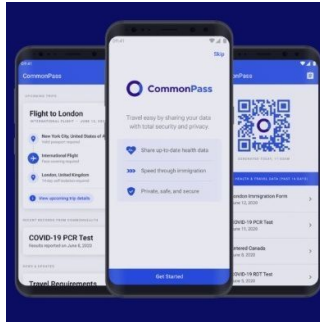## Cross-Border Management of COVID-19 Lab Results

Two digital initiatives are being tested aimed at facilitating cross-border handling of COVID-19-realted lab results for travellers and governments.

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International travel and tourism are among the industries brought down by the COVID-19 pandemic, with countries closing their borders or imposing stringent immigration rules (e.g. quarantines) as part of infection control protocols.

To enable safer airline travel and accelerate border reopenings, the World Economic Forum and The Commons Project Foundation, a Swiss-based non-profit building digital services for the common good, have jointly launched these twin initiatives:

- **CommonPass.** This digital health pass allows travellers to securely share their COVID-19 status across international borders while protecting their privacy.
- **Common Trust Framework for Health Status Verification.** With this platform, governments can set and verify their own health criteria for travellers while allowing lab results and vaccination records to be certified across borders.

In a recent inaugural transatlantic trial, volunteer travellers landing at Newark Liberty International Airport on United Airlines Flight 15 from London Heathrow used the CommonPass health pass on their mobile phone to document their COVID-19 status and share it with airline staff upon disembarking from the aircraft.

The digital health pass is meant to replace the current paper-based and cumbersome method of presenting and sharing of COVID-19 test results for travel. COVID-19 test results that are shown on pieces of paper (or photos of the paper) are from unknown labs, often written in languages foreign to those inspecting them. The absence of a standard test result format and certification system leaves room for confusion and even falsification of results.

CommonPass, in contrast, contains "trusted individual health data", according to Dr Bradley Perkins, Chief Medical Officer of The Commons Project. With the CommonPass and the CommonPass Framework, both travellers and governments will now have confidence in each traveller's verified COVID-19 status.

"Without the ability to trust COVID-19 tests – and eventually vaccine records – across international borders, many countries will feel compelled to retain full travel bans and mandatory quarantines for as long as the pandemic persists," Dr Perkins explained.

The transatlantic trial followed a successful trial of CommonPass on a Cathay Pacific flight from Hong Kong to Singapore on October 6. The goal of CommonPass trials is to replicate the full traveller experience of taking a test for COVID-19 prior to departure, uploading the result to their phones, and demonstrating their compliance with entry requirements at their departure and destination airports.

Enabling platforms like CommonPass is seen as important in restoring confidence in travel for travellers, industry and governments alike.

"Safe border reopening will not be possible without mutual trust and recognition between countries of testing results and vaccine records," said Lauren Uppink Calderwood, Head of Aviation, Travel and Tourism at the World Economic Forum. "The CommonPass framework enables this layer of trust while reducing potential fraud and ensuring the privacy of user data."

Source: BusinessWire

Image credit: The Commons Project Foundation

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