

ACL Guidance on the management of slots at Dubai Airports during the Northern Summer 2022 (S22) IATA Season

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

1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance sets out the process for managing slots during S22. The requirement to test passengers for Covid-19 has presented challenges with managing slots at Dubai International Airport. The late return of slots to the pool is also preventing carriers that do wish to operate from doing so and creating planning and operational challenges for the airport community.

Demand remains variable due to the challenging and changing environment around the world. However, additional capacity has been made available across the airport and all DXB facilities are now open, temporary limits remain in place to cover Covid-19 related capacity constraints, including PCR testing.

As we approach S22, ACL will continue the focus of using a hybrid approach, based on granting alleviation to full series slots allocated for S22 that were previously allocated to that carrier in S21 or exchanged prior to 31 January 2022. This is provided that they are returned to the coordinator between HBD and 2355 UTC on 02 February 2022 (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 due to expected Covid-19 testing requirements.
- 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 are required, 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 number 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.
- 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 the 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 W21.
- 3.5. Airlines with historic entitlement in S22 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 S22 will follow a similar approach to that of W21 and will be reviewed periodically, considering changes to the travel protocol.
- 4.2. ACL will take the historic baseline on or shortly after 31 January 2022. Slots held in the database at that time will form the basis for historic entitlement in Northern Summer 2023.
- 4.3. The historic entitlement will be based on the period of 04 July 2022 to the end of S22, in accordance with the DXB S22 Northern Runway Rehabilitation (NRR) Airline Briefing Presentation.
- 4.4. ACL will grant alleviation for historic K coded slots allocated for S22 that were previously allocated to that carrier in S21 or exchanged prior to 31 January 2022. This is provided that they are returned to the coordinator between HBD and 2355 UTC on 02 September 2022 (HBD+2).
- 4.5. Carriers intending to return slots to claim alleviation and then request ad hoc 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. Carriers should ensure that slots within the Northern Runway Rehabilitation (NRR) closure period, between 09 May 2022 at 1100 UTC and 22 June 2022 at 1400 UTC, are not returned to ACL, unless these are unwanted.
- 4.7. Slots held pre- and post- the NRR period can be returned to ACL. Please note, force majeure is being granted from the start of the season to 03 July 2022 for the NRR period. Historic slots returned for the period of 04 July 2022 to the end of the season will be granted alleviation.
- 4.8. The submission deadline for newly requested slots after claiming alleviation on historic slots is 2355 UTC on 02 February 2022. New slot requests will be allocated using a fair and transparent distribution across all carriers.
- 4.9. ACL will apply a utilisation target of 70% for all remaining historic slots left in the database after HBD+2.
- 4.10. For newly allocated slots, labelled as T coded slots, to be considered as historic slots in S23, a utilisation target of 70% must be achieved on slots held in the database, from 04 July 2022 to the end of the season, without any cancellations being made up to HBD+2.

Coordination of Temporary Limits

- 4.11. ACL will perform a mini coordination to smooth any slots exceeding the temporary capacity limits and communicate the results no later than 10 February 2022 by issuing an SIR.
- 4.12. 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.
- 4.13. 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.
- 4.14. Should two or more Carriers request 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.
- 4.15. 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.
- 4.16. Any requests for cancellations by the Coordinator will be granted alleviation.
- 4.17. 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.
- 4.18. In preparation for the mini coordination, ACL will switch off OCS access for the period.

Use it or Lose it Calculation

- 4.19. Change of service type will be permitted to count towards the 70% 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 S22, 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 January 2022
Hand Back Deadline + 2:	02 February 2022
Operators Submission Deadline:	02 February 2022
Coordinator Advises Airlines of Allocations:	10 February 2022

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 January 2022.

Any slot that has been issued on a non-historic basis may be granted historic eligibility in the subsequent season if the 70% 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 (PCR on Arrival)

List effective from 05 December 2021, 00:00LT

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

Europe			
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Georgia	Romania	Russia
Ukraine	Slovakia	Turkey	

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

South America		
Argentina	Brazil	Chile

Appendix 2 – NS2022 – Dubai International Airport Alleviation process

