

CHAPTER

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**International Civil  
Aviation Organization**





## International Civil Aviation Organization

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)<sup>1</sup> sets global standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. It is the only UN specialized agency with the mandate and responsibility for establishing, maintaining and promoting Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) on the issuance and verification of machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs), such as passports, and related identification management and border control issues. In this way, ICAO helps ensure cross-border interoperability, enhance facilitation, increase confidence in the reliability of travel documents, and strengthen national and international security, thereby enabling migrants and their families to benefit from their mobility. It also conducts research and prepares reports on new technologies available today or potentially in the future for use in MRTDs.<sup>2</sup>

In assuring travel document security and border security, and also increasingly through robust unique identification management systems,<sup>3</sup> ICAO helps develop States' capacities to establish and manage regular forms of cross-border mobility that can benefit all stakeholders. By aligning its regulatory and capacity-building initiatives for identification management, travel documents and border controls with evolving aviation security and facilitation frameworks, it supports inter-State cooperation on safer global travel. Secure travel documents and global regimes for document security, such as the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), support both multilateral cooperation in managing regular migration and the individual protection of migrants and the benefits they can bring for development.

<sup>1</sup> ICAO is a UN specialized agency created in 1944, with a mandate under the 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation (the "Chicago Convention") to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It serves as the global forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Members States. The official ICAO website is available at [www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int).

<sup>2</sup> ICAO MRTD technical specifications are published in Document 9303, "Machine Readable Travel Documents." Since 1986, these specifications have been developed through the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents (TAG-MRTD), composed of experts nominated by States and the civil aviation industry. The ICAO New Technologies Working Group both sets standards and conducts research.

<sup>3</sup> The thirty-seventh session of the ICAO Assembly particularly recognized the importance of a robust identification management system for travel document security and urged the development of guidance material related to evidence of identification, for example, "breeder" documents.

## 1. Migration and development activities since the 2006 High-level Dialogue

Since 2006, a number of ICAO activities have focused on assisting States in MRTD-related matters, including capacity-building activities that have relevance to international migration. To promote awareness of travel document issues, ICAO organizes an annual MRTD symposium and exhibition, and biannual regional seminars on the subject of MRTDs, biometrics and border security.

The 2012 MRTD Symposium included a session on the human dimension of travel documents and identity management in relief operations, international development and humanitarian assistance. It also built on the ICAO MRTD Programme's ongoing cooperation with UNHCR. The next MRTD symposium and exhibition will take place from 22 to 24 October 2013 and will focus on automated border controls for enhancing the security and facilitation of border operations.

Other activities undertaken regularly since 2006 include the following:

- (a) Regional workshops of a range of matters relating to travel document security, identification management, and migration and border control, often with a practical vocational training component;
- (b) Capacity gap and needs assessment missions focused on risk areas related to travel document security, integrity of the issuance process, and migration and border control-related matters;
- (c) Technical cooperation and assistance to States and implementation of projects for new MRTDs and related migration and border control matters;
- (d) Maintaining and updating the MRTD website, which provides Member States, working groups and other users with the latest relevant information on universal travel document specifications and related border control matters;<sup>4</sup>
- (e) Dissemination of a triannual magazine, the *MRTD Report*, to inform and educate the professional community on current MRTD issues, including those related to identification management, travel documents, migration and border control. The *MRTD Report* is available free of charge, in both print and downloadable formats.<sup>5</sup>

To better manage its MRTD-related assistance activities, the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on Machine-readable Travel Documents (TAG-MRTD) established the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) in 2008. The ICBWG

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<sup>4</sup> For more about the MRTD Programme, visit [www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/default.aspx).

<sup>5</sup> To browse the *MRTD Report*, visit [www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/MRTDReportMagazine.aspx](http://www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/MRTDReportMagazine.aspx).

assists the Secretariat in implementation, education, promotion, assistance and other capacity-building matters relating to identification management, MRTDs and border controls.

The new ICAO Traveller Identification Programme Strategy approved by the ICAO Council will be considered at the thirty-eighth session of the Assembly, which will run from 24 September to 4 October 2013. It is a holistic, systematic model for traveller identification management aimed at ensuring that all Member States are able to uniquely identify individuals.

ICAO has established the Public Key Directory (PKD) – a cooperative, interoperable regime for passport security that is accessible to all ICAO Member States. E-passport validation using the ICAO PKD helps border authorities to detect fraudulent documents. The PKD acts as a central broker, managing the multilateral exchange of certificates and certificate revocation lists, which are used to validate the digital signature on the chip.

