

**MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

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**GUIDELINES FOR SLOT ALLOCATION**

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**(Revised in May, 2013)**

## Contents

I)	Definitions	-	2
II)	Introduction	-	2
III)	Practice in India: A historical perspective	-	3
IV)	Demand and Capacity Management	-	9
V)	Coordination Mechanism	-	11
VI)	Historicity	-	12
VII)	Slot Allocation	-	15
VIII)	Slot Return and Historic Baseline	-	20
IX)	Coordination after final slot Allocation	-	21
X)	Residual issues	-	24
XI)	Timelines	-	24
XII)	Authorities	-	25

## **I) Definitions**

**“SLOT”** is a permission given by a coordinator for a planned operation to use the full range of airport infrastructure necessary to arrive or depart at a Level 3 airport on a specific date and time.

Classification of Airports: For the purpose of slot allocation, airports are generally categorized according to the following levels of congestion:

- a) Level 1: where the capacity of the airport infrastructure is generally adequate to meet the demands of airport users at all times.
- b) Level 2: where there is potential for congestion during some periods of the day, week, or season which can be resolved by voluntary cooperation between airlines.
- c) Level 3: where capacity is constrained due to lack of sufficient infrastructure.

## **II) Introduction**

1. With the increase in air traffic at the major airports in the country, the capacity of these airports has become constrained. Therefore, to ensure the most efficient use of airport infrastructure and in order to maximize benefits to the greatest number of airport users, it is essential to have a policy for allocation of constrained or limited airport capacity to airlines and other aircraft operators through a transparent and equitable mechanism so as to ensure viable airport and air transport operations.

2. An airport should be categorized into different levels by a responsible authority and by following a thorough demand and capacity analysis, and full consultation with all stakeholders and interested parties. The airport should be designated as Level 3 only if this analysis and consultation concludes that the demand for airport infrastructure significantly exceeds available capacity and there is no practical way to alleviate the problem in the short term. The airport capacity should be made available in the public domain through websites.

3. For Level 3 airports, a Coordinator is required to be designated to allocate slots to airlines and other aircrafts operators using or planning to use the airport as a means of managing available capacity. An airport slot would therefore mean a permission given by a Coordinator for a planned operation to use the full range of

airport infrastructure necessary to arrive or depart at a Level 3 airport on a specific date and time. The procedure should be devised in a manner that there is enough appellate mechanism inbuilt in the system.

4. It may be understood that coordination is not a solution to the fundamental problem of a lack of airport capacity. In all instances, coordination should be seen as an interim solution to manage congested infrastructure until the longer term solution of expanding airport capacity is implemented.

5. These Guidelines forms the slot allocation and management standard for Indian coordination, and should therefore be duly noted and implemented in full by all affected Indian airports and air carriers using such airport infrastructure. The Guidelines have been formatted to reflect international best practice and in accordance with the recommendations of the IATA Worldwide Slot Guidelines (WSG), as amended twice yearly. The WSG is the globally adopted standard for efficient slot allocation to optimize the use of severely congested airport infrastructure worldwide.

6. These guidelines are expected to maximize efficiency in the process of slot allocation, promote sustainable competition and encourage growth of air connectivity to remove and inaccessible regions of the country, while ensuring viability of operations of the airlines.

### **III) Practice in India: A historical perspective**

#### **1. Slot Allocation procedure prior to Year 2007:**

Prior to 2007, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) was allocating slots to international & domestic airlines (except Cochin airport, for which the slot allocation was being done by that airport itself). Airlines submitted their schedule before beginning of Summer Season and Winter Season i.e. twice in a calendar year. For the Defence airports, as terminals were managed by AAI and the runway was managed by the Ministry of Defence, the request for slots for such airports were filed with both the agencies.

##### **(i) International Airlines:**

(a) A Slot Allocation Committee chaired by Executive Director (Operations) AAI and consisting of representatives of Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Air India, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). Department of Customs, Bureau of Immigration and defence authorities (if required), discussed the proposals and

accommodated them within the notified airport capacities in respect of runway, parking stand and terminal building as per the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Scheduling Guidelines.

(b) These slots/ offers were further discussed in the Schedule Conference organized by IATA, twice in a year, which was attended by airlines and airport operators.

(ii) Domestic airlines:

A Slot Allocation Committee chaired by Executive Director (Operations) AAI and consisting of representatives of DGCA, BCAS, all airlines and defence authorities (if required), discussed the proposals and accommodated them within the notified airport, capacities.

