

Airport slot alleviation measures for Northern Summer 2022 (NS22)

WASB Recommendation

The following details the recommendation of the Worldwide Airport Slot Board (WASB) concerning the Northern Summer 2022 season and slot use alleviation

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Worldwide Airport Slot Board recognizes that different countries and regions are recovering and reopening at different rates.
- 1.2. The Worldwide Airport Slot Board notes that the European Union adopted an amendment to the Slot Regulation that delegated powers to the European Commission to extend slot relief until the end of the Summer 2022 season, if necessary, and to adapt the slot usage requirement within a range of 30-70% without the option for full series alleviation.
- 1.3. Other regulators adopted the Worldwide Airport Slot Board Recommendation for Northern Summer 2021 and then Northern Winter 2021 in full or provided alternative slot alleviation measures. These same regulators have not yet indicated their approach for Northern Summer 2022.
- 1.4. In light of the above, the Worldwide Airport Slot Board recommends to regulators who may wish to opt for extending airport slot alleviation measures for Northern Summer 2022 to do it with the principles outlined in Section 2. Where conditions allow, regulators should aim at progressively reinstating the policies and provisions contained in the Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines.
- 1.5. The Worldwide Airport Slot Board invites the competent regulatory authorities to take full account of the principles in Section 2 when considering slot alleviation measures. The WASB further recognizes that local competent authorities will make the final decision on how they adapt the principles below to the circumstances and needs of their local market.

2. PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1. When considering the most appropriate alleviation measures, the fact that **carriers may operate flights to/from different type of markets** shall be duly taken into account when providing an approach for NS22.
- 2.2. Further consideration shall be given to **changing circumstances in various markets**, which may occur during the season. In such situations, full regard shall be given to JNUS provisions in Section 3.

2.3. In **severely restricted markets**, that is countries, airports or regions where travel restriction levels prevent a sustained recovery. For example, restrictions that prevent all but essential travel, require mandatory quarantine or isolation even in case of negative COVID test, imply restrictions on crew layovers with quarantine, or restrict reopening to nationals and residents only, restrict frequency of operation and/or imply caps on load carried inbound to the country:

2.3.1. Full series of historic slots (other than newly allocated series) for which a carrier wishes to claim full season alleviation should be returned between the Historic Baseline Date (HBD) and HBD+7days. The coordinator will alleviate the series and place them in the slot pool for reallocation and use on a non-historic basis only.

2.3.2. Series of slots held at HBD that are not returned or are only partially returned at the deadline of HBD+7 days will be subject to the utilization requirement set for that season to secure the historic precedence in the subsequent equivalent season.

2.3.3. The utilization rate should be set at a maximum of 50:50; and WASG art. 8.7.2.2 shall be suspended.

2.3.4. Slot series returned between HBD and HBD +7 should not be reallocated to the same carrier for the same use within four weeks of HBD +7, unless there is a valid reason confirmed by the slot coordinator for reallocating these slots for use.

2.3.5. Airlines must hand back *any* series of slots not intended for utilization as soon as possible but no later than HBD/HBD+7. Slots held after HBD+7 which cannot be operated due to COVID-19 restrictions must be returned without delay but not later than six weeks prior to planned operation. Retiming and repurposing of slots within the six-week period is allowed provided that capacity is available.

2.4. In **partially restricted markets**, that is countries, airports or regions where travel is permitted with restrictions. For example, travel is permitted for vaccinated passengers but require quarantine for non-vaccinated passengers and more than one COVID test per passenger regardless of vaccination status, crew are subject to testing and arrival processes (not quarantine) that restrict scheduling flexibility:

2.4.1. Between 20% to 50% of full series of historic slots (other than newly allocated series) for which a carrier wishes to claim full season alleviation should be returned between the Historic Baseline Date (HBD) and HBD+7days. The cap on full series returns should be set at a level deemed necessary to sufficiently address the share of historic traffic to restricted and other recovering markets. The coordinator will alleviate the series and place them in the slot pool for reallocation and use on a non-historic basis only.

2.4.2. To maintain global reciprocity, an air carrier operating from a severely restricted market should be provided the ability to return all their full series of historic slots

(other than newly allocated series). Slots alleviated to comply with reciprocity requirements may only be reallocated for ad hoc operations.

