

ACL Guidance on the management of slots at Dubai Airports during the Northern Winter 2021 (W21) IATA Season

MANAGEMENT OF A TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN AVAILABLE CAPACITY AS A RESULT OF REDUCED DEMAND AND CAPACITY LIMITATIONS DUE TO COVID-19 TESTING REQUIREMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance sets out the process for managing slots during W21. The requirement to test passengers for Covid-19 and reduced demand has presented challenges with managing slots at Dubai International Airport. The late return of slots to the pool is preventing carriers that do wish to operate from doing so and making it difficult for Dubai Airports from determining the required capacity.

Demand remains variable due to the challenging and changing environment around the world. However additional capacity has been made available with Terminal 1 becoming available and additional testing capability.

As we approach W21, ACL will discontinue the process of mini coordination, and instead focus on moving towards a hybrid approach based on granting alleviation to full series slots allocated for W21 that were previously allocated to that carrier in W20 or exchanged prior to 31 August 2021, provided they are returned to the coordinator between HBD and 2355 UTC on 02 September 2021 (HBD+2), and setting of a utilisation target for series slots left in the database after HBD+2. Shortly after HBD+2, ACL will assess the remaining slots left in the database and if required will smooth out remaining demand that exceeds the reduced supply of capacity. This paper will set out the process, allocation priorities and deadlines in the spirit of transparency.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this process is to:

- 2.1. Manage the demand for airport infrastructure against a reduced supply of capacity.
- 2.2. Move the process back towards the standard coordination process giving carriers increased control of managing their own portfolio.
- 2.3. Limit schedule smoothing to only the periods that require it rather than an entire mini coordination exercise.
- 2.4. Provide the mechanism to support the release of capacity and ensure it is available for use as soon as it is released.
- 2.5. Give certainty that the allocated slots can be accommodated within the available capacity to avoid inconvenience and hardship to passengers.
- 2.6. Reduce the amount of enforced cancellations and/or retimes.
- 2.7. Provide a process that is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory.
- 2.8. Ensure that any capacity reduction is spread across all Carriers that hold slots at the airport that use the affected infrastructure.
- 2.9. Provide reassurance to Carriers that hold historic rights that these will be protected for use in the subsequent seasons when capacity returns to the formal Declared Capacity.

3. PRINCIPLES OF CAPACITY REDUCTION

- 3.1. The coordinator will only seek to smooth schedule after carriers have had the opportunity to return slots between HBD and HBD+2 that they do not intend to use and have claimed alleviation.
- 3.2. The Coordinator will aim to satisfy as much demand as possible based on the available Temporary Capacity.
- 3.3. This process will be followed in a single phase covering the entire season.
- 3.4. Dubai Airports has advised the temporary capacity will be a continuation of S21.
- 3.5. Airlines with historic entitlement in W21 may not be able to utilise this entitlement because of reduced capacity, however where this is the case the historic entitlement will be protected for the subsequent season when capacity returns to the formal declared capacity.
- 3.6. Any cancellations or retimes that result in the return of slots requested by the Coordinator will be provided alleviation.
- 3.7. Terminal allocations will be advised by Dubai Airports and the coordinator will base allocation decisions on the capacity available in that terminal.

4. PROCESS

Slot Alleviation and Utilisation Target

- 4.1. Dubai Airports has advised that the temporary capacity limits for W21 will follow a similar approach to that of S21 and will be reviewed.
- 4.2. ACL will take the historic baseline on or shortly after 31 August 2021. Slots held in the database at that time will form the basis for historic entitlement in Northern Winter 2022.
- 4.3. ACL will grant alleviation to full series, K coded, slots allocated for W21 that were previously allocated to that carrier in W20 or exchanged prior to 31 August 2021, provided they are returned to the coordinator between HBD and 2355 UTC on 02 September 2021 (HBD+2).
- 4.4. Historic Eligibility Local Rule will still apply up to the historic baseline date of 31 August 2021, thereafter, carriers may reduce their historic slot holdings in the period up to HBD+2.
- 4.5. Carriers intending to return slots to claim alleviation and then request adhoc slots should do so in separate messages. Please do not submit action codes D and N on the same message during this period.
- 4.6. The submission deadline for newly requested slots after claiming alleviation on historic slots is 2355 UTC on 02 September 2021. New slot requests will be allocated on first come, first served basis on or shortly after 03 September 2021.
- 4.7. ACL will apply a utilisation target of 50% for all remaining historic slots left in the database after HBD+2.
- 4.8. For newly allocated slots, labelled as T coded slots, to be considered as historic slots in W22, a utilisation target of 50% must be achieved on slots held in the database without any cancellations being made up to HBD+2.

Coordination of Temporary Limits

- 4.9. ACL will perform a mini coordination to smooth any slots exceeding the temporary capacity limits and communicate the results no later than 10 September 2021 by issuing an SIR.
- 4.10. Newly allocated slots, labelled as T coded slots, will be adjusted to fit within available capacity first as historic slots hold historical precedence. Thereafter, historic slots may also require adjustments. This will include a combination of mandatory seat caps and/or retimes.

