Quick Guide to using the IATA SSIM format for the slot allocation/scheduling process

The objective of this Quick Guide is to provide, to all those who for the first time are faced with the need to make a slot request, a basic knowledge of the language and formats defined by the industry for this purpose, and which are contained in Chapter 6 of the SSIM Manual (*Standard Schedules Information Manual*) published by IATA (*International Air Transport Association*).

This document is not intended as a substitute for a full and extensive reading of the Slot Coordination Manual. On the contrary, it is recommended that airlines that are not familiar with the usual Slot Coordination processes, whenever possible, access the Slot Coordination Manual to learn more about all types of communication messages between the Slot Coordinator and the Airline that currently exist.

This document attempts to provide a basic understanding of the two fundamental message types (SCR and SMA), as well as providing a brief description of two other frequently used message types (SIR and SAQ).

1. Basic Principles

Before going into detail with the description of the different elements that must be part of the messages for the request of slots or operating schedules, it is necessary to mention a series of principles and/or rules that are associated to the Coordination processes and, without their knowledge, this document would be incomplete. These basic concepts are the following:

- The legal framework governing the rights and obligations pertaining to the slot allocation process at European Union airports is Regulation (EEC) No 95/93, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 793/2004.

- Formally, the term 'slot' is associated only with those airports designated by the competent authority as *Coordinated*. At airports designated as *Schedules Facilitated* it must refer to the concept of 'authorized schedule'.

- The specific designation of an airport for which a request is made (in the above terms of *Coordinated* or *Schedules Facilitated*) also determines the type of message to be used.

- The calendar year is not the usual time reference. The airline industry divides the calendar year into 'seasons'. A *Summer Season* runs from the last Sunday in March to the Saturday before the last Sunday in October of the same year. A *Winter Season runs* from the last Sunday in October to the Saturday before the last Sunday in March of the following year. Therefore, three seasons coexist in a calendar year: the end of the Winter Season of the previous year, the entire Summer Season of that year and the beginning of the corresponding Winter Season of that year. Dates belonging to different seasons can never be mixed in a slot request.

- Unless expressly stated otherwise, slot requests must be made using UTC (also called GMT or Zulu) time, rather than the local time of the airport to which the request refers.

- Although each Coordinator may impose other particular rules on the mode of exchange of slot request information, the SITA channel and e-mail are widely used for this purpose.

2. Types of messages

SHL (*Slot Historical and Non-Historical Allocation List*): is the message used by the Coordinators to inform the airlines of the slots that have obtained historical entitlement and those that have not for the next equivalent season.

SCR (*Slot Clearance Request/Reply*): is the message used by airlines and Coordinators to manage slot requests at *Coordinated* airports. Only in a specific phase of each season Coordinators use a different message called SAL (see description below).

SMA (*Schedule Movement Advice*): is the message used by airlines and Schedules Facilitators to manage schedule requests at *Schedules Facilitated* airports. As in the previous case, at a specific stage of each season, Schedules Facilitators use a different message called SAL (see description below).

SAL (*Slot Allocation/Schedule Advice List*): is the message used by the Schedules Coordinator or Schedules Facilitator to inform airlines of the outcome of the initial slot/schedule allocation for a season. From this point onwards, changes to an airline's schedule will be handled using SCR or SMA messages.

SIR (Slot/Schedule *Information* Request/Reply): is the message used by airlines and Schedules Coordinators/Schedule Facilitators to exchange information about allocated slots or schedules at an airport.

SAQ (*Slot/Schedule Availability Query*): is the message used by airlines and Schedules Coordinators/Schedule Facilitators to request/give information about the slots in which it would be possible to allocate a slot or authorize a schedule at an airport.

WCR (*Waitlist Change Request/Reply*): is the message used by airlines and Coordinators to manage changes to the list of slots to be upgraded.

WIR (*Waitlist Information Request/Reply*): is the message used by airlines and Coordinators to exchange information about the content of the list of slots to be upgraded.

