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FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

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Agenda Item 3: General revision of Annex 9 – Chapters 2 and 3

INFORMATION PAPER

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ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION (API) AND ADVANCE PASSENGER CLEARANCE (APC)

REFERENCE

FALP/3-WP/6 – Paragraph 3.38 of Annex 9.

1. ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION (API)

1.1 Australian Immigration and Customs air and seaport processing strategies are based on the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) to accelerate immigration and customs passenger processing and enhance border control.

1.2 The method for collecting API is the Advance Passenger Processing (APP) System developed on the Electronic Travel Authority System (ETAS) platform.

2. ADVANCE PASSENGER PROCESSING (APP)

2.1 APP is designed to provide the level of facilitation sought by airlines, both on and off-shore, and deliver high integrity API to Customs and Immigration.

2.2 The APP System is a seamless part of the check-in process that allows collection of passenger data at the point of embarkation and transmission of the data to Australian border agencies prior to flight arrival. (The attached document provides a brief overview of the functionality, operation and aims of the APP System.)

(3 pages)

2.3 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalises the agreement between the Australian Government and those carriers that use the APP System.

2.4 The APP System allows carriers to confirm that passengers have authority to enter Australia before boarding. This in turn reduces the carriage of inadequately documented passengers and subsequent fines incurred. Passengers are then afforded express lane clearance upon arrival.

2.5 Australian Border Agencies' receipt of API enhances border control and enables more effective and efficient processing of passengers on arrival.

2.6 About 42% of all arriving passengers are processed by APP.

ADVANCE PASSENGER PROCESSING (APP)

The System

APP is a system that is integrated into an airline Departure Control System and allows airlines to send API (the ICAO defined set of passenger bio data and flight information) to border agencies using the SITA communications network (used by airlines).

The information is used to pre screen passengers, which results in a subsequent reduction in the time taken to process passengers at the primary line.

Costs

Funding of APP is based on a pricing structure where CPS Systems Pty Ltd, the system provider, obtains a fee for each transaction conducted.

The Process

- At check-in the airline staff key in the passengers nationality, passport number and the first four characters of their family name. (The same as the current TIETAC entry).

- This data is sent via the SITA network to a central system that checks that the passenger is on the database and has any necessary visas or ETAs.

- Within 2-4 seconds the system advises the airline if the passenger is OK to board. If the passenger is not OK the system will advise the appropriate action.

- This activity replaces the need to physically check the passenger's passport for visas, and eliminates any fine that the airline may incur for inadequately documented passengers.

- At check in, the airline prints the passenger's biodata and flight number on a special Australian Incoming Passenger Card with the word "EXPRESS" clearly indicated. The card also has a magnetic stripe that is coded with an identifier to retrieve that data on arrival in Australia.

- On arrival in Australia the passenger will be directed to the appropriate processing lanes by use of dynamic signage. Passengers on flights with EXPRESS LANE are expected to be cleared in about half the time of flights that do not use APP.

System design

The APP system has been designed as an extension of the ETA system.

Consultation with airlines has ensured a minimal impact on check-in and minimal computer system development.

The check-in procedure is basically identical to the ETA. The key benefit to this approach is that airlines that use the ETA immediately have access to standard APP.

The APP system will handle entries of up to five passengers at a time, providing all passengers are uniquely identified. The system provides some flexibility for airlines that may wish to tailor their interface to meet their own market place needs.

APP is available for airlines that wish to fully automate the capture of passenger bio data and print it on the front of the Incoming Passenger Card. A unique identifier is simultaneously coded onto the card's magnetic stripe section.

The check-in staff entries are made in the airline's departure control system, which then sends the data to the APP system. This option requires some development work by the airline.

Service delivery

The level of service (i.e. EXPRESS Lane clearance) that is afforded to APP passengers is a standard of 95% of passengers processed through passport control in 20 minutes.

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