- 4.11. Slots that remain on the waitlist will be given priority for improvements (and allocated on a non-historic/ad hoc basis) over newly requested slots requested after the baseline creation date.
- 4.12. Should two or more Carriers have the requested the same slot time, ACL will consider the additional criteria as set out in clause 8.4 of the IATA WASG ensuring that a fair distribution of flights is maintained based on slots held at the HBD+2.
- 4.13. All requests that cannot be satisfied within the available capacity will remain on the waitlist or maybe no slotted. The waitlist will be reviewed regularly by ACL, and improvements made as airlines cancel or new capacity is made available.
- 4.14. Any requests for cancellations by the Coordinator will be granted alleviation.
- 4.15. Coordination will be based on the available capacity including the requirement for PCR testing. Only those countries that require testing will be considered against the PCR constraint during coordination.
- 4.16. In preparation for the mini coordination, ACL will switch off OCS access for the period.

Use it or Lose it Calculation

- 4.17. Carriers not planning to operate should return slots as soon as possible so they can be reallocated. Slots returned within four weeks of the operation will **not** count towards the 50% utilisation target.
- 4.18. Non-utilisation of slots will also be treated as a cancellation and **not** count towards the 50% utilisation target.
- 4.19. Change of service type will be permitted to count towards the 50% utilisation calculation. The change will only be permitted using C/R and/or C/L action codes.
- 4.20. ACL will maintain the principle of airlines not increasing their slot portfolio whilst benefiting from alleviation.

Justification for the Non-Utilisation of Slots (JNUS)

- 4.21. Justification for cancellation within four weeks is defined as a restriction that prevents a flight from operating to/from a specific destination or countries for which the slot was held, and such change or introduction of such restrictions occurred within the four weeks of the planned operation.
- 4.22. Newly announced restrictions imposed that prevents the ability to operate will be considered for force majeure for a period of four weeks after the effective date.
- 4.23. Known imposed restrictions, defined as a restriction that has been imposed for more than four weeks prior to the commencement of W21, will not be considered for force majeure.

- 4.24. For the avoidance of doubt, bilateral agreements, Government, landing and/or overflight permissions/permits, internal COVID-19 restrictions including testing measures which are not directly linked to the ability to operate, commercial considerations or poor booked loads, slot restrictions down-route, security restrictions which are not directly linked to the ability to operate, operational technical issues including bird strikes and weather issues would not be considered as a reason for alleviation for slots cancelled within four weeks.
- 4.25. The burden of proof rests with the operator to justify the non-utilisation of the slot.

5. PCR TESTING

- 5.1. Appendix 1 identifies the current list of countries that require PCR testing at Dubai International Airport.
- 5.2. If a country is added to the list during the season, ACL will review if capacity is available under the infrastructure applicable to the testing. If capacity is not available, the slot will be offered the nearest available time based on available capacity or no slotted where no alternative is available. The slot will remain on the waitlist should capacity become available.
- 5.3. If a country is removed from the list, and slots not allocated as required, will be reviewed for improvements.

6. TIMELINE

Historic Baseline Created:	31 August 2021
Hand Back Deadline + 2:	02 September 2021
Operators Submission Deadline:	02 September 2021
Coordinator advises airlines of allocations:	10 September 2021

7. TRANSPARENCY

All allocation will be available on OCS and by requests an all airport/carrier SIR once the coordination exercises have been completed.

8. ALLEVIATION

Alleviation will be granted to slots cancelled in compliance with this process. Appendix 2 outlines the process in flow diagram format.

9. HISTORICS

Historics for the subsequent season will be based on the allocation held on 31 August 2021.

Any slot that has been issued on a non-historic basis may be granted historic eligibility in the subsequent season, if the 50% utilisation target is achieved.

10. COMPLIANCE

ACL will review any failure to operate to the times allocated and may refer poor performance to the Slot Performance Committee (SPC) that may result in sanctions or historic entitlement being removed.

Appendix 1 – List of PCR Countries

List effective from 30 June 2021, 00:00LT

Middle East & Africa					
Angola	Guinea	Kenya	Somaliland	Tunisia	Qatar
Djibouti	Iran	Lebanon	South Africa	Uganda	Oman
Egypt	Iraq	Morocco	South Sudan	Zambia	Bahrain
Eritrea	Israel	Nigeria	Sudan	Zimbabwe	
Ethiopia	Ivory Coast	Rwanda	Syria	Somalia	
Ghana	Jordan	Senegal	Tanzania	Kuwait	

Europe			
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Georgia	Moldova	Russia
Croatia	Hungary	Montenegro	Slovakia
Cyprus	Malta	Poland	Ukraine

Asia			
Afghanistan	Indonesia	Pakistan	Turkmenistan
Bangladesh	Kyrgyzstan	Philippine	Uzbekistan
Cambodia	Myanmar	Sri Lanka	Vietnam
India	Nepal	Tajikistan	Turkey

South America		
Argentina	Brazil	Chile

Appendix 2 – NW2021 – Dubai International Airport Alleviation process

