

Dear Travel Partners ,

**- INPUTS/CLARIFICATIONS -**

**QUOTE:**

The following details are given for your clarification:

1. Can we have equivalent type of RT-PCR at airports?

Can following COVID-19 molecular testing platforms can be used for arriving passengers?

- a) Open system RT-PCR
- b) TrueNat
- c) Gene Xpert
- d) RT-LAMP
- e) CRISPR/TATAMD CHECK/FELUDA
- f) Abbott ID NOW
- g) Accula by Thermofisher
- h) Rapid RTPCR

The above tests would give options to passengers for a quick exit and for efficient throughput.

**Clarification:** Kindly note that ICMR has approved the following systems for molecular testing of SARS-CoV-2 (all these systems are considered equivalent to RTPCR):

- a. Open system RTPCR
- b. TrueNat
- c. GeneXpert
- d. RTLAMP
- e. CRISPR/TATAMD CHECK/FELUDA
- f. Abbott ID Now
- g. Accula by Thermofisher
- h. Rapid RTPCR
- i. CoviDx DirectPlex

**Kindly note that ONLY samples collected in Viral Transport Media (VTM) are compatible for genome sequencing.**

**Out of the above nine systems, the following five systems have ability to test samples collected in VTM:**

- 1. Open system RTPCR
- 2. RTLAMP
- 3. CRISPR/TATAMD CHECK/FELUDA
- 4. CoviDx DirectPlex

## 5. Rapid RTPCR

### **Airport to follow the advice below:**

1. All airport labs should be instructed to collect samples in VTM and NOT in viral lysis buffer, to enable genomic sequencing.
2. Of all samples collected, only an aliquot should be used for RTPCR testing and the remaining aliquot must be immediately stored at -20 degree C. If not possible, then storage at 4 degree C must be ensured.
3. Any sample from the Omicron enlisted countries, if turns out to be COVID-19 positive, must be immediately sent to the nearest linked genomic sequencing laboratory.
4. If the samples are tested by any of the systems except the above 5 systems which can test VTM samples OR sample is not collected in VTM, **then for all COVID-19 positive cases, a repeat sample must be collected in VTM and referred to the nearest linked genome sequencing laboratory.**

**You may please find the document with the list of designated laboratories for genome sequencing linked with the airport for your ready reference. These details may please be brought to the notice of the labs in the airport to ensure that these labs would adhere to the guidelines of MoHFW/ ICMR. State/UT Governments are requested to monitor the same.**

2. 5% of travellers excluding from those Countries at risk (as per latest MOHFW guidelines) would be subject to post-arrival testing at random. Whether they need to wait at the airports till the test result is received? Can they be allowed to leave the airport of entry to reduce the crowding at the airport?

**Clarification: Travellers undergoing random sampling may give the sample and be allowed to leave. Now, the random sampling would be limited to 2% as per latest MoHFW guidelines and it would be on self-paid basis. Airlines/Airports may co-ordinate with the officials of State/UT Governments to select the passenger at random sampling.**

3. If the travellers from Countries (excluding those Countries at risk) are transiting through the airports of countries 'at risk,' but staying within the airports, can they be exempted from the post-arrival testing based on the self-declaration form?

**Clarification: Post-arrival testing can be exempted if a person is travelling from a NOT AT RISK country and has only a transit (without leaving immigration) in AT RISK country before taking the destination flight. However, if the person has travelled to any AT RISK country in last 14 days, he/she will be asked for post arrival testing and other additional restrictions, etc.**

4. Submission of sample for post-arrival COVID-19 test at the point of arrival (self-paid). Such travellers will be required to wait for their test results at the arrival airport before leaving or taking a connecting flight.

**Clarification:** This means after the negative results are received, the passengers can take connecting flights to reach their final destination.

5. Can exit of passengers can be phase-wise as the results are received so that all need not wait till the result is received for every passenger of the particular flight?

**Clarification:** A passenger can exit the airport or can take connecting flights for final destination once the negative report is received. He/She need not wait for the report of all the co-passengers.