- 2.4.3. Series of slots held at HBD that are not returned or are only partially returned at the deadline of HBD+7 days will be subject to the utilization requirement set for that season to secure the historic precedence in the subsequent equivalent season.
 - 2.4.4. The utilization rate should be set within a range of 60% to 70% (i.e. 60:40 to 70:30); and WASG art. 8.7.2.2 shall be suspended.
 - 2.4.5. Slot series returned between HBD and HBD +7 should not be reallocated to the same carrier for the same use within four weeks of HBD +7, unless there is a valid reason confirmed by the slot coordinator for reallocating these slots for use.
 - 2.4.6. Airlines must hand back any series of slots not intended for utilization as soon as possible but no later than HBD/HBD+7. Slots held after HBD+7 which cannot be operated due to COVID-19 restrictions must be returned without delay but not later than six weeks prior to planned operation. Retiming and repurposing of slots within the six-week period is allowed provided that capacity is available.
- 2.5. In **reopening markets**, that is countries, airports or regions where travel is permitted for vaccinated passengers, and at most a single PCR test is required for non-vaccinated passengers, with crew restrictions eliminated:
- 2.5.1. Up to 20% of full series of historic slots (other than newly allocated series) for which a carrier wishes to claim full season alleviation should be returned between the Historic Baseline Date (HBD) and HBD+7days. The cap on full series returns should be set at a level deemed necessary to sufficiently address the share of historic traffic to restricted and other recovering markets. The coordinator will alleviate the series and place them in the slot pool for reallocation and use on a non-historic basis only.
 - 2.5.2. To maintain global reciprocity, an air carrier operating from a severely restricted market should be provided the ability to return all their full series of historic slots (other than newly allocated series). Slots alleviated due to reciprocity requirements may only be reallocated for ad hoc operations
 - 2.5.3. Series of slots held at HBD that are not returned or are only partially returned at the deadline of HBD+7 days will be subject to the utilization requirement set for that season to secure the historic precedence in the subsequent equivalent season.
 - 2.5.4. The utilization rate should be set within a range of 60% to 70% (i.e. 60:40 to 70:30); and WASG art. 8.7.2.2 shall be suspended.
 - 2.5.5. Airlines must hand back slots not intended for utilization as soon as possible but no later than HBD/HBD+7. Slots held after HBD+7 which cannot be operated due to COVID-19 restrictions must be returned without delay but not later than

six weeks prior to planned operation. Retiming and repurposing of slots within the six-week period is allowed provided that capacity is available.

2.6. In **open markets**, that is countries, regions or local (domestic) markets where travel is permitted for all passengers:

2.6.1. The slot utilization rate should be set at 80% (i.e. 80:20) where travel takes place within and/or between open markets. For historic traffic to all other markets, the same full series returns and the maximum utilization rate principles for reopening markets should apply.

2.7. Where full series alleviation is permitted, series of slots allocated and operated as approved on a non-historic basis have priority over new demand for the same timings in the next equivalent season, subject to capacity and any other legal conditions.

2.8. For the initial coordination of NS23, series operated as stated in the previous paragraph during NS21 and NS22 will have priority over series operated in such a manner only in NS22.

2.9. Airlines should return without delay slots of flights that are not intended to be operated or of flights they do not have the operational resources to perform.

3. JUSTIFIED NON-UTILIZATION OF SLOTS (JNUS)

3.1. The existing justified non-use criteria in art. 8.8 of the WASG does not capture specific restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that may prevent airlines from operating scheduled flights for reasons other than commercial cancellations.

3.2. Coordinators should accept as valid justification for the non-utilization of series of slots, any prolonged or new government restrictions, to specific airports, destinations (including intermediate points) or countries for which the slot was held, such as examples listed hereafter.

3.2.1. Government travel restrictions based on nationality, closed borders, government advisories related to COVID-19 that warn against all but essential travel, or complete bans on flights from/to certain countries or geographic areas.

3.2.2. Severe government restrictions related to COVID-19 on the maximum number of arriving or departing passengers on a specific flight or through a specific airport.

3.2.3. Government restrictions on movement or quarantine/isolation measures within the country or region where the airport or destination (including intermediate points) is.

3.2.4. Government-imposed closure of businesses essential to support aviation activities (e.g. closure of hotels as well as public facilities such as restaurants and leisure venues).

3.2.5. Unforeseeable restrictions on airline crew, including sudden bans on entry or crew stranded in unexpected locations due to quarantine measures.

3.3. Furthermore, enhanced transparency regarding the application of JNUS criteria is necessary to ensure that the proposed examples above are responsive to aviation stakeholders' needs. Coordinators should report, where requested by local Coordination Committees and agreed with the coordinator, on the implementation of the proposed list.

3.4. Coordinators are encouraged to make early decisions so that airlines return slots for which they receive JNUS at least 6 weeks in advance of planned operation.

3.5. Coordinators are encouraged to grant alleviation during a recovery period of up to 6 weeks following the announcement of the ending of any relevant restrictions which lead to alleviation under 3.2.

3.6. In the event of airport capacity reduction as a result of health measures being imposed, regards should be given to the [WASB Best Practice Paper on Capacity Reductions](#) and the JNUS provisions contained therein.

4. **CONDITIONS:**

4.1. Alleviation measures shall not apply to a series of slots of an airline that permanently ceases operations at the airport.

4.2. Exchanges and transfers currently allowed will continue where they are not prohibited by the laws of the relevant country WASG 8.11.5.

4.3. New slot trade arrangements are not eligible for full season alleviation (this does not include continuation or unwinding of existing slot trade arrangements) but are eligible for other slot relief measures mentioned in Section 2.

4.4. Implementation of a recommendation agreed in the WASB must be legally approved by the competent authority of the country where the coordinated/scheduled facilitated airport is located. In some jurisdictions, it requires the entering into force of a new legislation or the modification of an existing legislation

4.5. Where regulations governing slot policies and alleviation measures are already in place, those regulations have precedence over the policies, principles and processes of this Recommendation.