(iii) After the said meeting the approved slots were conveyed to DGCA for approval of the flight schedule.

(iv) Subsequent requests for amendments received with respect to new/additional flights, change of time due to operational reason, etc. were examined by AAI and cleared, if found acceptable, within the notified capacities.

(v) In case of any dispute between airport operator and airlines which remained unresolved after the meeting of the Slot Allocation Committee, the same was addressed at the level of Member (Operations).

## 2. Recommendations of the Task Force:

In order to review the system of allotment of slots, the Ministry of Civil Aviation had in 2003 constituted a Task Force under Dr. Nasim Zaidi, the then Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and comprising of the representatives of DGCA, AAI and Intelligence Bureau. The Task Force had inter-alia made the following recommendations on the mechanism of slot allocation:

(i) The airports operators should be assigned slot allocation function in an equitable manner. In case of any dispute between airport operator and airlines, the matter should be referred to Appellate Committee for arbitration.

- (ii) AAI should develop a suitable mechanism to monitor if the airlines are adhering to the time slot granted to them at all airports handling international flights. This information could be used in allowing historic rights to airlines.
- (iii) AAI should periodically assess and notify the runway, apron and terminal capacities of the airports where international flights operate. All regulatory agencies should be associated while conducting terminal building surveys.
- (iv) The capacity constraints, if any, be notified through Notice on Airport capacity (NAC) Chart, to be published on internet.
- (v) AAI should be the slot coordinator and deal directly with the international airlines and IATA on the issues of slot allocation.
- (vi) AAI should promote allocation of slots to airlines during non peak and day time. However, in exceptional cases, the Slot Approval Committee may consider airline requests particularly the requests of developing countries or flights affected by curfew at destination airport for slots during the night time within the available capacity.
- (vii) Ground handling agencies should not influence slot allocation to suit their handling requirements.
- (viii) An effective mechanism of advising passengers about reporting time by airlines in consultation with Airport operator should be evolved and monitored.

The recommendations of the Task Force were accepted by the Government in the year 2005 subject to the following:

- (i) AAI would continue to assess the air –side and terminal capacity periodically but it may not be desirable to notify the details of the available capacities to all the airlines. Instead the AAI can broadly indicate the capacities available during day and night, without going into hourly basis.
- (ii) For grandfather rights, a standard slot adherence of 80% of allotted slots must be followed.

- (iii) In case of dispute in the Slot Allocation Committee, it would be addressed at the level of Member (Operations) in case of AAI airports and Airport Coordination Committee in case of Greenfield Airports.
- (iv) After allocation of historic slots, 50% of the remaining slots will be allocated to the new airlines and the remaining to the existing airlines. In case the demand from the new airlines is not there to the extent of 50% then the balance slots can be allocated to the existing airlines.

### 3. Slot Allocation Procedure post Year 2007:

After leasing of Delhi and Mumbai Airports to JVCs, and setting up of the Greenfield Airports at Hyderabad & Bangalore by another set of JVCs, this Ministry had reviewed the slots allocation procedure and issued “Revised Procedure” vide its letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2007.

This revised procedure allowed the respective JV airport operators of Delhi and Mumbai to allocate slots for these airports, and AAI for the other airports. AAI and JVCs were also asked to periodically assess and notify the runway, apron and terminal capacities of airports where international flights operate.

As per the revised procedure of slots allocation, following was the procedure for Delhi and Mumbai airports:

- (i) Airlines, both international and domestic, will submit their schedule to JVCs before beginning of summer and winter season as per IATA guidelines.
- (ii) International airlines will also submit their schedule to AAI through Air India simultaneously. Domestic airlines will submit their schedule to AAI directly.
- (iii) As the ATC/CNS services will continue to be provided by AAI, JVCs shall be doing the slot allocation in consultation with AAI as the nodal agency for the same. AAI will advise runway capacity for slot allocation to JVCs
- (iv) JVCs will analyze the requests of airlines with reference to runway capacity as advised by AAI, terminal and apron capacity (as decided by respective JVC). If request of airlines is within the capacity parameters, JVCs will approve the slots.

