter 9. Passenger Data Exchange Systems was introduced with amendment 26. It contains enhanced provisions related to passenger data. Effective 23 October 2017, the establishment of API systems became a Standard and the introduction of interactive API (iAPI) became a Recommended Practice. The alignment of PNR data requirements and its handling with the guidelines contained in Doc 9944 and other recognized guidance materials also became a Standard.

1.3 However, as more States are implementing API and PNR systems, airlines increasingly encounter challenges, resulting from non-alignment with standards, such as requests for non-standard data elements, non-standard format, transmission or timing. This non-alignment can easily result in undue operational issues or excessive financial burden on airlines as well as significant costs and delayed implementation for governments.

1.4 SARPs regarding API and PNR programs have existed in ICAO Annex 9 – *Facilitation* for a number of years. IATA strongly supports the existence of strong global standards on API / PNR. IATA is one of the authors of the detailed Guidelines and Message Implementation Guide for API, alongside ICAO and the World Customs Organization (WCO). IATA also maintains the “PNRGOV” technical standard allowing airlines to transmit PNR data to government authorities.

1.5 The airline industry operates internationally and requires consistency. Moreover, government requests need to recognize airlines’ systems and capabilities. This is why IATA, with the support of ICAO and WCO, has led an awareness campaign in the last few years through a series of regional Workshops and publication of an online educational Passenger Data Toolkit (<http://www.iata.org/iata/passenger-data-toolkit/index.html>). IATA and our member airlines stand ready to provide assistance to requesting States, as has been done with many States already.

### 2. DISCUSSION

When States start considering adoption of a passenger data programme, or different agencies within a State consider requesting passenger data for different purposes, the following principles are worth remembering:

2.1 Alignment with global standards: Annex 9 Standard 9.6 requires that “The API system of each Contracting State shall be supported by appropriate legal authority (such as, inter alia, legislation, regulation or decree) and be consistent with internationally recognized standards for API”. Airline systems already have capabilities to comply with global standards. Harmonized systems will reduce the need for airlines to make modifications, thus enable States to receive more reliable data, accomplishing better compliance.

2.2 Machine-readable API data elements only: Annex 9 Standard 9.8 requires that “Contracting States shall require only data elements that are available in machine readable form in travel documents [...]. All information required shall conform to specifications for UN/EDIFACT PAXLST messages found in the WCO/IATA/ICAO API Guidelines.” In addition, API Guideline suggests “States should limit their data requirements to the minimum necessary and according to national legislation.” Non-essential data element requirements simply add to costs and to impacts and delays experienced at the airport.

2.3 Limited impact on operations: Annex 9 Recommended Practice 9.10 recommends that “Contracting States should seek to minimize the number of times API data is transmitted for a specific flight”; while Standard 9.11 requires that they “seek, to the greatest extent possible, to limit the operational and administrative burdens on aircraft operators, while enhancing passenger facilitation.”

2.4 Funding responsibility: Airlines invest significant resources to format and transmit passenger data to border control authorities; the receiving and processing of this data should be funded by States and not the airlines or passengers. As per ICAO’s policies on charges in Doc 9082, airlines and their passengers should not be charged for any costs that would be incurred for more general security functions performed by States (para 7 of Section II refers). Unfortunately, recent years have seen an increase in charges being levied on airlines or passengers to recover the costs of States’ programmes – usually interactive API. These charges may not appear significant on a per passenger basis but very often the revenues from these charges are in excess of the cost of implementing and operating such programmes considering the total number passengers entering these States each year. Border management and border security are State responsibilities and should be funded accordingly by the State. It should be recognized that increased travel costs can have a negative impact on traffic and thus there is a need to keep costs minimum to maximize economic benefits.

2.5 Single window: Passenger data can be required by multiple agencies, such as Immigration, Customs, Security, Police, etc. Annex 9 Recommended Practice 9.1 recommends that “Contracting States requiring the exchange of Advance Passenger Information (API), interactive API (iAPI) and/or Passenger Name Record (PNR) data from aircraft operators should create a Passenger Data Single Window facility for each data category that allows parties involved to lodge standardized information with a common data transmission entry point for each category to fulfil all related passenger and crew data requirements for that jurisdiction.” This RP is expected to become a Standard at the upcoming ICAO Facilitation Panel (FALP/10) meeting in September 2018.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) urge States to align with the internationally recognized global standards and recommended practices for API and PNR, found in: ICAO Annex 9; API Guidelines on Advance Passenger Information (API) developed by WCO/ICAO/IATA; ICAO Doc 9944, Guidelines on Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data;
- b) urge States to ensure data elements required are truly essential for border security and facilitation purposes and limited to the minimum necessary;
- c) encourage States to pursue a robust consultation and cooperation with industry to minimize operational and financial impact on airlines while achieving effective implementation and economic benefits;
- d) endorse the adoption of a Passenger Data Single Window facility for States to achieve greater efficiency.