

UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

April 29, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for the opportunity for the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) to develop specific and actionable recommendations on how the U.S. Government can work with the private sector to accelerate progress on implementing the biometric entry and exit system for travelers at ports of entry.

This effort, led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), aims to improve security and create an efficient and seamless experience for travelers entering and exiting the United States. Public and private sector collaboration, especially with airlines and airports, will be necessary to implement the program.

These recommendations support your efforts as the principal business voice in the Administration to increase economic growth and advance the competitiveness of the U.S. travel and tourism industry.

Summary of Challenges and Recommendations

1. DHS federal agencies, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), are actively pursuing biometric technology solutions reflecting unique agency requirements.

Pursue and implement a single platform solution for the use of biometric technology.

2. Global forums are exploring new international frameworks and standards.

Establish interagency lead to coordinate with global stakeholders to ensure alignment on biometric parameters.

3. Passenger information must be readily accessible both domestically and internationally while ensuring the integrity of data and compliance with privacy regulations.

Validate implications of a Unique ID/Sovereign ID for each traveler within a trusted framework that could be used across the traveler journey.

4. Minimum standards/requirements are not clearly defined for facial recognition, data privacy and ownership and management of data systems.

Document minimum standards on biometric technology recognition parameters and processes to accelerate implementation at airports.

5. Acknowledging the progress that has been made with biometric exit and entry systems, while identifying opportunities to drive broader and faster implementation of this technology.

Create an interagency task force with private sector representatives to accelerate the progress with biometric system development and implementation.

Background

Airlines, airports and security agencies are faced with increasing volumes of air travelers negotiating a complicated and extensive travel experience. CBP and TSA are the Agencies responsible for ensuring the safety of hundreds of millions of travelers both within the United States and those traveling to/from abroad. The Agencies are challenged with the rapid assessment and scaling of new technology, modification of policies and procedures that enhance their primary missions of securing and protecting the nation, as well as not overly burdening the movement of people and goods.

The pace of change in the biometric market continues with a wide variety of solutions that offer improved speed and accuracy exceeding human capabilities.

For the purpose of this report, the definition of biometrics from *DHS Biometric Strategic Framework 2015-2025* is applied: “A biometric is a measurable physical characteristic or personal behavior trait used to recognize the identity or verify the claimed identity of an individual. The most common biometrics in use in the security market today include fingerprints, facial image, or iris scans.”

The global biometric market is projected to register a \$21B investment by 2020. In addition, travelers are increasing their use of biometrics in their daily lives. A biometric revolution is underway as travelers understand the benefits of biometric programs that unlock a more frictionless travel experience. Whether through faster introduction of pilot programs or a rapid expansion of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), both CBP and TSA have a generational opportunity to enhance security and speed travelers on their way.

With the increase in projected international and domestic travelers, staffing challenges at both CBP arrival halls and TSA checkpoints will continue. Investing in new technology solutions will be paramount to facilitate the movement of passengers and to meet consumer expectations.

Our recommendations are designed to support these Agencies as they unlock the power of biometrics that promise to streamline and secure the travel process. Addressing these concerns will facilitate more efficient collaboration between public and private sectors.

Current State

Exit Biometrics (International Departures)

CBP leverages the Traveler Verification System (TVS) photo gallery to validate travelers departing from the U.S. with a valid passport. Benefits include increased security (higher accuracy), faster boarding times at the gate, ability to incorporate the boarding ticket into the system as a single step process, and paperless boarding solutions for customers. Other benefits include labor optimization for both airlines and CBP.

Entry Biometrics (International Arrivals)

CBP leverages facial recognition upon passenger arrival with pre-population of existing traveler data from manifests, visas, and passports. Cameras capture the image of the traveler's face and authenticate the image against the passport allowing the officer to focus on the passenger inspection process and minimizing manual administrative tasks. In the near future, Global Entry qualified passengers will be able to go through the fully automated process (e-gates or other rapid exit options with facial recognition) and officer intervention becomes exception/referral based.

Benefits include increased security accuracy, quicker transaction times with officer, automated for pre-qualified travelers, officer labor optimization, potential reduction of false positives, and enhanced traveler satisfaction.

TSA Checkpoints

TSA is working on implementing Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) which matches passenger photo IDs against the Secure Flight database and Biometric Authentication Technology (BAT). This process checks fingerprints against fingerprints provided during TSA pre-check registration, which will allow for paperless verification of passengers at the document check position eliminating the need to present a boarding ticket or a paper ID unless requested. TSA is also partnering with CBP for international travelers and leveraging CBP's TVS gallery as identification at the TSA checkpoint.

Benefits include increased throughput at each checkpoint lane due to reduction in document check transaction time, improved security accuracy, Transportation Security Officer labor optimization, and potential space usage optimization. Traveler satisfaction is also improved.

Recommendations

1. Establish interagency lead to coordinate one government perspective for the use of biometric technology, funding requirements, and data sharing across security departments, Department of State, and public organizations.
2. Establish interagency lead to coordinate with global stakeholders to ensure alignment on data standards, privacy compliance, rules, rights, responsibilities, governance and

technical requirements for a trusted framework. Lead would also ensure synergies and representation with international consortium initiatives, noting entities currently making progress in this area. Finally, assessing future investment opportunities will be critical.

3. Validate implications of a Unique ID/Sovereign ID for each traveler that creates a trusted ID that could be used across the travel journey (several examples are already being developed, i.e., IATA – One ID).
4. Document minimum standards on biometric technology recognition parameters and processes for government validation of traveler data allowing interested private businesses to participate as part of the customer travel experience.
5. Establish an interagency/private sector task force to create an operating plan and timetable for biometric system development and implementation. Technology company representatives, airline and airport representatives, and other relevant private sector representatives would partner with interagency leaders to evaluate challenges, propose solutions, and set an implementation timetable.

The TTAB appreciates your leadership and looks forward to working in partnership with the Department of Commerce, DHS, and the Department of State to make the U.S. the world's number one travel destination.

Respectfully submitted,



John Sprouls
Chair



Kurt Ekert
Vice Chair