- (v) If any slot is not available due to runway capacity constraint and is available from terminal & apron capacity perspective, JVCs will coordinate with AAI for approval/offer from runway capacity perspective.
- (vi) JVC will give offer/approval to airlines after getting clearance from AAI from runway capacity perspective.
- (vii) JVC will convey slot approval (both for international and domestic flights) to AAI, who in turn will inform DGCA for approval of schedules.
- (viii) Same procedure will be followed for amendments in schedule also.

Later the revised procedures were also made applicable to the other JVCs at Hyderabad and Bangalore.

4. Shortcomings in the existing system:

- (i) There is no system of objectively assessing the available slots at an airport and publishing the same in form of Notice on Airport Capacities (NAC) charts.
- (ii) The information about available slots at any Level 3 airport in the country is not placed in the public domain, and resultantly there is a valid apprehension of opacity in the process of slot allocation.
- (iii) The airlines are also blocking the slots, without actually utilizing the same. There is no mechanism to cancel the allocated slots, if the airlines fail to utilize the same within a specified period.
- (iv) The dates for filing of slots by domestic airlines are not fixed.
- (v) Appellate mechanism needs to be made more robust.
- (vi) The Slot Allocation Guidelines should be well defined and in tune with the global best practices.

5. In 2011, the feedback about the current system of slot allocation was not found positive and several complaints were being received from different

stakeholders in this regard. It was required that the system of slot allocation should be transparent, fair and equitable and necessary course corrections may be done. Following instructions were issued accordingly:

- (i) DGCA should issue letter to domestic airlines for filing of schedule at least four months in advance of the next season.
- (ii) AAI and JVC airports before beginning of each season should publish Notice on Airport Capacities (NAC) charts – runway, apron & terminal for metro airports on their website, so that airlines can plan their schedule accordingly.
- (iii) After filing of schedule, the Airport Operators will process the slots according to the airport capacities and based on the offers publish a draft schedule for the airlines to comment in a prescribed period. Based on inputs, the revised NAC charts on their website at least 30 days prior to slot allocation committee meeting.
- (iv) Based on the revised NAC charts and the offers given to airlines, Slot Allocation Committee will be convened for finalization of slots.
- (v) Adherence to the allocated slots will be monitored by ANS of AAI. In case any airline which not adhering to the allocated slot (15 minutes), the same will be notified after two months of commencement of schedule. This information will be utilized for calculating the historicity of allocated slot.
- (vi) Amendments in schedule during mid-season may be discussed and finalized by a committee headed by Jt. Secretary, MoCA, officials from DGCA, AAI and JVC airports. This committee shall meet at least once in a month to discuss and finalise these amendments.
- (vii) In case an airline does not utilize the allocated slot for one month, the allocated slot may be cancelled. DGCA representative informed that this is a part of CAR wherein airlines have to inform about the unutilized slot and/or flights not operated for a considerable period due to commercial reasons leading to combination/cancellation thereto be intimated to all concerned agencies.

#### **IV) Demand and Capacity Management**

1. A designated Capacity Management Committee which will be called as 'Coordination Committee' at airport level would regularly conduct a thorough demand and capacity analysis, using commonly recognized methods. In particular, demand and capacity would be assessed whenever there are significant changes in airport infrastructure, operational practices, or patterns of demand. The constitution of this Committee would be as under:

- (i) The concerned Airport Operator
- (ii) A representative of the AAI/ANS
- (iii) A representative of the DGCA

2. The analysis should objectively consider the ability of the airport infrastructure to accommodate demand at desired levels of service, such as queue times, level of congestion or delay. The analysis should assume that the airport facilities are being managed efficiently and are fully staffed.

3. The analysis should determine any infrastructure, operational, or environmental constraints that prevent demand from being satisfied and identify options for overcoming such shortages through infrastructure, operational or policy changes and improvements.

4. The results of the demand and capacity analysis would be shared with the airlines to solicit their views within a specified time period. The views of the airlines, so expressed, would be discussed in the Coordination Committee, before determining the final capacity of the airport.

5. The results of the demand and capacity analysis, the views of the airlines and the finalized capacity of the airport would be published on the designated websites, including that of the respective airport operators.

6. The objective of this analysis should be to improve the ability of the airport to accommodate demand and avoid, wherever possible, the need for the airport to change from Level 1 to Level 2 or from Level 2 to Level 3.

7. When an airport's infrastructure is no longer able to accommodate all of the demand, the Coordination Committee may determine that a change to Level 2 or Level 3 is required.

