



Guidance document for airlines on baseline checklist when forming a new interline partnership



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1. Introduction

The IATA multilateral interline framework comprises IATA standards, multilateral agreements and platforms.

Establishing and implementing a new interline partnership relationship implies a variety of considerations and aspects for carriers that would need to be set up with the other interline carriers such as the interline agreements, processes and procedures.

2. Scope and objectives

This Guidance document is intended to provide a starting point for establishing interline processes between IATA Members.

The objective of this document is to capture, in the form of a checklist, the issues and procedures that a carrier needs to discuss and arrange with a new interline partner when working to establish an interline agreement. This baseline checklist is referenced via the Recommended Practice 1780a.

This checklist lays out the issues that need to be discussed and/or addressed when working to establish new interline partnerships. It includes references to the agreements and procedures that airlines would use with their partners and that are described in IATA Resolutions and Recommended Practices, such as publishing schedules, processing reservations, determining pricing based on published fares and rules, issuing and honouring tickets, through-checking baggage, prorating through-fares and performing interline billing using the IATA Clearing House.

By using the checklist, the carriers will not form an actual interline agreement, although the Recommended Practice and/or the baseline checklist will be published and can be referred to in the final agreement entered into by the carriers.

3. Establishing a new interline relationship

Before initiating discussions on implementing an Interline Traffic Agreement, carriers should consult the IATA Interline Information Repository (See Appendix Section 4.1) whose objective is to assist airlines in identifying potential partners. Carriers are invited to provide their own information.

3.1 Establishing a legal interline agreement

The Interline Agreement formation can be achieved either by becoming a party to the IATA Multilateral Interline Traffic Agreement (MITA) and concurring with another MITA party or by executing a Bilateral Interline Traffic Agreement (both hereunder referred to as the "Interline Agreement")



3.2 Define the services that will be provided

Carriers should clearly specify in their Interline Agreement the list of special services each carrier will provide to each other (e.g. special meals, seats etc.).

The IATA template for the Interline Electronic Miscellaneous Documents and Additional/Optional Services General Business Requirements (EMD GBR, see Appendix Section 1) can be used to capture the list of these additional services and their agreed handling procedure around reservation, ticketing and reporting.

Carriers should also specify the optional services which are out of scope of the Interline Agreement and the procedures to be implemented and followed when these services are being requested by the customer.

Carriers should determine and agree on the scope and handling procedures of group booking and special passengers' types such as infant and child.

These should include the procedures of each carrier concerning the definition of the infant and child types, booking and pricing procedures.

The IATA template for the Interline Electronic Ticket General Business Requirements (Ticket GBR, see Appendix Section 1) can be used to capture the list of these special services and their agreed handling procedure around reservation, ticketing and reporting.

If either airline has exceptional embargoes on carriage of checked baggage, including special items, oversized, overweight, or excess pieces, etc., clear instructions should be agreed and further provided to customer-facing agents to inform them about how those are to be implemented.

3.3 Exchanging schedule data

Carriers should determine with their partner(s) how and when schedule information will be exchanged.

Each carrier should review its own published fare details and rules to support the commercial implementation of the interline relationship.

This should be supported by producing a Standard Schedule Information Manual (SSIM) file, which will be shared with the interline partners or via industry aggregators.

Carriers should ensure that each airline's offices have accurate schedule details for the interline partner.

Carriers may consider checking with their new interline partners whether the third-party distribution systems relied upon present connections and/or stopover bookings in the shopping results and that interline itineraries are priced accordingly in these third-party distribution systems.

Carriers should ensure that their distribution systems selling the interline itineraries have access to accurate schedule details.

Carriers should check and make sure that the ground handling companies that will use their own system to check baggage on interline routings have accurate schedule information on the other interline partner.

Carriers should review and publish their Minimum Connecting Time exception details (especially "suppressions") to industry aggregators.



Carriers should ensure with their partners that the Minimum Connecting Time data is correctly shared. It is recommended for carriers to review the publication process.

Carriers should check with their interline partners if the Minimum Connecting Time data and exception details are also available in the interline partner's Departure Control System or in the interline partner's ground handler Departure Control System, if relevant.