3. SCR-SMA type messages

Both types of message share the same format and structure. Although, as a reference in the examples below, the SCR type is used, all the above is equally valid for the SMA type.

SCR messages consist of three parts:

A. Message Header

It is made up of a minimum of 4 lines and a maximum of 6, depending on whether or not optional lines are used. The meaning of these lines can be understood through the following example, which is explained below.

SCR
/GES1720795
S09
25MAR
MAD
REYT/11453

SCMessage type

***/*GES1720795** *Optional. Reference to identify the message*

S09Season *for which slots are requested. It consists of three characters:*

- *The first one: S ('Summer') for Summer seasons or W ('Winter') for Winter seasons.*
- *The second and third digits are the last two digits of the year in which the season in question begins.*

25MARDate *on which the message is sent. It consists of five characters:*

- *The first two are the day of the month. It will be indicated 01, 02,....30, 31*
- *The last three are the first three letters of the name of the month in the English language: JAN, ...FEB,,,NOV, DEC*

MADIATA **code** *of the airport for which the request is made.*

REYT/111453 *Optional. In response messages sent by a Coordinator you may find a line starting with REYT (Reference to Your Telex) and followed by the reference of the original message from the carrier (or the date/time group in which your original message was generated).*

B. Application Data

It is the part of the message consisting of one or more lines subject to a specific format through which the airlines and Coordinators specify the exact details of the request for slots and their response respectively.

An example would be:

NSWT2435P SWT2436 01MAY30JUN 1234500 **068AT7 PMIPMI2125** 04501PMIPMI PC **2**
12345678910 11121314 15 16 17

in which,

1 *Action CodeIndicates* what type of operation or transaction you want to perform. with the data referenced below. Carriers and Coordinators use different action codes. The most commonly used Action Codes are described later in the document.

2 *Flight Identifier ArrivalIt may* consist of the aircraft registration data. (in the case of General Aviation or Business Aviation flights) or of the

flight number (in the case of commercial flights). In the latter case, it shall consist of:

- ICAO or IATA airline code
- 3 or 4 digit number
- Suffix (optional) consisting of a letter

3 *Departure Flight Identifier* Identical to the previous one, for departure operation

4 *Date of Origin OperationFirst* day to which the request refers. It is formed as follows described above for the date the message was sent.

5 *Operation* *End DateLast* day to which the request refers. Optional if the transaction date is unique (coincides with the Origin Date)

6 *Days of OperationSequence* of 7 digits representing the days in the week for which the request is made. Monday is indicated by 1, Tuesday by 2, and so on. Days on which there is no operation are represented by a 0 in the corresponding position in the sequence. This field is optional if the operation date is unique.

7 SeatsThree-digit *number* representing the seating configuration of the aircraft with which the airline intends to operate.

8 *Aircraft* TypeIATA Aircraft Subtype IATA *Code*

9 *Origin* AirportIATA *code* of the airport of origin of the operation.

10 *Airport Previous Stopover* IATA code of the immediately preceding airport in the that the inbound flight has a stopover. Optional if it coincides with the origin airport

11 *Arrival* *TimeTime* (UTC) of scheduled arrival. It is represented by 4 digits using the 24-hour format (from 0000 to 2359). Minutes are usually required to be expressed by digits ending in 0 or 5.

12 *Departure Time* *Time* (UTC) of scheduled departure.

13 *Overnight IndicatorNumber* expressing the number of days after the *Overnight* Arrival in which the departure flight will occur. Only values 1 and 2 are permitted. day the arrival will be skipped

14 *Airport Next Stopover* IATA code of the airport immediately after the airport in the that the departure flight has a stopover. Optional if it coincides with the Final Airport

15 *Final* AirportIATA *code* of the destination airport of the transaction

16 *Service CodesIndicate* the reason for the inbound and outbound operation. output. The most common are as follows:

J: Scheduled passenger flight
C: Passenger charter flight
F: Regular cargo or mail flight **H**: Cargo or mail charter flight **P**: Positional Flight
X: Technical Scale

D: General or Private Aviation Flight
N: Business Aviation / Aerotaxi Flight

17 *Frequency IndicatorIndicates* how many weeks the operation is repeated. If it is not includes it should be understood that the operation is carried out weekly. A 2 indicates that the operation is every two weeks. No other value is allowed.

