Executive Overview
ICAO Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and
Issuance of Travel Documents

This executive overview explains why an assessment is important and gives a brief description of:

1. Why and for whom,
2. Identity infrastructure,
3. The method and its issues,
4. Assessment Methodology and Objectives,
5. Results,
6. Conditions for assessment,
7. Confidentiality,
8. Contact.

1.   Why and for whom
It is the task and responsibility of Governments to provide their citizens with reliable, secure and internationally accepted travel documents. As travel documents themselves are becoming more secure the next step is that increased emphasis is being placed on the security of the handling and issuance process to help prevent the issuance of legitimate documents under false identity. Appropriate international standards for Secure Travel documents are set by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)[1]. Strengths, weaknesses and potential risks will be detected through an assessment for Handling and Issuance of Travel Document.

The Assessment helps:
a.   states in evaluating their own travel document issuance and handling processes;
b.   in capacity building efforts to assess a state's handling and issuance processes;
c.   in assessing the handling and issuance processes of states under consideration for visa-waiver eligibility.

The following scheme shows that executing an assessment is one of the four steps of the continuous process Governments should pay attention to.
This methodical analytical approach also enables the detection and anticipation of possible bottlenecks and treats and creates opportunities for improvement.
Based on the outcome of the assessment, the requesting Government can then decide which recommendations (if any) that it will implement.

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[1] **International Civil Aviation Organization** (**ICAO**), an agency of the United Nations
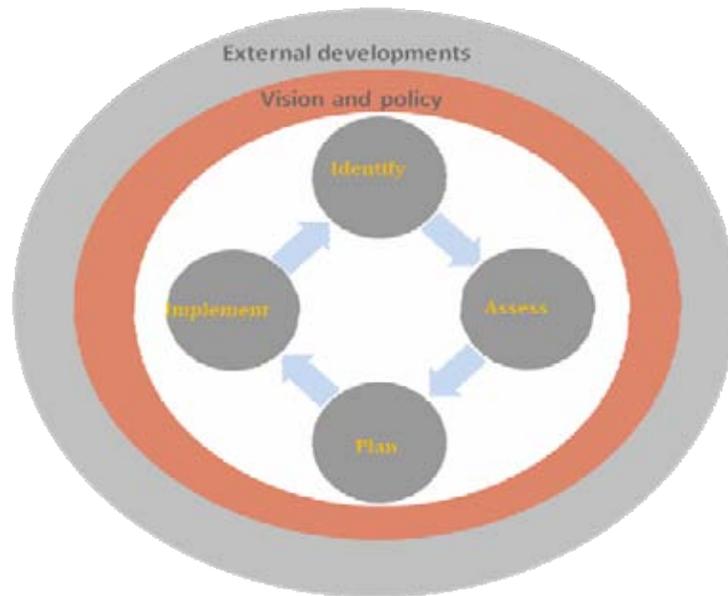
2. *Identity infrastructure*

Establishing a citizen's identity to an appropriate level can only be successful if all components of the identity infrastructure are considered. The identity infrastructure exists of four main components, namely registration, documents, processes and instruments. The identity infrastructure is the fundament of the life cycle of citizens, starting with the origin of the identity, the use of identity details, the control (for example border crossing) and the end of an identity. The assessment will cover all components of the identity infrastructure to some extend, with the primary focus on travel documents and ICAO compliancy[2].

	Origin Identity	Use of Identity	Control Identity	End Identity
Registration				
Documents				
Processes				
Instruments				

Image of an identity infrastructure

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[2] ICAO compliancy is conditional for cross border interoperability.

3.   The method and its issues

The ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) was tasked to set up an assessment guide to support Governments with the execution of an assessment of their travel document issuance program.
The Assessment Guide has been developed by an international group of independent experts who have experience across all relevant aspects of the travel document continuum. This Guide includes establishing the identity of applicants, the travel document application process, workflow and security within the travel document issuance area, personnel issues, printing and dispatch of documents.

The scope and complexity of issues related to secure document issuance requires the use of qualified independent assessors who are familiar with the ICAO Assessment Guide and how to use it.
Assessors conduct an objective and comprehensive in-country analysis of a nation's travel document handling and issuance program. The assessors will then generate a confidential report for the requesting Government.

4.   Assessment Methodology and Objectives

Once the necessity of an assessment is identified and the necessary arrangements are made and conditions are met, the actual assessment will be done to gather all relevant information. This includes:

- Assessment of the current situation (' As Is') contains the following steps:
  - (Fraud) risk analysis
  - Conclusions regarding necessary improvements
  - Gap analysis
  - Migration from ' As Is' to 'To Be'
  - Determine necessary and desired changes

The assessment is focussing on the following issues:

- Travel Document Issuing Authority - Organizational Structure, Internal Security and General Security Practices
- Application Processes
- Entitlement Processes
- Treatment of Materials and Blank Books
- Personalization and Delivery
- Document Security
- Facility Security
- Information Technology Security
- Personnel and Internal Integrity
- Lost and Stolen Travel Documents
- Overseas Issuance
- National and International Stakeholders

5.   Results

Following completion of the assessment a report will be prepared by the independent assessors indicating the findings and prioritising them in relation to how serious they are. The requesting Government is owner of the report which can be used as the basis for further work to improve the application and issuance processes.

6.   Conditions for assessment

Before an assessment can be conducted, there are several requisite elements that must be defined and agreed upon. To achieve maximum benefit, the assessors will require access to all parts of the application and issuance process. They will also need to be able to speak with relevant staff involved in each of the processes. If for example access is unable to be provided, the assessment may not be as comprehensive as it could be.

A letter of understanding, as signed between the requesting Government and ICAO will clearly define the role and responsibilities of stakeholders during the assessment. The letter of understanding contains details, like;
- Ownership final report
- Participation
- Access facilitation
- Administrative services and accommodations
- Security and travel
- Advance materials
- Code of ethics and confidentiality.

7.   Confidentiality

The results of the assessment and the content of the report is confidential and only known by the requesting Government and the assessor.

8.   *Contact*

For more information about an assessment, the Assessment Guide or other questions related to the work of the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), please send an email to: **icbwg@icao.int**