8. When a change in level is decided, the Coordination Committee would notify all interested parties (airlines, airport managing body, governments, IATA) of the decision to change the level of the airport. In any event, notification of an airport level change should be made no later than 1<sup>st</sup> April for the next winter season and 1<sup>st</sup> September for the next summer season.

9. A change in level should only occur after the Coordination Committee has ensured that:

- (i) A full demand and capacity analysis has been undertaken ; and
- (ii) All interested parties have been fully consulted on the analysis and the proposed change of level, and their views have been taken into account.

10. A change to Level 3 may be necessary, when:

- (i) Demand for airport infrastructure significantly exceeds the airport's capacity during the relevant period;
- (ii) Expansion of airport infrastructure to meet demand is not possible in the short term; and
- (iii) Attempts to resolve the problem through voluntary schedule adjustments have failed or are ineffective.

11. The Coordination Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, designate an airport as Level 3 for a temporary period not to exceed one season. Examples of exceptional circumstances are a significant increased in demand due to a special event (for example, Olympics, World Cup etc.) or a temporary reduction in capacity, resulting in a significant imbalance between demand and capacity at the airport. As the Level 3 designation is temporary and for not more than a single season, airlines will not accrue historic rights to slots during the temporary change of level.

12. A reduction in capacity from the previous equivalent season should be avoided wherever possible. The airlines operating at the airport must be consulted as soon as possible before any reduction of capacity occurs. In any case, airlines' historic slots must be honored. A capacity reduction after the Initial Submission Deadline or a reduction to a level that cannot accommodate established historic slots must be avoided in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

## **V) Coordination Mechanism**

1. The airport operator of a Level 1 airport should monitor demand for airport infrastructure and develop additional capacity when required to meet that demand. It is also responsible for working with handling agents and other authorities to avoid constraints that impact on airline operations.

2. Airlines operating at a Level 2 airport must be willing to make voluntary schedule adjustments in order to avoid exceeding the coordination parameters, otherwise the airport could be designated as Level 3 and require mandatory slot allocation. The voluntary schedule adjustment may be facilitated by the airport operator.

3. For slot allocation at a Level 3 airport, each airport operator would designate a Coordinator, which will be notified to all concerned, and his details should be published on the designated websites, including the websites of the respective airport operators.:

4. The function of the coordinator will include the following:

- i) Allocate slots to airlines and other aircraft operators in a neutral, transparent and non-discriminatory way, on the basis of the applicable coordination parameters, guidelines and regulations.
- ii) Make available to interested parties details of the applicable coordination parameters for all constrained components of airport infrastructure, such as runways, taxiways, aircraft parking stands, gates, terminal capacity (check-in, security, baggage reclaim, etc.) and environmental constraints (for example, night restrictions), local guidelines and regulations; and any other criteria used in the allocation of slots.
- iii) Make available to be the interested parties, ideally by online means, lists of slots allocated, remaining slots available and the reasons why slots were not allocated as requested. This data should be as detailed as possible to illustrate in graphic form the schedule limitations at the airport for each coordination parameter and which hours are congested.

- iv) Monitor planned and actual operations, apply the 'Use it or Lose it' rule, and report on performance to airlines, other aircraft and airport operators.
  - v) Offer advice to airlines and the relevant authorities on all matters likely to improve airport capacity or slot allocation flexibility, and in particular on any area which will help the airport return to Level 2 or Level 1.
  - vi) Address problems arising from conflicting requirements in such a way as to avoid any need for external intervention.
  - vii) Attend and participate in all IATA Slot Conferences.
5. The initial coordination for slot allocation may be chaired by DGCA or his representative as the chairman of the coordination committee and AAI will be the convener.

## **VI) Historicity**

### **1. *'Use It or Lose It' Rule:***

Historic precedence is only granted for a series of slots if the airline can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Coordinators that the series was operated at least 80% of the time during the period allocated in the previous equivalent season. Coordinators should provide timely feedback to airlines about flights at risk of failing to meet the minimum 80% usage requirement during the season to allow the airline to take appropriate action.

### **2. Eligibility for Historic Precedence:**

- i) The following guidelines would be used to determine which slots are eligible for historic precedence and the number of operations required to achieve 80% usage:

- (a) The series of slots held on the Historic Baseline Date of 31<sup>st</sup> January (summer) and 31<sup>st</sup> August (winter) is used as the basis for determining eligibility for historic precedence.

