

# ***Quick Guide to Using the IATA SSIM format in the slot allocation/schedule authorisation process***

The aim of this Quick Guide is to provide all those requesting a slot for the first time with the basic knowledge of the language and formats defined by the industry for this purpose, which can be found in Chapter 6 of the SSIM Manual (*Standard Schedules Information Manual*) published by IATA (*International Air Transport Association*).

This document is not a substitute for the complete and thorough reading of said manual. To the contrary, it is recommended that airlines which are not familiar with the usual Slot Coordination processes should, where possible, consult the manual, to gain a better and more detailed understanding of all the types of messages that currently exist for communication between the Coordinator and the Airline.

This document aims to provide basic knowledge of the two basic message types (SCR and SMA), and also provides a brief description of two others which are frequently used (SIR and SAQ).

## **1. Basic principles**

Before giving a detailed description of the different elements which must be included in operating slot or schedule requests, we should mention a series of principles and/or rules associated with the coordination processes, without knowledge of which, this document would be incomplete. These basic concepts are as follows:

- The legal framework that regulates the rights and obligations corresponding to the slot allocation process in European Union airports is Regulation (EEC) No 95/93, amended by Regulation (EC) No 793/2004.
- Formally, the term 'slot' is associated only with airports designated by the competent authority as *Coordinated* airports. At airports designated as *Schedules Facilitated* airports, the concept 'authorised time' is used.
- The specific designation of an airport for which a request is made (*Coordinated* or *Schedules Facilitated*) also determines the type of message which must be used.
- The calendar year is not the usual time reference. The air transport industry divides the calendar year into 'seasons'. The *summer season* runs from the last Sunday in March to the Saturday before the last Sunday in October of the same year. The *winter season* runs from the last Sunday in October to the Saturday before the last Sunday in March of the following year. Therefore, there are three seasons within a calendar year: the end of the winter season of the previous year, the whole of the summer season of that year and the start of the winter season for said year. When making a slot request, dates belonging to different seasons can never be mixed.
- Unless expressly indicated otherwise, slot requests must be made using the UTC time (also known as GMT or zulu time), instead of the local time at the airport for which the request is being made.
- Although each coordinator may impose their own particular rules with regard to the way information on slot requests is exchanged, SITA and e-mail are widely used for this purpose.

## **2. Types of messages**

**SHL** (*Slot Historical and Non-Historical Allocation List*): this is the message used by Coordinators to inform airlines of the slots that have been granted historic rights and those which have not for the equivalent following season.

**SCR** (*Slot Clearance Request/Reply*): this is the message used by airlines and Coordinators to manage slot requests at *Coordinated* airports. Only during a specific phase of each season do the Coordinators use a different message known as SAL (see description further on).

**SMA** (*Schedule Movement Advice*): this is the message used by airlines and Schedule Facilitators for managing authorised schedules at *Schedules Facilitated* airports. As in the previous case, during a specific phase of each season the Schedules Facilitators use a different message known as SAL (see description below).

**SAL** (*Slot Allocation/Schedule Advice List*): this is the message that the Coordinator or Schedules Facilitator uses to inform airlines of the results of the initial allocation of slots/authorised schedules for a given season. From that time on, any changes to the schedule of an airline will be managed using the SCR or SMA messages.

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

**SAQ** (*Slot/Schedule Availability Query*): this is the message used by airlines and Coordinators/Schedules Facilitators to request/give information on the time periods in which it is possible to allocate a slot or authorise a schedule at an airport.

**WCR** (*Waitlist Change Request/Reply*): this is the message used by airlines and coordinators to manage changes to the list of slots pending improvement.

**WIR** (*Waitlist Information Request/Reply*): this is the message used by airlines and coordinators to exchange information on the content of the list of slots pending improvement.

### **3. SCR-SMA Messages**

Both these types of messages have the same format and structure. Although the SCR type message is used as a reference in the examples given below, the information given is equally valid for SMA messages.

SCR messages consist of three parts:

## A. Message header

This consists of a minimum of four lines and a maximum of six, depending on whether or not the optional lines are used. The meaning of these can be seen in the following example, followed by an explanation.