Each carrier should review the impact of its respective baggage provisions and how those will apply for travel in the relevant markets. The industry standards around default interline baggage provision selection (and applicable regulations) need to be understood and included in carrier training, processes and internal procedures.

3.4 Pricing automation data

Carriers should provide to each other the tariffs and other information necessary to sell the specific interline itinerary.

Carriers should review ATPCO Chart I and II that determine which RBDs may be used to participate in specific fares filed by other carriers within an automatic pricing environment (see Appendix, Section 1).

Carriers should address with their interline partners the question of fare data aggregators as well as the frequency of updates in those systems.

Carriers should discuss with their interline partners and check that the process to price their services in an interline itinerary is understood.

Carriers should check with their interline partners the respective baggage provisions and how those will apply for travel in the relevant markets.

If either carrier is new to interlining, it is recommended to ensure that it understands the exceptions to the IATA "most significant carrier" concept for baggage provisions when the customer's ticket involves travel from or to the USA or Canada.

Carriers should review each other's carry-on baggage allowance and the relevant instructions to customer-facing employees about how to communicate potential differences that may occur and may impact the customer experience.

3.5 Reservation

Carriers should negotiate bilateral selling agreements (Example: interactive availability and interactive selling), as described in Resolution 766.

Each carrier must decide how it intends to provide availability status for the interline connections to any office that will offer and sell these connections. For sales made by third parties (e.g. GDS users) carriers should ensure that customer-facing staff are aware of limitations that may be applied to "informational segments" and provide clear work-around instructions as may be required.

Carriers should address the following:

- Whether the booked carrier should return its record locator to the booking party.
- Whether availability information is required and what the procedures are to be followed if one of the carriers does not have the availability status by flight/date/segment/RBD from the other partner



- If additional information is required, the carriers may consider the option of implementing interactive availability processes.
- If routine interline booking capabilities between the two carriers are not considered sufficient, the carriers may evaluate the options provided through interactive selling.

Carriers should agree on the reservation procedures for optional services if these are covered by the interline agreement (see Section 3.2).

It is important to ensure that each carrier understands any exceptional requirements of the other partner when making arrangements for customers with special needs (see Section 3.2).

Based on the agreed list of eligible passengers' type codes and if the interline carriage of an unaccompanied minor (UMNR) has been agreed, carriers should ensure that detailed procedures have been established. As per the recommendations listed in the Section 3.2, if group booking is part of the agreed Services then carriers should establish and agree on the corresponding handling procedures.

For bookings made as part of "involuntary rerouting" (see Section 3.10), carriers should jointly establish the reservation and rebooking procedures that are to be used to reroute the passenger, as required by Resolutions 766 and 735d. Some examples of aspects that carriers can address and clarify with their partners include:

- Channel and system used to perform the rebooking (e.g. reservation system)
- Allowance to reroute customers without having them involved in the decision or present to accept the rerouting immediately
- Exceptional provisions that should be made for group bookings

3.6 Ticketing

In addition to the general agreement around issuance and honouring of tickets, which is formed as part of the Interline Agreement, carriers should discuss and agree on the following:

- Service eligibility. This may include:
 - Procedures in case of group bookings, different passenger type code, depending of the type of constructed interline itinerary (e.g. conjunctive itinerary)
- Ticket and Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) issuance. This may include:
 - Issuance timeframe and used method to inform the interline partner about the new document
 - Types of EMD (including the respective Reason for Issuance Code and Reason for Issuance Sub-codes)
 - Form of Payment
- Void and cancellation
- Refund processing
- Exchange/re-issue processing
 - Types of supported exchanges
 - Communication between the interline partners
- Ticket and Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) handling in irregular operations
 - Request the control of impacted coupons
 - Identifying Involuntary Reroute Reissue
 - Setting the "I" indicator
 - Redirect the control of the coupon
- Ticket and Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) Receipts
- Set of messages to be set-up and exchanges to support all above scenario and procedures (see Section 3.14)

The IATA templates for the Interline Electronic Ticket General Business Requirements (Ticketing GBR, see Appendix Section 1) and Interline Electronic Miscellaneous Documents and Additional/Optional Services



General Business Requirements (EMD GBR, see Appendix Section 1) can be used to capture the business processes and agreed procedures between the partners.