- (b) For a series of slots newly allocated after the Historic Baseline Date, the number of slots in the series on the date of first allocation forms the basis of the 80% usage calculation.
  - (c) Slots allocated on ad-hoc basis are not eligible for historic precedence. However, slots requested as a series but initially allocated as ad-hoc, which form a series by the end of the season, may be eligible for historic precedence.
  - (d) If an airline holds more than one series of slots at the same time with identical or overlapping periods of operation, then the usage of each series is calculated separately.
  - (e) If a flight operates on more than one day-of-week, then each day-of-week is considered as a separate series of slots.
  - (f) Adhoc non time related changes to a series of slots (for example, flight number, route or service type) do not affect eligibility for historic precedence. The 80% usage is calculated over the full period of operation of the service.
- (ii) Cancellations after the Historic Baseline Date: All cancellations made after the Historic Baseline Date are considered as non utilization of the series of slots in the 80% usage calculation, unless the non utilization is justified.
  - (iii) When an airport changes to Level 3, it becomes necessary to determine the historic slots of each airline that operated at the airport in the previous equivalent season. This determination would be based on the records available of both planned and operated schedules from the previous equivalent season. The newly designated Level 3 airport will compare the planned schedules with the services operated to determine the historic slots. This procedure would also apply in the event that an airport changes directly from Level 1 to Level 3.
3. Justified non utilization of slots:
- i) When calculating the 80% usage of a series of slots, slots not used will be considered as operated if the non utilization is justified for any of the following reasons, or that considered reasonable by the coordinator:

(a) Interruption of the air services of the airline due to unforeseeable and unavoidable causes outside the airline's control, for example a closure of an airport or airspace or severe weather; or

(b) Action intended to affect these services that prevent the airline from carrying out operations as planned, for example, industrial action or strikes.

ii) Airlines should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible after the flight cancellation or non operation occurs to confirm that such flights will be treated as operated.

4. Slot Misuse:

i) An airline must have a slot allocated to it before operating at a Level 3 airport. An airline that operates without slots will be requested by the coordinator to stop any operations not having slots. If the airline continues to operate without slots, the matter will be brought to the attention of the airport's Coordination Committee or other responsible body.

ii) Airlines must not intentionally operate services at a significantly different time or use slots in a significantly different way than allocated by the coordinator. Airlines that do so on a regular basis will not be entitled to historic precedence for either the times they operated or for the allocated times.

iii) The data of the on time performance of an airline for a given slot for the whole season will be monitored by the coordinator and taken into account while determining the slot misuse.

iv) The Coordinators must not deny an airline historic precedence without first initiating a dialogue with that airline. If, by the Historic Deadline, the airline has not responded to the dialogue initiated by the Coordinator, then the decision of the Coordinator will be final.

v) The following actions would also constitute slot misuse:-

(a) Holding slots that the airline does not intend to operate:

- (b) Holding slots for an operation other than that planned for the purpose of denying capacity to another aircraft operator;
  - (c) Requesting new slots that the airline does not intend to operate or
  - (d) Requesting slots for an operation other than that indicted, with the intention of gaining improved priority.
- vi) The Coordinator should seek the advice of the Coordination Committee to review the Coordinator's findings in monitoring slot performance.
  - vii) Continued slot misuse may result in a lower priority for future slot requests.
  - viii) Any new slot request made by an airline may be linked with their outstanding dues towards airport operator.

## ***VII) Slot Allocation***

### **Determination of Historic Slots:**

1. The coordination process is initiated when the Coordinator provides each airline with the details of their historic slots as a Slot historical allocation List (SHL) message. These messages must be distributed for each airport when the historic slots are determined by the coordinator, but not later than the SHL Deadline (see Timelines on Page 25). The historic slots will be established for domestic and international operations by this deadline.
2. Airlines must acknowledge receipt of the SHL to the coordinator and check its contents. Airlines that do not receive an SHL message must request the SHL from the coordinator. If an airline disagrees with the determination of Historic, then it must contact the coordinator as soon as possible and not later than the Agreed Historics Deadline. This will allow differences to be resolved before the Initial Submission Deadline (see timelines on Page 25).
3. No new differences related to the SHLs will be considered by the coordinator after the Agreed Historics Deadline.