SCR  
/GES1720795  
S09  
25MAR  
MAD  
REYT/11453

**SCR**                      *Message type*

**/GES1720795**      *Optional. Reference code for identifying the message*

**S09**                      *Season for which the slots are requested. Consists of three characters:*

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

**25MAR**                      *Date on which the message is sent. Consists of five characters:*

- *The first two are the day of the month. Shown as 01, 02,....30, 31*
- *The last three are the first three letters of the name of the month in English: JAN, FEB, ....., NOV, DEC*

**MAD**                      *IATA code for the airport for which the request is made*

**REYT/11453**      *Optional. In reply messages sent by a coordinator there is a line which starts with REYT (Reference to Your Telex) followed by the reference code for the original message from the airline (or the date/time group in which the original message was produced).*

## B. Details of the request

This is the part of the message which is made up of one or a number of lines, subject to a specific format, through which the airlines and the coordinators specify the exact details of the slot request and request reply respectively.

An example of this would be:

**NSWT2435P SWT2436 01MAY30JUN 1234500 068AT7 PMIPMI2125 04501PMIPMI PC 2**  
**1      2      3      4      5      6      7 8      9 10 11      12 13 14 15 16 17**

in which,

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>1</b> <i>Action Code</i>        | Indicates the type of operation or transaction you wish to make with the details referred to below Airlines and Coordinators use different action codes. The most frequently used action codes are described further on in the document. |
| <b>2</b> <i>Arriving flight ID</i> | This could consist of the details of the aircraft registration mark (in the case of general aviation or business flights) or the flight number (in the case of commercial flights). In the   |

latter case, it will be composed of:

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

<b>3</b>	<i>Departing flight ID</i>	Same as above for the departure operation
<b>4</b>	<i>Operation Start Time</i>	First day referred to in the request. This is given in the way described above for the message sent date.
<b>5</b>	<i>Operation End Time</i>	Last day referred to in the request. This is optional if there is only one operation date (it is the same as the Start Date)
<b>6</b>	<i>Operating Days</i>	7 digit sequence which represents the days of the week for which the request is made. Monday is indicated by 1, Tuesday by 2, etc. The days on which there is no operation are represented by a 0 in the corresponding position within the sequence. This field is optional if the operation is only taking place on one day.
<b>7</b>	<i>Seating</i>	A 3 digit number which represents the seating layout of the aircraft with which the airline plans to undertake the operation.
<b>8</b>	<i>Type of aircraft</i>	IATA aircraft subtype code
<b>9</b>	<i>Origin airport</i>	IATA code for the origin airport of the operation
<b>10</b>	<i>Previous stopover airport</i>	IATA code for the previous airport at which the flight made a stopover. Optional if this is the same as the origin airport
<b>11</b>	<i>Arrival time</i>	Scheduled arrival time (UTC). This is represented by 4 digits in 24 hour format (from 0000 to 2359). Usually minutes have to be expressed in digits ending in 0 or 5
<b>12</b>	<i>Departure time</i>	Scheduled departure time (UTC).
<b>13</b>	<i>Overnight (Overnight)</i>	<i>indicator</i> Number expressing the number of days after the arrival that the departure flight will take place. Only the values 1 and 2 are accepted. If the departure is on the same day as the arrival, this is omitted
<b>14</b>	<i>Next stopover airport</i>	IATA code for the next airport in which the flight will make a stopover. Optional if this is the same as the destination airport
<b>15</b>	<i>Destination airport</i>	IATA code for the destination airport of the operation
<b>16</b>	<i>Service codes</i>	These indicate the reason for the arrival and departure operations. The most frequently used are the following:  J: Scheduled passenger flight C: Chartered passenger flight F: Scheduled cargo or mail flight H: Chartered cargo or mail flight P: Positional flight X: Technical stopover D: General or private aviation flight N: Business aviation flight / Air taxi

## 17 Frequency indicator

Indicates how often the operation is repeated. If this is not included it is understood that the operation is carried out weekly. A 2 indicates that the operation is carried out once every two weeks. No other values are accepted.

### ACTION CODES

#### a) Used by the airline

##### • New slot requests

**N:** used to ask the coordinator for a new slot.

**Y:** used to ask the coordinator for a new slot with *year-round* priority (continuation of an operation from the previous adjoining season to produce a year-round scheduled operation).

**B:** used to ask the coordinator for a new slot with *new entrant* priority.

**V:** used to ask the coordinator for a new slot with *new entrant* priority and *year-round* priority at the same time

##### • Changing allocated slots

**C:** used to show the slot for which the change is requested (operational change). Must be used in combination with the codes R, L or I.

