

# Registered traveller programs - a public and private partnership

**Nanne Onland**, explains why registered traveller programs can be successfully operated via a public-private partnership and how they fit into the bigger picture of e-borders.

In a world where international travel increasingly means heightened security checks and longer waiting times, a new type of service program is emerging for those travellers prepared to voluntarily undertake upfront security screening in return for expedited clearance facilities for border passage and security along with other membership services included within the program. These registered traveller (RT) programs are emerging throughout the world, sometimes initiated by government authorities and sometimes by the private sector.

Border Authorities around the world will have to adapt to huge changes in the border management processes in the coming years. There is a clear trend towards more intelligence-led border operations whereby ultimately the border authorities of the destination country will be able to tell the traveller before boarding the plane whether they are welcome or not. The Border Police officer at the port of arrival will become the last line of defence rather than the first.

This so called 'e-borders' concept will, as a consequence, lead to tremendously different logistic operational flows at the various ports of embarkation and arrival – from a current situation where human border police resources check everybody manually towards a future where 'known' passengers are processed automatically/semi automatically. The future will see border officers dealing with exceptions rather than granting admission to the country. In fact, we could theoretically foresee that the vast majority of the travellers arriving at certain borders will be (pre) registered travellers and hence a 'friendly flow'.

In combination with the use of biometric technologies such as e-passports, automated processing and risk profiling based on traveller status, completely new logistical flow concepts for handling travellers will emerge at land, sea and air ports. Carriers, ports and authorities will have to revise their current (often independent) processes to create new definitions and agreements for the facilitation of travellers.

To implement e-borders concepts a paradigm shift is necessary; it will take time, investments and careful migration planning to come to realisation. Taking into account the slow growth of the number of people carrying e-passports, the investment in infrastructure and systems as well as the bilateral and multilateral agreements that need to take effect, realistically we are looking at a change that will gradually take place over the next decade to say the least.



Nanne Onland, Director of Dartagnan BV, a full daughter of Schiphol Group, the Netherlands has spent the last four years being responsible for the aviation and transportation business of the company. He started his career at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol 11 years ago where he fulfilled a number of assignments dealing with introducing and delivering innovative passenger services.

Yet, where authorities and aviation parties have to think and act big, they can very well start smart by working together to gain experience for large scale roll out of automated border passage by setting up RT programs on a voluntary basis for frequent travellers. The continuing rapid growth of international traveller volumes along with increasing global security requirements have tremendously impacted travellers. Longer waiting times, increased and more complex security measures often coupled with indifferent service are typically the reward for departing and arriving travellers. The more frequent the travel, the more frequent the recurring problems are encountered. RT programs present all stakeholders with a great opportunity to work together today and yet prepare for the future:

- Airlines and airport operators have a great incentive to increase non-aviated revenue improve service levels for frequent travellers and to build on customer intimacy and increased quality perception.
- Government authorities have an incentive to better utilise existing limited resources by facilitating friendly flow and match resource to risk.
- Last but not least frequent travellers in principle just want to get from A to B without any hurdles and master their own time and are often prepared to pay a premium to achieve this.

With each party doing what they do best, the government setting the rules, regulations and undertaking the enforcement and the private sector dealing with the logistical challenges, the investments and management of the program/facilities to ensure premium customer service, quality and performance, immediate benefits for all involved can be realised. Established programs such as Privum (Netherlands) and Sapphire (Indonesia) demonstrate there is demand for these services.

RT programs increasingly form an integral part of Government e-border ambitions and are seen as an intermediate step towards full-scale automated mass border control for all travellers. Currently the European Commission is investigating an EU wide RT program for entry and exit across European borders, leading to new policy proposals for Member States in 2008. ■

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