### **Initial Slot Submission by Airlines:**

4. The airlines would be required to file their slot request for initial allocation twice each year for the summer and winter seasons with the concerned Coordinator of the Level 3 airport. The actual deadline for filing of this request would be as stated in the IATA WSG Coordination Calendar, around mid October for the ensuing summer season (which starts on the last Sunday of March) and mid May for the ensuing winter season (which starts on last Sunday of October).
5. Initial Submissions must include requests for all domestic and international slots that an airline intends to operate during the season, including flights at the beginning of the season that originate in the preceding season.
6. If a coordinator notices that an airline has failed to apply for a historic slot, then the coordinator should immediately ask the airline to clarify its submission. If the airline fails to respond within 24 hours, then the slot may be allocated to another airline.

#### Initial Coordination:

7. Based on the requests made by the airlines and their own published capacity, each coordinator of the Level 3 airport would draw up an initial slot allocation plan to be communicated to the carriers no later than the Slot Allocation List (SAL) Deadline (see timelines on page 25). The SAL should indicate any changes from the airlines Initial submission necessary to keep within the airport's coordination parameters, and the reasons for any changes. In the event that the requested time is not available, the coordinator or facilitator will offer the nearest available time.
8. The initial slot allocation plan drawn up by the Coordinator would be published on the website of the respective airport operators only after all SALs have been issued, it must contain details by airline of all allocated times and outstanding requests in a format that excludes flight number and route details.

#### Slot Conference Activity:

9. The twice yearly IATA Slot Conference (SC) is the forum for initial discussions of slots and schedule adjustments for international operations and domestic if necessary.

10. Prior to the SC, acceptance of initial slot allocations cancellation of unwanted slots, and minor changes are encouraged in order to improve the efficiency of the SC.
11. From the start of the SC coordinators and facilitators should make available to all airlines the full details of all allocated times and outstanding requests and updated capacity utilization data for the airport concerned.
12. If required, the coordinators of the Level 3 airports can organize a local conference for the adjustment of domestic slots prior to the Slot Return Deadline.
13. Post conference the coordination process continues reallocation is a continuous process. All requested must be processed by coordinators and facilitators promptly and within 3 business days, where possible.
14. Coordinators and facilitators must maintain a record of all outstanding requests and review it regularly, during and after the SC, and especially at the Slot Return Deadline.

Slot Allocation Priorities:

15. When developing a slot allocation plan based on the initial submissions by airlines, coordinator should apply the following priorities:
  - i) VIP Movements
  - ii) Historic Slots
  - iii) Changes to a historic slot should have priority over new requests for the same slot within the capacity available. However once an airline's request for a change to a historic time has been accepted by the Coordinator the airline cannot subsequently claim its original historic slot.
  - iv) Once historic slots and changes to historic slots have been allocated, the coordinator will establish a slot pool, including any newly created slots. Slots available in the pool are allocated to airlines requesting a slot, using the criteria set out in the following paragraphs.
16. The criteria for allocation of slots available in the slot pool to various airlines should be as under:

- i) New Entrants: an airline requesting a series of slots at an airport on any day where, if the airlines request were accepted, it would hold fewer than 5 slots at that airport on that day
  - a) Only airlines are eligible for new entrant status.
  - b) 50% of the slots contained in the pool at initial slot allocation must be allocated to new entrants unless; requests by new entrants are less than 50%.
  - c) In allocating slots among new entrants, the priority for Year Round operations and the Additional criteria for Slot Allocation will apply.
  - d) A new entrant that has been offered slots within one hour before or after the time requested, but does not accept this offer within a specified period, will not retain new entrant status for that season.
  - e) If a new entrant is dissatisfied with the response from the coordinator to its slot request then it may ask for a meeting of the Dispute Resolution Committee to seek to resolve the situation.
  - f) If an existing airline proposed a new flight to connect new stations in Tier-II/Tier-III towns cities from Tier-I city and vice-versa or in between two or more Tier-II/Tier-III town/cities, then the same may be given priority over other airlines for allocation of slots. The airline must operate on the same sector throughout the season and shall not cancel such flights. In case the airlines do not adhere to these guidelines, slots allocated to such flight will be withdrawn.
- ii) Amendments: After the publication of the final slot allocation plan by the respective airport operators no amendments would be made, except adhoc amendments due to weather / technical reasons (attributable to airport operator)/operating restrictions (like watch hours/sunset restrictions etc.) may be considered.
- iii) Hub: Promotion of Hubs, both international and domestic for passenger and cargo operations would be the underlying principles of

these guidelines. The airlines planning to connect flights on Domestic – Domestic, Domestic-International, International-Domestic and International-International sectors would be given priority in slot allocation.