**M:** used to show the slot for which the change is requested (non-operational change). Must be used in combination with the codes R, L or I.

**R:** used to show the change in the slot requested through the revision of the slot indicated on line C or M. Code R is used to inform the coordinator that, if the required slot is not available, the airline will accept a different offer from the one requested if this leads to an improvement in their current situation.

**L:** The only difference between code L and code R is that code L is used by the airline to inform the coordinator that they are not willing to accept offers other than the requested change.

**I:** code I lets the coordinator know that the requested slot change corresponds to the continuation of an operation from the previous season in order to produce a year-round scheduled operation ( *year-round* priority). It includes the option to accept offers.

##### • Cancelling allocated slots

**D:** used to indicate the slot the airline wishes to cancel from their schedule.

##### • Offers accepted/rejected

**P:** used to accept an offer made by the coordinator whilst still keeping the original request on a list of slots pending improvement.

**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) Used by the coordinator

**X:** used to inform the airline that the indicated slot has been cancelled and as a reply to a code 'D' request, for any other combination of changes: 'C-R/L/I' or 'M-R/L/I' or acceptance of offer 'A/P'.

**K:** used to inform the airline that they have been allocated the indicated slot and as a reply to a new slot request 'N/B/Y/V', a change request 'C-R/L/I' or 'M-R/L/I' or acceptance of offer 'A/P'.

**H:** used to indicate the slot currently allocated to the airline, normally whilst awaiting a decision from the airline on an offer issued by the coordinator for the corresponding flight.

**U:** used to let the airline know that the requested slot is not available and it will therefore be added to the list of slots pending improvement.

**O:** used to indicate the slot offered as an alternative to the original slot requested by the airline if the original is unavailable and cannot be allocated.

**T:** used instead of codes H or K to let the airline know that the allocation of the indicated slot is subject to certain conditions being met.

**W:** used to indicate the line of details of the request from the airline that is not recognised by the coordinator (generally because some of the details do not match the information stored in the coordinator's database)

When the request includes both the arrival and departure operations, as in the example, it is said that the request format corresponds to the stopover format or *turnaround* format.

However, in airports where it is permitted, the airline can make separate requests for arrival and departure. In these cases, fields exclusive to the associated operation should not be included in the request. Furthermore, when the operation refers to the departure, a blank space should be included between the action code and the flight's first identifying character.

### **Labels with Additional Information (optional)**

Once the basic information line is completed, ending with the *Frequency Indicator* referred to above, the airlines and coordinators can add additional information which complements the data given on the main line. This information is based on the use of labels and is expressed using the following format:

- The additional information to be included starts and ends with a forward slash (/)
- The different labels are separated from each other by blank spaces
- A label always consists of a code (which represents the subject to which the subsequent information refers), a full stop (.) to separate label and information and the information itself.
- When the total length of the main line plus the group of labels is more than 80 characters, the additional information goes on a different line, under the main line.

#### **a) The most common labels used by airlines**

*Timing flexibility indicator (FA-FD):* This is used to indicate the time period within which offers will be accepted, if the requested slot is not available. The labels to be used are **FA**, for arrival operations and **FD** for departure operations. The information will be presented in an 8 digit format representing the times between which offers would be accepted (for example, FA.07000810)

*Minimum stopover time (MT):* This is used to inform the coordinator of the minimum stopover time that the aircraft would require. The label to be used is **MT**. The information is presented in a 3 digit format to indicate the minimum number of minutes for the stopover (for example, MT 090)

*Aircraft registration mark (RA):* This is used to inform the coordinator of the registration mark of the aircraft that will be carrying out the requested operation. The label to be used is **RA**, and the information would be the registration mark itself (e.g. RA.DE76X3)

#### **b) The most common labels used by coordinators**

*Reject reason code (CA-CD):* This is used to let the airline know the reasons (capacity restrictions) why it has not been possible to allocate a slot at the requested time. The labels to be used are: **CA**, for arrival operations and **CD** for departure operations. The information provided by the coordinator would indicate if the capacity restriction is runway (RA), Terminal (TA), apron (AA) or a combination of these (UA).