3.7 Baggage

In order to process baggage, carriers should establish policies and procedures that will facilitate the handling of baggage between carriers and reduce potential seams in their shared passenger's journey.

3.7.1 Baggage policy and publication

Carriers should communicate their baggage allowances to their interline partners. These include carry-on as well as checked-in baggage.

Carriers should address whether baggage policies and procedures vary depending on the type of connections (domestic or international) and by Airport or type of ground handler.

3.7.2 Baggage provision determination

Carriers should address and determine the applicability, collection, proration and settlement of baggage fees.

Carriers should specify and share with their interline partners the specific baggage type that is accepted or included in a baggage allowance. The handling of special baggage types should be addressed and agreed across partners (e.g. Oversize bags or sports equipment).

Carriers should ensure awareness of where baggage allowances may be different depending on the carrier that checks in the passenger, for example where a customer is granted additional baggage allowance due to something that is not indicated on the ticket (e.g. elite status or an ancillary membership).

3.7.3 Reservation and ticketing of baggage

The IATA templates for Interline Electronic Miscellaneous Documents and Additional/Optional Services General Business Requirements (EMD GBR, see Appendix Section 1) can be used to capture and detail the business processes and agreed procedures between the partners around baggage handling.

3.7.4 Excess baggage

Carriers should address and determine with their interline partner the procedures when excess baggage charges need to be collected on an accountable document (see Section 3.6).

3.7.5 Operational handling and baggage carriage

Carriers should determine procedures to facilitate;

- Exchange of baggage at connecting airports including the airport processes and each partner's responsibilities.
- Handling of baggage affected by irregular operations
- Handling of baggage where the passenger journey is changed from the information printed on the initial bag tag

Agree on the responsibilities of accepting, carrying and delivering carriers to resolve mishandled baggage or address damaged or lost baggage claims.



3.8 Customer initiated changes

Carriers should support customers in case they would like to perform voluntary changes to the originally purchased itinerary and services based on the rules and conditions specified by the fare owner carrier.

In order to support this, carriers should agree on the procedures to handle these changes that in principle are carried out by the Validating Carrier. The Operating Carrier system should then receive messages with changes to be able to process them accordingly and notify the Validating Carrier.

Carriers should determine and agree on the procedures when these changes are initiated by the customer in the airport environment with the Operating Carrier.

3.9 Airline initiated schedule changes

Carriers should establish how they will communicate any relevant schedule changes to their partners.

Carriers should address and ensure clear understanding and same interpretation on the schedule change definition. Schedule changes are not irregular operations; they constitute changes to a *filed* schedule.

Carriers should ensure clear roles and responsibility depending on which partner initiates the schedule change. As per the recommendations and procedures described in the IATA Resolution 736 the responsibility to reissue is in principle with the Validating Carrier.

Carriers should ensure clear communication of schedule changes between partners

Carriers should check the existing industry standards for participating carriers to advise booking sources of changes to schedule. The Operating Carrier making the schedule change must be able to notify the Validating Carrier as part of:

- Regular exchange of schedule data OR
- Ad-hoc provision of schedule data containing changes

Carriers should address and agree on the impacts of schedule changes on the revenue and settlement.

3.10 Irregular operations and involuntary rerouting procedures

Carriers should clarify the procedures and expected processes for all involuntary changes.

Carriers should establish the reservation, ticketing and baggage procedures for passenger re-accommodation. These should be included in each carrier's staff training and processes. It is recommended that carriers consult the Guidance document Interline considerations on irregular operations (See Appendix Section1).

Carriers should bilaterally agree as to whether exceptions to Resolution 735d will apply.

Carriers should discuss and agree with their interline partners on the communication channels that can be used in case of irregular operations. It is encouraged to handle this via a centralized contact point.

Carriers should address and ensure clear procedures around the absorption of passenger's expenses.



3.11 Airport Delivery

Carriers should discuss and agree on the operational procedures related to management of the reservation and ticketing as part of the GBR (General Business Requirements) or Data Collector provided by a system provider (see section 3.6).

