

PASSENGER DATA

(API/PNR)

IOM's Immigration and Border Management Division

As a result of the exponential growth in air travel and passenger traffic in recent years, States have been confronted with evolving border management practices to guarantee travel facilitation and border security. To maintain the delicate balance between facilitating cross-border movements and upholding border security, effective cooperation between government agencies, the private sector and relevant international actors is crucial. Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) are two technical responses to streamline traveller identification management and facilitate border management.

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division provides States with technical assistance and capacity-building support to strengthen their traveller identification management capacities and API/PNR implementation.



Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.

Objective 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner.

Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.



Target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Target 16.a: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION (API)

An API system is an electronic communications system whereby passenger data elements are collected and transmitted by air carriers to border control agencies prior to flight departure or arrival and made available on the primary line at the border crossing point. API enables national border agencies and other government departments to pre-identify persons of interest prior to their arrival (as well as departure in case of transit passengers). In alignment with the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), API has been established as a standard and became a legal obligation for all Member States of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in February 2018. However, effective API implementation remains a significant challenge for many States.

PASSENGER NAME RECORD (PNR)

PNR is information provided by passengers and collected by carriers at the time of ticket booking. It includes information on travel itinerary, ticket information, contact details, means of payment and others. PNR contains a greater number of data sets than an API message and can constitute a stronger law enforcement tool to prevent, detect and investigate terrorism and other forms of serious crime should the appropriate national intelligence capacity be in place. In furtherance of ICAO standards and recommended practices, the use of PNR data against various databases and provision of related technical assistance are strongly supported by the UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017), with full respect for privacy and data protection principles.

IOM provides impartial and tailored technical assistance towards the implementation of a passenger data system that is fully owned and sustained by the requesting government, while effectively cooperating with international and regional partners and adhering to internationally recognized standards.

MAIN PILLARS IN IOM'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF PASSENGER DATA (API/PNR)



AWARENESS-RAISING

IOM organizes workshops and study visits for ministries and relevant government departments involved in, or who would benefit from, the use of an API/PNR system. Ensuring a thorough understanding of the concept and technicality of passenger data is crucial in helping States determine what type of system to operationalize. Oftentimes, foreign governments, airlines and industry experts are also invited to such workshops to share experiences and good practices and provide impartial technical advice.



LEGAL ASSESSMENT

For States to operationalize the API/PNR system, solid national legislation needs to be in place, setting out rules on passenger data collection and specifying provisions on the use, transfer and retention of data. The legislation needs to comply with relevant international standards including those related to privacy and data protection. IOM can assist Member States with conducting a legal assessment and drafting new legislation or amendments to existing legal acts.



TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

IOM can assess Member States' existing technical capacities including the ICT architecture of the law enforcement sector, identify gaps for the desired API/PNR system and share recommendations for potential solutions and specifications which may serve as a basis for developing procurement tender documents. IOM can also help Member States assess training needs, develop a national implementation road map, and draft or revise related standard operating procedures.



PROCUREMENT TENDER

To get the maximum use out of the passenger data obtained, having appropriate data processing and analysis tools is vital. IOM assists governments in developing quality tender documents and providing impartial feedback during the bid evaluation in order to materialize appropriate solutions that are proportional to the government's needs. In addition, IOM's expertise can help ensure alignment with aviation industry standards when integrating software.



STAKEHOLDER LIAISON

IOM assists governments in establishing national committees comprised of ministries and government departments as well as other stakeholders including carriers. In line with international standards, the committee is encouraged to appoint one agency as a single point of contact (single window) to receive data from carriers and share it with other government agencies as required.



TESTING AND ROLL-OUT

During the testing phase, IOM continues to liaise with the government agencies, carriers and possible vendors to ensure that the communication links between the stakeholders are fully supported. IOM provides continued technical support during the go-live to ensure that the system is up and running in line with existing international standards, and that the stakeholders respect the agreed-upon operational processes.



ANALYSIS OF PASSENGER DATA

IOM supports government agencies in strengthening their intelligence and analytics capacities through providing training sessions. IOM does not have any access to passenger data which governments receive from carriers.

ICAO TRAVELLER IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME STRATEGY

Building upon the memorandum of understanding signed between IOM and ICAO in 2016, IOM assists Member States in implementing the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy by providing technical assistance in API/PNR implementation for ICAO Member States. The ICAO TRIP Strategy provides a global approach to traveller identification management processes, with the aim of ensuring that all States have the means to properly identify travellers.

