

WASB communication to the global airport slot community on how to manage series of slots that were allocated on an ad-hoc basis during Northern Winter 2021

The different slot relief measures adopted worldwide for the Northern Winter 2021 (NW21) season have been instrumental to help protect airlines from the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Depending on the jurisdiction, slot relief measures vary from the possibility to receive full season alleviation subject to conditions to a reduced utilization rate (e.g., 50:50).

Additionally, depending on the jurisdiction, restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and that have prevented airlines from operating scheduled flights, may have been considered by coordinators as justified reasons for the non-utilization of slots (JNUS) and the cancellations derived not counted against the utilization rate. In May 2021, the industry published a set of recommendations about the slot relief measures applicable for the Northern Winter 2021 (WASB Recommendation on [Airport slot alleviation measures for Northern Winter 2021](#)).

The combination of all these applicable slot alleviation measures may have created capacity availabilities at coordinated airports, providing opportunities for entry to new airlines and/or different types of services (e.g., cargo operations), which seek to give adequate response to the increased demand observed in some markets. At the same time, the Covid-19 crisis has provided the opportunity to some airlines to review and optimize their schedules (e.g., re-timing their network to support higher fleet utilization and efficiency). However, these opportunities will not always allow the operators to build up historic access rights for the series of slots involved, which may have been allocated by the relevant coordinator on an ad-hoc basis, as those slots will eventually return to their historic slot holder.

Bearing in mind that some of these newly allocated or retimed series of slots may be intended to continue beyond the Covid-19 crisis, the Worldwide Airport Slot Board (WASB) is jointly requesting the slot coordinators community to look into the applicable regulations with flexibility, and to follow the industry's recommendations and guidance on the management of those series of slots that were allocated on an ad-hoc basis during Northern Winter 2021 and that have complied with the minimum slot usage threshold. Specifically, the WASB asks slot coordinators to consider the following recommendations:

- [...] *slots requested as a series but initially allocated on an ad hoc basis, which form a series by the end of the season, may be eligible for historic precedence*
(WASG 8.7.1-d *Eligibility for Historic Precedence*);
- *Series operated as approved on a non-historic basis in NW21 should have priority over new demand for the same timings in the next equivalent season subject to capacity and any other legal conditions*
(point 2.1.6 of WASB Recommendation on [Airport slot alleviation measures for Northern Winter 2021](#));
- [...] *consideration should be given to the following factors (in no particular order) to determine which of the competing requests should be allocated a slot:*
 - [...] c) **Time Spent on Waitlist:** *Whether an airline's request has been pending on the waitlist longer than competing requests*
(WASG 8.4.1 *Additional criteria for slot allocation*);

Based on the above recommendations, the WASB invites slot coordinators:



- to manage **series of slots that were newly allocated in NW21 on an ad-hoc basis**, that complied with the minimum slot usage threshold and that could not be granted historic precedence in the NW22 SHLs due to lack of capacity, with an additional priority during the initial slot coordination process of NW22, providing that such a new series of slots is requested again by the airline. Coordinators are encouraged to identify and inform these series of slots in the NW22 SHLs with the action code 'T' (i.e., meaning that an additional priority will be granted for that series during the initial coordination and subject to capacity availability); and
- to manage **series of slots that were retimed on an ad-hoc basis during NW21**, and that complied with the minimum slot usage threshold, with an additional priority during the initial slot coordination process of NW22, whenever such a retime is requested again by the airline.