The PKD is recognized as a valuable instrument, currently without a viable alternative, for implementing the specifications contained in Document 9303 (see footnote 2). It also ensures interoperability and adherence to technical standards, while minimizing the volume of digital information being exchanged. The total number of PKD-participating States as of March 2013 was 37.<sup>6</sup>

## **2. Support provided to the Global Forum on Migration and Development**

ICAO is not a member of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

## **3. Identified good practices**

With regard to MRTD matters, best practices identified in technical documents and guidance materials are readily available on the ICAO website.<sup>7</sup> Among the most notable global best practices is the PKD, which facilitates a more multilateral approach to recognizing travel documents and managing safe, regular travel across borders.

<sup>6</sup> Detailed PKD information and updates are available at [www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/icaoPKD.aspx](http://www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/icaoPKD.aspx).

<sup>7</sup> MRTD-related technical reports and guidance materials are available at [www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/Downloads.aspx](http://www.icao.int/Security/mrtd/Pages/Downloads.aspx).

## 4. Challenges identified in carrying out ICAO MRTD work

The challenges identified in carrying out ICAO MRTD include the following:

- (a) Limited ICAO presence in the field, especially in the developing world where the needs for technical assistance are greatest;
- (b) A need for intensified outreach efforts and ongoing technical dialogue with Member States on MRTD, identification management and border control matters;
- (c) Limited institutional resources, making it necessary to seek external donor funding for capacity-building activities;
- (d) A need to enhance and streamline communication with relevant government agencies in Member States.

## 5. Gaps evident within the migration and development sphere

The following gaps within the migration and development sphere have been identified by ICAO:

- (a) Remaining weaknesses in identification management or travel document security tend to be exploited by terrorists and criminals worldwide, and present a weak link in global efforts to ensure security, stability, good governance and the rule of law. Numerous States face challenges in implementing international standards and specifications, because of the lack of funds or technical knowledge, or both. Further options for the international community to provide assistance, through technical cooperation projects, are therefore required.
- (b) A few States still do not issue machine-readable passports in accordance with ICAO specifications, despite the 1 April 2010 deadline for their issuance, and a few States still do not issue machine-readable passports that are fully compliant with ICAO standards and specifications.<sup>8</sup>
- (c) An ICAO Annex 9 standard requires all non-machine readable passports to be out of circulation by 24 November 2015.<sup>9</sup> The TAG-MRTD has endorsed a communications plan with regard to this deadline, to be implemented by the ICAO Secretariat, in coordination with the ICBWG.

<sup>8</sup> Annex 9 (“Facilitation”), Standard 3.10 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation states that “Contracting States shall begin issuing only [machine-readable passports] in accordance with the specifications of Doc 9303, Part 1, no later than 1 April 2010.”

<sup>9</sup> Annex 9 (“Facilitation”), Standard 3.10.1 requires that “[f]or passports issued after 24 November 2005 and which are not machine-readable, Contracting States shall ensure the expiration date falls before 24 November 2015.”

- (d) Passport controls are processed manually in some States, without the use of an automated database and MRTD-aligned passport readers. In addition, there is often no “watch list” functionality.
- (e) A number of States issuing e-passports do not participate in the ICAO PKD and do not share the certificate information by any other means, preventing other States from authenticating e-passports presented at borders.
- (f) In a number of States, immigration and passport officials appear to have insufficient knowledge of migrant processing and passport examination, and generally have not undergone specialized vocational training. This means they cannot apply modern secure MRTD and migrant processing techniques, with negative implications for border security and integrity.
- (g) In a number of States, the issued UNHCR 1951 and 1954 Convention travel documents are not ICAO-compliant.
- (h) The security and integrity of MRTDs are only as robust as the breeder documents used to verify an individual’s identity. In a number of States, breeder document systems are not satisfactory.

## **6. Recommendations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue**

Recommendations for the 2013 HLD include the following:

- (a) Travel documents should be issued according to ICAO standards. ICAO-compliant travel documents facilitate sharing of information about travellers’ identities, and enhance border controls that apply to international migrants.
- (b) States issuing e-passports should join the ICAO Public Key Directory, and all receiving States should verify the digital signatures associated with the e-passports.
- (c) To further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of border controls, States should consider employing electronic data and mobile technologies for processes related to identification management and migration.
- (d) States should align their MRTD and border control assistance and capacity-building efforts with the broader international development agenda, in order to enhance the sustainability of these activities.