ACTION CODES

a) <u>Used by the airline</u>

- **New slot applications**

N: used to request a new slot from the Coordinator.
Y: used to ask the Coordinator for a new slot with *year-round* priority (continuation of an operation from the previous adjacent season to constitute a yearly operation aligned in time).
B: used to request a new slot from the Coordinator with the priority of *New Incoming*.
V: used to request from the Coordinator a new slot with the *New Incoming* priority and the *year-round* priority at the same time.

- **Modification of allocated slots**

C: used to show the slot for which a change is requested (operational type change). Necessarily used in combination with R, L or I codes.
M: used to show the slot in which a change is requested (non-operational type change). Necessarily used in combination with R, L or I codes.
R: used to show the modification in the requested slot by revising the slot indicated by the C or M line. The use of the R code informs the coordinator that the airline, in the event that there is no capacity available to obtain the required slot, is willing to accept an offer other than your request, provided that it improves your current situation.
L: the use of code L differs from the use of code R only in that the air carrier informs the coordinator that it is not in a position to accept offers other than the requested modification.
I: the use of the code I indicates to the coordinator that the requested slot modification corresponds to the continuation of an operation of the previous adjacent season in order to constitute an aligned annual operation (*year-round* priority). It includes the possibility to accept offers.

- **Cancellations of allocated slots**

D: used to indicate the slot that the Company wants to cancel from its schedule.

- **Acceptance/Rejection of offers**

P: used to accept an offer made by the Coordinator but keep the original request in the list of slots to be upgraded.
A: used to accept an offer made by the Coordinator, removing the slot from the list of slots pending improvement.
Z: used to decline an offer made by the Coordinator.

b) <u>Used by the Coordinator</u>

X: used to inform the airline that the indicated slot has been cancelled, either in response to a request for code 'D', any other combination of modification: 'C-R/L/I' or 'M-R/L/I' or offer acceptance 'A/P'.
K: used to inform the airline that the indicated slot has been allocated, either in response to a new slot request 'N/B/Y/V', modification request 'C-R/L/I' or 'M-R/L/I' or offer acceptance 'A/P'.
H: used to indicate the slot currently allocated to the airline, usually while waiting for the airline to decide on an offer submitted by the Coordinator for the corresponding flight.
U: used to indicate to the airline that the requested slot is not available and therefore becomes part of the list of slots pending improvement.
O: used to indicate the slot that is offered as an alternative to the original slot requested by the airline, once it cannot be allocated because it is not available.
T: used in place of the H or K codes to indicate to the airline that the slot allocation indicated is subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions.
W: used to indicate the line of data in the airline application that is not recognized by the Coordinator (usually because some of the data does not match the information in the Coordinator's database).

When the request includes both the inbound and outbound operation, as in the example above, the format of the request is said to be in *scale* format or *turnaround* format.

However, an air carrier, where permitted, may make its application separately for arrival and departure. In such cases, those fields unique to the associated operation shall not be included in the application. In addition, where the operation relates to departure, a blank space shall be included between the Action Code and the first character of the flight identifier.

Additional Information Labels (optional)

At the end of the basic information line, which concludes with the *Frequency Indicator* referred to above, airlines and Coordinators may add additional information that complements the data collected in that main line. This information is based on the use of labels, and is expressed according to the following format:

- Additional information to include begins and ends with a slash (/).
- The individual labels are separated from each other by blanks.
- A label always consists of a code (representing the subject to which the following information refers), a period (.) to separate the label and the information, and the information itself.
- When the total length of the main line plus the label set exceeds 80 characters, the additional information is contained on a separate line below the main line.

a) Most common labels used by airlines

Schedule Flexibility Indicator (FA-FD): Used to indicate the interval within which offers would be accepted, in case the requested schedule is not available. The labels to be used would be **FA**, for arrival operations, and **FD** for departure operations. The format of the information would consist of a set of 8 digits representing the two hours between which bids would be accepted (e.g. FA.07000810).

