

## ***Why and how we should act on the COVID-19 emergency, if we want to save commercial air transport and the world economy***

*-Gustavo J. Barba Román (ATPL) & Antonio Peláez Portales (Aeronautical Engineer)*

### ***What's going on?***

- The global spread of the COVID-19 virus has caused a reduction in the capacity of international passenger traffic by 89%. However, the economic impact is even greater, as markets with severe restrictions imposed by governments account for 98% of airline revenues;
- The collapse of commercial air transport is having a very negative impact on the world economy and very significantly on the aviation supply chain and tourism. It affects more than 25 million jobs and estimates losses of USD 450 billion;
- The airlines will start to go bankrupt successively as they exhaust the remaining cash flow, so they need an early cancellation of the restrictions imposed by the governments;
- However, governments will not lift restrictions on commercial air transport until measures are implemented to ensure the health of passengers and workers, and this in turn will restore confidence and therefore demand.

***The longer the practical suspension of commercial air transport operations is prolonged, the more costly it will be to recover and the consequences for industry and states will be irreparable.***

### ***Why is it necessary to act?***

- *The ICAO Council Declaration of 9 March 2020* expresses the urgent need to reduce the public health risks arising from the spread of COVID-19 in air transport, and to protect the health of passengers and aviation personnel, through measures:
  - i. Based on proven scientific facts and knowledge;
  - ii. Developed and implemented within the framework of multilateral international collaboration among all stakeholders; and
  - iii. To provide the necessary information to aviation authorities, airlines and the general public to help control the spread of the virus.

***International air transport has always been identified as the engine of a global economy, being the first to contract in the face of global threats and the first to react in its recovery.***

#### ***Request:***

- i. The collaboration of Member States to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization, to carry out their own risk assessments and adapt their response measures, in accordance with International Health Regulations (IHR 2005); and
- ii. The collaboration of airlines, airports and the industry in general, with governments and international organizations to implement response measures.

*It urges Member States to:*

- i. Apply existing regulations, in particular the SARPs in Annex 9 and any other applicable regulations in the other Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation;
- ii. Apply the recommendations of the World Health Organization in accordance with the risk assessments of each state;
- iii. Establish national facilitation committees that include all relevant entities in accordance with ICAO provisions;
- iv. To contribute to the proactive management of prevention of events affecting public health in aviation;
- v. Take the necessary actions to maintain the sustainability of air transport and the highest level of safety.

According to available analyses, air transport recovery will not be globally symmetrical, but will depend on:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the different regional markets;
- The weight of air transport and tourism in the economy of each state;
- The economic strength and cash flow of each airline and airport operator; and
- Financial support from the states and/or access to private financing.

Therefore, different recovery curves are foreseen depending on the various scenarios, where V recovery is no longer feasible in any of them. However, narrow or wide U-curves are considered, W in even L for those that cannot overcome the crisis.

In any case, a critical and differential factor in the success of the recovery strategy, especially for the most affected environments, will be the prompt resumption of activity, before the cash flow runs out.

#### ***How to act?***

- Many agencies, bodies and organizations, both national and international, have already issued guidelines, mechanisms and recommendations for action to control the risk of infection, transmission and spread of COVID-19 in the field of public health, such as commercial air transport. To make effective the implementation of the necessary procedures at international level;
- Protocol should:
  - i. Address three critical health issues:
    - The conditions in the airports;
    - Airline operations; and
    - The conditions of the passengers and crew on board each aircraft
  - ii. Include mechanisms, to operate at as low a level of risk as is reasonable to prevent the infection, transmission and spread of COVID-19;

***It is vital that international organizations, states, industry and professionals work together to develop a harmonized protocol for health protection from COVID-19, which will allow for the earliest possible restoration of commercial air transport operations.***

- iii. Be based on a model and have tools that allow for harmonized, effective and rapid global implementation; and
- iv. First, implemented at the national level to evaluate its effectiveness, and then accepted by different states reciprocally. Thus, achieving safe corridors: airport-airline/airport.

### ***What is our proposal?***

Above all, we are professionals in the sector, committed to improving operational safety and deeply concerned with the situation we are experiencing. On a personal level and based on our experience as ICAO instructors and safety analysts, we propose a proposal for integrated and systematic action, applying the Bowtie Model.

The advantages of this approach are multiple, since it would allow the simultaneous and independent work of "ad hoc multidisciplinary national/regional groups" under the same model, that would facilitate their communication, evaluation, continuous improvement, implementation and follow-up.

***This practical and progressive approach could be an essential tool for the ICAO-WHO-WTO-IATA-ICAO High Level Group:***

- ***By feeding it with the necessary applied knowledge and operational certainties; and***
- ***By providing the model and tools, which can facilitate a harmonized recovery process in the shortest possible time.***

The use of a tool like BowTieXP, accessible to any organization, with wide dissemination and global implementation, not only in the aviation environment (regulators, airlines, airports, etc.), but also in the health and financial industry, would be vital to ensure effective and rapid implementation.

For this reason, we have carried out a study of the recommendations, guidelines, standards and lines of action issued by the main organizations, which are actively working to control the risk of COVID-19 in the field of aviation and health.

Based on this documentary study and analysis of the problem, we have developed a high level BowTieXP, with the aim of integrating available knowledge and best practices detected at international level, to control the risk of infection, contagion and spread of COVID-19 during commercial air transport operations.

Our BowTieXP has all the essential features for Safety Management:

- The specific definition of the problem;
- Mechanisms for measuring its effectiveness;
- The possibility of setting concrete achievable targets;
- A robust and scalable system of documented barriers;
- Lines of responsibility and control;
- Processes for analysis, continuous improvement and exchange of information; and
- Risk assessment.

In a separate file, we attach our high level BowTieXP, and encourage all parties interested in working on this proposal, to join our LinkedIn **COVID-19.Aviation.BowTie** Working Group, where we will share the details, features and specific capabilities developed through BowTieXP.

Our contact email is **covid19.aviation.bowtie@gmail.com**