Additionally, carriers should establish:

- The conditions when the passenger can be checked-in and boarded by the Operating Carrier
- Applicable through checking procedures and Inter-Airline Through Check-In (IATCI) agreement.
 - It is recommended that the first Operating Carrier of the interline itinerary should through check the customer to the final destination. This should include the provision of boarding passes and bag tags for the entire relevant journey.
- Communication with the passenger

Carriers should discuss the specificities of the operational handling and exchange relevant contact details.

As per the Section 3.2, carriers should discuss and agree on the operational procedures to handle additional services and special passenger types (such as UMNR).

3.12 Proration

Carriers should establish with their partners the basis on which interline billing occurs, which may be under the IATA Multilateral Prorate Agreement Passenger (MPA-P) or a Special Prorate Agreement (SPA).

Carriers should ensure clear scope of the SPA, along with procedures for establishing a coupon's value when it is outside the scope of the SPA.

When setting up a new SPA, carriers should discuss and agree:

- SPA Validity date
- Ticket type (e.g. original ticket, involuntary reroute, group travel, frequent flyer)
- Journey type (e.g. stopover, transfer, seasonality)
- Amount to be prorated.
 - Differentiate based on the fare owner, fare type, sector type, class of service, etc.
- Settlement Method.
 - Determine the revenue share via fixed rates or by applying Minimum Prorate Rule
- Clarity on the billing on the carrier specific charges
- Ticket Discount
 - Define ticket discounts for Infants, Child, Adults or other types of passengers
- Interline fee
 - Define Interline Service Charge, Handling Fee or Code Share Commissions

Carriers should ensure clear understanding on the impact of documents used to collect non-transportation charges and how those are billed and settled.

- If EMDs or excess baggage tickets are to be used, ensure that the proration method is understood by each airline.
- If the airlines bilaterally agree not to prorate baggage charges, and not to bill, they should ensure that any administrative procedures for back-office settlement are understood by each airline.



3.13 Interline Billing and Settlement

IATA member airlines should check if the non-member airlines have access to the Revenue Accounting Manual (RAM) to support billing and settlement for interline and disputes processes.

Carriers should exchange the interline invoices using the Simplified Industry Settlement (SIS) platform. Settlement can then be processed through the IATA Clearing House (ICH).

Carriers should establish if any interline billing procedures beyond those established in IATA standards are needed.

Carriers should establish contact points between revenue accounting teams.

3.14 System connectivity

Before participating in an interline journey carriers should set up and test the following technical interfacing and utilities:

Reservations

To support the reservation procedures (such as creation or change of a Passenger Name Record) airlines should implement and exchange teletype Type A and B messaging.

Ticketing

To support ticket functions and procedures (such as the issuance or exchange of an electronic ticket or EMD, see Section 3.6 above) carriers should exchange EDIFACT messages.

Carriers should bilaterally agree on the set of data and messages to be exchanged. The EMD and Ticket GBRs templates can be used by the interline partners to check and agree on the technical settings of each party.

The Electronic Ticketing Database provider must support a set of data elements and messages that are defined and maintained in the PADIS messages for example: Change of Status messages, Request Airport Control messages, final / interim status of coupons.

Baggage

To support baggage handling in interline itineraries, carrier partners should determine and implement:

- Messaging to support Through Check-In
- Baggage Transfer Messages (BTM) and Baggage Source Messages (BSM)
- Required messaging by jurisdictions, such as USDOT Bag Scanning

Carriers should discuss the cases and potential impacts of either airline's use of ground handlers own Departure Control System including some exceptional scenario such as:

- Ground handler Departure Control System does not support the sending and processing of IATCI messaging
- Ground handler Departure Control System does not support the sending and processing of BTM messaging



Carriers should ensure that critical baggage handling technologies are integrated, or a workaround is found (i.e. Self-Tagging or Smart Bags).

Airport delivery

To support the passenger through check-in, carriers should address and agree whether to implement IATCI messages.

Voluntary and involuntary changes

To support and manage voluntary and involuntary changes on interline itineraries, carriers should discuss how they will implement and exchange:

- SSIM files with teletype or ASC (Advice of Schedule Change) messaging for the flight and reservation changes
- EDIFACT messages for changes related to the ticket or the Electronic Miscellaneous Document.