- iv) Introduction of Year Round Operations:
  - a) Within each category (changes to historic slots, allocations to new entrants and other allocations from the slot pool) a request to extend an existing operation to operate on a year round basis should have priority over a new slot request.
  - b) In evaluating whether the year round priority applies, coordinators should allow flexibility on timings to cater for the differing requirements of short and long haul services.
- v) Additional criteria for initial Slot Allocation : When slots cannot be allocated using the primary criteria as set out above, consideration should be given to the following factors:
  - a) Effective period of operation: The schedule that will be effective for a longer period of operation in the same season should have priority.
  - b) Type of service and Market: The balance of the different types of services (scheduled, charter and cargo) and markets (domestic, regional and long haul), and the development of the airport route network should be considered.
  - c) Competition: Coordinators should try to ensure that due account is taken of competitive factors in the allocation of available slots.
  - d) Curfews: When a curfew at one airport creates a slot problem elsewhere priority should be given to the airline whose schedule is constrained by the curfew.
  - e) Requirements of the travelling public and other users: Coordinators should try to ensure that the needs of the travelling public and shippers are met as far as possible.

- f) Frequency of operation: Higher frequency should not in itself imply higher priority for slot allocation.
- vi) While allotting the slots, the coordinator shall factor in the Block Times published by DGCA for specific domestic sectors and ensure availability of slots to the given airline at the receiving airport.
- vii) The coordinator shall ensure availability of slots for extra section flights on account of VVIP movement/Non scheduled operations/Medical emergency/Natural calamity/Evacuation etc.

Dispute Resolution Committee:

17. A Dispute Resolution Committee may be constituted as under:

- i) Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation
- ii) DGCA
- iii) Member (ANS), AAI
- iv) Defence Authorities (in case of Defence enclaves)
- v) Concerned Airport Operator

18. The unresolved slot issues will be discussed in the meeting of the Dispute Resolution Committee to be held before the Slot Return Deadline. The airline will file their schedule with the DGCA as per their final slot allocation plan prior to season start vetted by the Coordinators of the concerned airports.

### **VIII) Slot Return and Historic Baseline**

1. Airlines should only hold slots that they intend to operate or use. To ensure that scarce capacity is not wasted airlines must immediately return any slots they know they will not use. Even at short notice, it may be possible to reallocate returned slots to other operators.

2. In particular, series of slots that no airline does not intend to operate must be returned no later than the Slot Return Deadline dates of 15<sup>th</sup> January (summer) and 15<sup>th</sup> August (winter).
3. Airlines that intentionally hold on to series of slots and return them after the Slot Return Deadline will receive a lower priority by the coordinator during the next equivalent season.
4. Airlines should make all public holiday and other ad hoc cancellations on or before the historic Baseline Date of 31<sup>st</sup> January (Summer) and 31<sup>st</sup> August (winter) so that such cancellations are not taken into account in the use it or lose it calculation.
5. A list of airlines that return series of slots after the slot return deadline will be maintained and published by the coordinator.
6. The coordinator must confirm all international slot holdings on the Historic Baseline Date (see timeline on page 25) for determination of Historic Precedence.

## **IX) Coordination after final Slot Allocation**

1. The coordination process continues even after the finalization of the slot allocation. All fresh requests must be processed by coordinators promptly.
2. Where a request cannot be accommodated within the coordination parameters the coordinator will offer the nearest available slot to the requested times and provide the reason why the original request could not be granted.
3. Coordinator must maintain a record of all outstanding requests and review it regularly. Coordinators should try to satisfy outstanding requests as soon as possible using the priorities already outlined.
4. Slot allocation for ad hoc operations:
  - i) Coordinators must process all ad hoc slot requests from airlines and general/business aviation operators but should give priority to requests for series of slots.