Minimum Time of Stopover (MT): It is used to inform the Coordinator of the minimum time of stopover that the aircraft would need. The label to use would be **MT**. The format of the information would consist of three digits to indicate the minimum scale minutes (e.g. MT.090).

Aircraft Registration Number (RA): Used to inform the Coordinator of the registration number of the aircraft that will perform the requested operation. The label to use would be RA, and the information would be the registration number itself (e.g. RA.DE76X3).

b) Most common tags used by Coordinators

Reason for Refusal Code (CA-CD): Used to indicate to the airline the reasons (capacity restrictions) why it has not been possible to allocate a slot at the requested time. The labels to use would be: **CA**, for arrival operations, and **CD** for departure operations. The information provided by the Coordinator would consist of indicating whether the capacity restriction affected is Runway (RA), Terminal (TA), Apron (AA) or a mixture of them (UA).

C. <u>Message footer (optional)</u>

It consists of any additional information, written in free text form, that the airline or Coordinator wishes to add as part of the message. There are two types of additional information that may be included:

- Supplementary Information: refers to specific information on the data line(s), such as a clarification. It must be preceded by the characters SI (*Supplementary Information*).

- General Information: Any other information not strictly related to the data line(s), such as a greeting, an indication of the end of the message, etc. It must be preceded by the characters GI (*General Information*).

SCR MESSAGE EXAMPLES

Example No. 1: New flight request in *turnaround* format

Airline request **(N)**

SCR
/REF XG1/01APR
S09
15FEB
BCN
NXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1800 1850PMIPMI JJ
/ FA.17301920 FD.18102000 MT.040/
YES PRIORITY ODD FREQUENCIES 1030507 GI
THANK YOU DPT OPS

Response options from the Coordinator

- *Confirmation by Coordinator* **(K)**

SCR
S09
16FEB
BCN
REYT XG1/01APR
KXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1800 1850PMIPMI JJ
IF WE COULD COORDINATE ALL FREQUENCIES
GI GREETINGS

- *Rejection of the application with offer by the Coordinator* **(U-O)**

SCR
S09
16FEB
BCN
REYT XG1/01APR
UXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1800 1850PMIPMI JJ
/ CA.R060 CD.R010/
OXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1745 1840PMIPMI JJ
SI 1840 SLOT AVAILABLE NEAREST YOU
GI GREETINGS

In this example, the Coordinator uses the rejection reason R060 to indicate that the arrival slot is not available due to the Runway Capacity restriction of 60 minutes. The authorization of the requested departure slot is conditioned as a result of the 10-minute Runway Capacity restriction.

Acceptance of the offer by the air carrier with indication that its original request is not included in the list of slots to be upgraded **(A)**

SCR
S09
16FEB
BCN
AXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1745 1840PMIPMI JJ
GI THANK YOU DPT OPS

Confirmation of the slot by the Coordinator **(K)**

SCR
S09
16FEB
BCN
KXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1745 1840PMIPMI JJ
GI GREETINGS

Example No. 2: Request for modification of assigned arrival slot

Airline Request (**C-R**) SCR
S09
15MAR
MAD
CAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0900 C
RAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0810 C
GI GREETINGS

Response options from the Coordinator

- *Confirmation of the slot by the* SCR *Coordinator* (**X-**

K) SCR
S09
15MAR
MAD
XAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0900 C
KAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0810 C

- *Rejection of the application with double offer by the Coordinator* (**H-U-O-O-O**)

SCR
S09
15MAR
MAD
HAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0900 C
UAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0810 C / CA.R010/
OAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0755 C
OAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0820 C

Where possible, the Coordinator may offer airlines two different slots as alternatives to the requested slot, one with an earlier timetable and one with a later timetable.