Message reject procedures

It is recommended that carriers address and ensure clear procedures in case of message reject.

3.15 Others

If the airlines bilaterally agree to any exceptions on the above listed standards recommendations, they should ensure that any administrative procedures are understood by each airline.


Contacting interline partners



Carriers need to ensure regular and transparent communication with their partners.

In order to achieve this, carriers should establish and share among themselves the relevant contact points. Carriers should ensure that relevant teams can be easily provided with contacts between the two airlines (e.g. Commercial Manager, Ticketing Manager, Technical Implementation Manager) as well as relevant contacts on the system provider's side.

4. Appendix

4.1 Section 1: Actions and utilities to support the forming of a new multilateral interlining

Action	Resources
Check and update the IATA Interline Information Repository with own information if needed	https://www.iata.org/en/programs/airline-distribution/multilateral-interline-framework
Establish Interline Multilateral agreement to form a contractual interline relationship: To become a party or form concurrences, members should send a request to IATA via the Customer Portal portal.iata.org . In the case of concurrences, evidence should be provided that the other party agrees.	MITA Agreement Resolution 780 MITA Agreement – One-way Resolution 780e MITA Agreement – Intermodal Recommended Practice 1780e MITA Agreement – Enhanced Distribution Recommended Practice 1780f
Multilateral agreement under which revenue division of through fares can be agreed. To become a party to the MPA-P, airlines should sign the MPA-P and Prorate Agency Agreement (PAA). Note that there is no cost involved in becoming a Signatory airline.	Multilateral Prorate Agreement – Passenger (MPA-P)
Agreement under which airlines can form an agreement to facilitate leisure travel for staff members.	Zonal Employee Discount (ZED) agreement
Agreement under which airlines can form an agreement to facilitate duty travel for staff members.	Multilateral Interline Business Travel Agreement (MIBA) Managed by the ZED/MIBA Forum, which is administered on behalf of its members by IATA.
Review the ATPCO types of data you may need to be coded in order to achieve the intentions set forth in your interline and/or code share agreements	ATPCO Checklist:  Partnering for Success_ATPCO (dat)

Action	Resources
<p>Establish a model which can be used to develop a GBR between new partners around interline electronic ticketing.</p>	<p>Available in the Standard Setting Workspace under the IATA Ticketing Group page</p>
<p>Establish a model which can be used to develop a GBR between new partners around interline EMDs.</p>	<p>Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) model General Business Requirements (GBR)</p> <p>Available in the Standard Setting Workspace under the IATA Ticketing Group page</p>
<p>Ensure compliance with Resolution 766 requires interline partners to bilaterally agree the method that should be used when obtaining inventory for use in passenger accommodations following an irregular operation. A template was developed by IATA and may be used as a model to build such an agreement.</p>	<p>Template agreement for booking method for irregular operations</p>  <p>Inventory Agreement Template v1.0.odt</p>
<p>Establish IROPS Procedures</p>	<p>Guidance document Interline considerations on irregular operations</p>
<p>A checklist that can be used internally to ensure that a special prorate agreement is clear and comprehensive.</p>	<p>Special Prorate Agreement (SPA) Checklist:</p>  <p>spa-coding-check-list (2).xlsx</p>



4.2 Section 2: Overview of applicable Resolutions

Section	Resources
Schedule distribution standards	Defined in the Standard Schedule Information Manual (SSIM).
Reservation	The Interline Passenger Reservation Procedures are defined in the Resolution 766
Interline ticket issuance and handling	The procedures around the issuance and handling of Tickets are defined in IATA Resolution 722f and Resolution 722g
Interline EMD issuance and handling	The procedures around the issuance and handling of EMDs are defined in IATA Resolution 725f and Resolution 725g
Involuntary Change	<p>The procedures around the involuntary change of Carrier, Routing, Class or Type of Fare are defined in the Resolution 735d</p> <p>The procedures around the Involuntary Change of Routing Enroute are defined in the Resolution 735e</p>
Schedule changed	The procedures around Planned Schedule Changes are defined in the Recommended Practice 1735
Airline initiated schedule changes	The procedures around voluntary changes to Tickets and Miscellaneous Documents are defined in the IATA Resolution 736