



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POLICY WHITE PAPER

# HARMONISING AIR TRAVEL

MAY 2022



01

## Objective of the White Paper

This White Paper sets out a policy that would help eradicate the confusion experienced by passengers, carriers and governments relating to air travel, by creating a single, clear, up-to-date online resource setting out requirements for entry to all participating countries.

The policy is based on four key principles:

- To harmonise the health information requested from air passengers
- To improve information sharing and transparency
- To protect the health and safety of passengers
- To restore and retain passenger trust

02

## Projected Impact

The policy will make international travel simpler, easier and more enjoyable by removing confusion over travel requirements currently discouraging millions of people from booking flights.

Based on analysis conducted on the period March 2020 to December 2021, the policy's expected beneficial economic impact (had it been enacted, in a base case scenario), was estimated at approximately USD 1.1 trillion.

03

## Context and Background

This policy will ensure international aviation operators are able to easily access travel health requirements and respond to future health crises such as pandemics in a unified manner, thereby improving their collective resilience.

To give context, according to a recent YouGov survey<sup>1</sup>, a third of people in the United States, and 40 percent of people in both the United Kingdom and Italy said they would not travel by air in 2022 because of a lack of clarity on travel restrictions.

In the Arabian Gulf, close to half of respondents said the issue would prevent them booking flights for the remainder of the year.

With the co-operation and guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), this white paper proposes the establishment of a universally recognised and accepted international health requirement framework for air passengers.

<sup>1</sup> YouGov Research (2022)

## 04

### Characteristics and features

The policy enables governments to communicate clearly and effectively with airlines, passengers and other parties regarding the health related restrictions that may apply for entry. It allows for swift and centralised communications to deal with future health emergencies.

*It works by providing:*

- a harmonised international reporting mechanism for travel related health requirements
- purpose built digital communication tools to report on and manage the response to health crises that affect air travel
- innovative, world-class governance and coordination processes
- a system to facilitate adoption of a globally-recognised Digital Health Certificate.

Based on the pillars above, travellers will have access to clear guidelines and requirements needed to get from origin to arrival. The universal platform will be able to integrate all existing international aviation and government-to-government health crises communication systems.

## 05

### Role of GACA and KSA contribution to global aviation

The General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia (GACA) will present the white paper at the Future Aviation Forum in Riyadh in May, 2022, with the aim of obtaining sufficient engagement and support from key stakeholders for it to be presented at the 41st ICAO General Assembly, to be held later in 2022.

This policy white paper illustrates the Kingdom's commitment to supporting global efforts to enhance the resilience of the air transport sector in direct alignment to resolutions undertaken at the ICAO High-Level Conference on Covid-19<sup>2</sup>.

## 06

### Conclusion

The white paper is informed by the principle of reducing complexity for air passengers regarding restrictions or requirements for entry that apply in individual countries, particularly during future global health emergencies.

It proposes the introduction of a universal framework to harmonise health information protocols, with the objective of providing a clear understanding of these for passengers. It will also limit reductions to passenger traffic volumes during future health emergencies whilst creating more resilient aviation systems.

<sup>2</sup> ICAO High-Level Conference on Covid-19 (October 2021)