Acceptance of an offer by the air carrier with indication of inclusion of your original request in the list of slots to be upgraded (**P**)

SCR
S09
17MAR
MAD
PAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0755 C

In the case of double bids, it is not necessary to explicitly reject the bid that is not accepted.

Confirmation of the slot by the Coordinator (**X-K**)

SCR
S09
18MAR
MAD
XAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0900 C
KAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0755 C

Although not explicitly notified by the coordinator, the flight is included in the list of slots pending improvement.

Example No. 3: Request for cancellation of assigned departure slot

*Airline application (**D**)*

SCR
/AB_PMI001 CANC_DEADLINE
S09
14JAN
PMI
D AB1928 30MAR01JUL 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
D AB1928 31AUG25OCT 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
YES FLIGHT ONLY OPERATES IN THE CENTRAL SUMMER
PERIOD GI THANK YOU

Response options from the Coordinator

- *Confirmation of cancellation by the Coordinator (**X**)*

SCR
S09
14JAN
PMI
REYT AB_PMI001 CANC_DEADLINE
X AB1928 30MAR01JUL 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
X AB1928 31AUG25OCT 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
GI SALUDOS

- *Error detected in the request by the Coordinator (**W**)*

SCR
S09
14JAN
PMI
REYT AB_PMI001 CANC_DEADLINE
W AB1928 30MAR01JUL 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
W AB1928 31AUG25OCT 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J
YES THE STR-DUS ROUTE WAS CHANGED TO FLIGHT NUMBER AB1930 TWO DAYS AGO.
PLEASE CONFIRM CANCELLATION
GI GREETINGS

4. SIR type messages

The structure of this type of message is identical to that of the SCR-SMA: a header, whose main purpose is to indicate the type of message, the season and the airport to which the request refers, a few lines of data with the information requested and a footnote (optional) to add additional information.

The Action Code used in this type of message by the requesting airline is always Action Code 'Q'.

The following are some examples of this type of message.

Example 1: Requesting information on an airline's complete schedule at an airport

SIR
S09
31MAR
MJV
QYW YW

Example 2: Request for information on the complete schedule of an airport, for a specific day of the week, in a specific time slot and only for departing flights.

SIR
S09
31MAR
AGP
Q QQQQ 29MAR24OCT 0004000 0800 1000

Example 3: Request for information on the slot allocated for a specific inbound flight of a given airline company

SIR
S09
31MAR
LPA
QNT458 13MAY

The Coordinator's response to this type of scheduling query messages from airlines consists of another SIR type message which includes the complete list of all authorized slots that meet the conditions referred to in the request, preceded by the action code 'H' to indicate that they are confirmed slots.

5. SAQ type messages

The structure of this type of message is identical to that of SCR-SMA type messages: a header, the main purpose of which is to indicate the type of message, the season and the airport to which the request refers, a few lines of data with the information requested and a footnote (optional) to add additional information.

An SAQ type message is identical to an SCR, with the only difference being that in the case of an availability query, the coordinator's response does not imply any change to the confirmed schedule of the airline, but is limited to informing it whether the requested slots are available and, if not, the nearest alternative. For the allocation of these slots it is absolutely necessary for the airline to send the corresponding SCR.

The action codes that the company will use in an SAQ will be the same as in an SCR (N and C-R typically). The Coordinator, on the other hand, will use the following Action Codes in a SAQ

its response: 'H' to indicate the slots that the company has confirmed, 'U' to indicate if the requested slot is not available and the code 'I' with the same meaning as the code 'O' in SCR messages.

Example: Query for Change of Slot Allocation of Arrival Slot

Airline Request (**C-R**) SAQ
S09
18MAR
PMI
CJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0900 C
RJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0810 C
GI GREETINGS

Response from Coordinator with information on available offers (**H-U-I-I-I**) SAQ
S09
18MAR
PMI
HJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0900 C
UJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0810 C
IJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0755 C
IJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0830 C