

IATA's digital Covid Travel Pass could spark meaningful recovery of int'l travel

A Monitor Report

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Geneva : The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has stated its digital Covid Travel Pass will be ready 'within weeks'. The pass, in the form of a mobile app, should alleviate the severity of travel restrictions and quarantine measures while boosting traveller confidence.

IATA's Travel Pass is not the golden ticket to an instant recovery for the global travel sector, but it will no doubt help. According to GlobalData, international air arrivals decreased by 48.1 per cent YOY (Year-Over-Year) in 2020. Due to this unprecedented drop in demand, which has now continued into the start of 2021, ongoing testing, tracing and vaccinations rollouts will need to be continued alongside the implementation of the digital Covid Travel Pass in order to ensure a strong and sustained recovery.

International travel is a possibility this summer and the success of vaccine rollouts may allow for short-haul travel to resume between many economically developed nations. However, low traveller confidence may still stop many from travelling. According to GlobalData's Week 11 COVID-19 Recovery Survey (fieldwork undertaken December 2-6, 2020), 52 per cent of global respondents stated that they are either 'quite' or 'extremely' concerned regarding restrictions on international travel, IATA's Travel Pass should help to ease these ongoing apprehensions. The app

confirms if a passenger has had the appropriate Covid-19 tests or vaccines required to enter a country. This will assure travellers that there will be no nasty surprises when they enter the destination such as restrictions on movement.

Etihad, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Air New Zealand are some of the airlines currently conducting trials of the Travel Pass. IATA has stated that it is discussing the pass with most airlines throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It is likely that all airlines that are approached will get on board with this initiative as it is seen as something that will strengthen and speed up recovery, which poses obvious advantages for them.