### **C. Message footer (optional)**

This includes any additional information, written in free text form, that the airline or coordinator wish to add as part of the message. There are two types of additional information which can be included:

- **Supplementary information:** this refers to specific information on the data line(s), such as a clarification. This 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, indication of the end of message, etc. This must be preceded by the characters GI (*General Information*)

## EXAMPLES OF SCR MESSAGES

### Example 1: New flight request in *turnaround* format

*Request from the airline (N)*

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

*Coordinator response options*

- *Confirmation from the coordinator (K)*

SCR  
S09  
16FEB  
BCN  
REYT XG1/01APR  
KXG700 XG701 29MAR24OCT 1234567 180320 IBZIBZ1800 1850PMIPMI JJ  
SI ALL FREQUENCIES HAVE BEEN COORDINATED  
GI KIND REGARDS

- *Request rejected with offer from 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 CLOSEST AVAILABLE SLOT  
GI KIND REGARDS

In this example, the coordinator uses rejection reason R060 to indicate that the arrival slot is not available due to the runway capacity restriction of 60 minutes. Authorisation of the requested departure slot is determined by the runway capacity restriction of 10 minutes.

*Acceptance of the offer by the airline indicating that their original request should not be included in the list of slots pending improvement(A)*

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



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

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

**Example 2: Request to change an allocated arrival slot**

*Request from the airline (C-R)*

SCR  
S09  
15MAR  
MAD  
CAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0900 C  
RAEA900 01APR07APR 1234567 189738 LPALPA0810 C  
GI KIND REGARDS

*Coordinator response options*

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

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

- *Request rejected with double offer from the coordinator (H-U-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 can offer the airline two different slots as alternatives to the requested slot, one earlier than the requested slot and one later than the requested slot.

*Acceptance of the offer by the airline indicating that their original request should be included in the list of slots pending improvement(P)*

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

In the case of double offers, there is no need to explicitly reject the offer which is not accepted.

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

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

Although the coordinator does not give explicit notification, the flight is included in the list of slots pending improvement.

### **Example 3: Request to cancel an allocated departure slot**

*Request from the airline (D)*

SCR  
/AB\_PMI001 CANC\_DEADLINE  
S09  
14JAN  
PMI  
D AB1928 30MAR01JUL 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J  
D AB1928 31AUG25OCT 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J  
SI FLIGHT ONLY OPERATES MIDDLE OF SUMMER SEASON  
GI THANK YOU

*Coordinator response options*

- *Confirmation of cancellation from 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 KIND REGARDS

- *Coordinator detects error in the request (W)*

SCR  
S09  
14JAN  
PMI  
REYT AB\_PMI001 CANC\_DEADLINE  
W AB1928 30MAR01JUL 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J  
W AB1928 31AUG25OCT 0000067 263752 1400STRDUS J  
SI THE ROUTE STR-DUS CHANGED TO FLIGHT NUMBER AB1930 TWO DAYS AGO.  
PLEASE CONFIRM CANCELLATION  
GI KIND REGARDS

## 4. SIR Messages

The structure of these messages is identical to that of the SCR-SMA 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, some lines of data with the requested information and a footer (optional) for adding additional information.

The action code used by the airline in this type of message is always action code 'Q'.

Below are some examples of this type of message.

Example 1: Request for information on the complete schedule of an airline 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, within a determined time period and only for departure flights

```
SIR
S09
31MAR
AGP
Q QQQ 29MAR24OCT 0004000 0800 1000
```

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

```
SIR
S09
31MAR
LPA
QNT458 13MAY
```

The response from the coordinator to this type of schedule query message from airlines consists of another type of SIR message which includes the complete list of all authorised 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 Messages

The structure of these messages is identical to that of the SCR-SMA 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, some lines of data with the requested information and a footer (optional) for adding additional information.

An SAQ message is identical to an SCR, with the only difference being that, because it is an availability query, the response from the coordinator does not involve any changes to the company's confirmed schedule. Instead it simply lets the airline know if the requested slots are available and, if not, what are the closest alternatives. For these slots to be allocated, the airline must send the corresponding SCR.

The action codes the airline will use in an SAQ are the same as those for an SCR (Typically N and C-R). The Coordinator will use the following action codes in his response: 'H' to indicate the airline's confirmed slots, 'U' to indicate if the requested slot is not available and code 'I' with the same meaning as code 'O' in SCR messages.

Example: Query to change an allocated arrival slot

*Request from the airline (C-R)*

SAQ  
S09  
18MAR  
PMI  
CJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0900 C  
RJKK900 05APR 125M83 MADMAD0810 C  
GI KIND REGARDS

*Response from the Coordinator with information on available offers (H-U-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