- ii) Ad hoc cancellations and ad hoc slot requests in off peak periods should be processed as soon as possible.
5. Changes on the day of operation:
- i) Coordinator should establish procedures for slot allocation outside of normal business hours
  - ii) Airlines should not notify coordinators of on the day equipment changes or operational variations (for example delayed flights weather disruptions etc) to their allocated slots.
  - iii) Only significant operational variations which affect the following day(s) may require an airline to submit a request for a new slot for the following day(s).
  - iv) When long term disruptions result in a rescheduling process the treatment of eligibility for historic precedence should be discussed and agreed between the coordinator and the airline.
  - v) Airlines should notify the coordinator of on the day of cancellations so that the slots can be reallocated to other carriers.
6. Slots of an Airline which gets a license to operate at an Airport:
- i) Request by an airline intending to start operations in the middle of a season after it has got license, will be given priority by the coordinator over all other pending requests.
  - ii) The coordinator will process such slot requests and adjust them within the coordination parameters.
7. Slots of an airline which ceases to operate at an Airport:
- i) An airline that ceases operations at an airport must immediately return all of the slots allocated to it for the remainder of the season and for the next season (if already allocated) and advise the coordinator whether or not it will use the slots in the future.

- ii) If an airline fails to provide the necessary information by a reasonable deadline date set by the coordinator then the coordinator may withdraw and reallocate the slots. In the allocation of the withdrawn slots, preference will be given to another airline that is willing to operate on the virgin route.

8. Slots of an Airline that loses its operating license:

- i) Slots can only be held by an airline with a valid operating license. If an airline ceases to hold a valid operating license, its slots revert to the slot pool.
- ii) In the case of bankruptcy (or similar proceedings) the representatives of the airline should enter into dialogue with the coordinator to discuss their future intentions for the slots and provide the contact details of the administrator.
- iii) The slots may be reserved by the coordinator for one month pending reinstatement of the airlines operating license or a formal takeover of the airlines activities. The airline its legal representatives or the responsible licensing authority should keep the coordinator informed of the airlines status.
- iv) If dialogue has not been initiated within a reasonable deadline set by the coordinator and if there is no legal protection linked to bankruptcy then the coordinator should reallocate the slots.

9. Slots of an airline after merger and acquisition:

- i) When an airline is merged or acquired by another airline the series of slots held by this airline will be transferred to the acquiring airline.
- ii) The historic slots held by the merged or acquired airline will be transferred to the acquiring airline which will enjoy the historicity of these slots as if it itself had held these slots.

## **X) Residual issues**

### **1. Change of use of slots by Airlines:**

Any change in the route/aircraft type/ service need prior approval of the slot coordinator

### **2. Slots allocated without historic precedence:**

- i) Where a series of slots becomes available out of the historic slots held by an airline for certain temporary reasons the coordinator may reallocate those slots to another airline on an adhoc basis.
- ii) Usage of such series of slots does not entitle the airline to claim historic precedence. Historic precedence remains with the original slot holder provided that airline applies for its historic slots in the next equivalent season.

## **XI) Timelines**

See the IATA worldwide slot guidelines (WSG) latest edition for actual dates and deadlines. The timelines are to be in sync with the IATA-WSG.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Typical dates from slot conference (SC) start date</b>
SHL Deadline	SC-59 days
Agreed Historics Deadline	SC-42 days
Confirmation of final coordination parameters and details of available capacity	SC-42 days
Initial submission deadline	SC-35 days
SAL deadline	SC-14 days
IATA slot conference for international operations	Opens Thursday after second Saturday in November (Sum) & June (win)
Slot return deadline	15 January (sum) & 15 August (win)
Historics baseline Date	31 January (Sum) & 31 August (Win)
Start of season	Last Sunday in March (Sum) & Last Sunday in October (Win)

SHL: Slot Historical allocation List

SAL: Slot Allocation list

## ***XII) Authorities***

1. A coordinator to be designated at each Airport
2. A coordination Committee at each airport
  - i) The concerned airport operator
  - ii) All airlines using the airport regularly and their representative organizations
  - iii) Air traffic control authority (representative of AAI)
  - iv) Representative of general/business aviation (where relevant)
3. A capacity management committee at each Airport
  - i) The concerned airport operator
  - ii) A representative of the AAI/ANS
  - iii) A representative of the DGCA
  - iv) A representative of the BCAS
  - v) A representative of the Bureau of Immigration
4. A dispute Resolution Committee
  - i) Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation
  - ii) DGCA
  - iii) Member (ANS), AAI
  - iv) Concerned Airport Operator
  - v) Defence Authorities (in case of Defence enclaves)

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