FACT SHEET

Introduction

In May of 2013, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) created a new office within the Office of Field Operations (OFO) to advance the entry/exit mission. The Entry/Exit Transformation team's mission is to enhance the integrity of the immigration system through assurance of traveler identity. The goal is to accurately verify who arrives and to determine who is abiding by the terms of their admission and who is not, while enhancing border security and facilitating travel.

To accomplish this goal, CBP's strategy includes a holistic assessment of operational processes and evaluation of a variety of technologies; testing and deploying new biometric technologies while building on existing biographic data collection; and implementing a non-intrusive technology that is transparent to the traveler, enhances border security, and responds within seconds to the CBP officer and ensures our economic security.

Although current legislation focuses on biometric exit, improvements must be made to the end-to-end process, from entry to exit, in order to be most effective to the integrity of the immigration system.

CBP's Strategy

The CBP Entry/Exit team embraces this new challenge, and our strategy is clear:

1. Improve our current biographic entry-exit system

CBP already collects nearly 100% of all departure data from foreign nationals who depart the United States via air and sea ports of entry. CBP is building on this by partnering with Canada to exchange entry information, so that entry information collected by one country is recorded as an exit for the other. While similar discussions have just started with the Government of Mexico, CBP remains confident that our bi-national deliberations will also result in new opportunities for biographical data exchange. Advancing and improving our existing biographic collection process is a CBP priority, considering the backbone of the criminal justice system is built on biographic data.
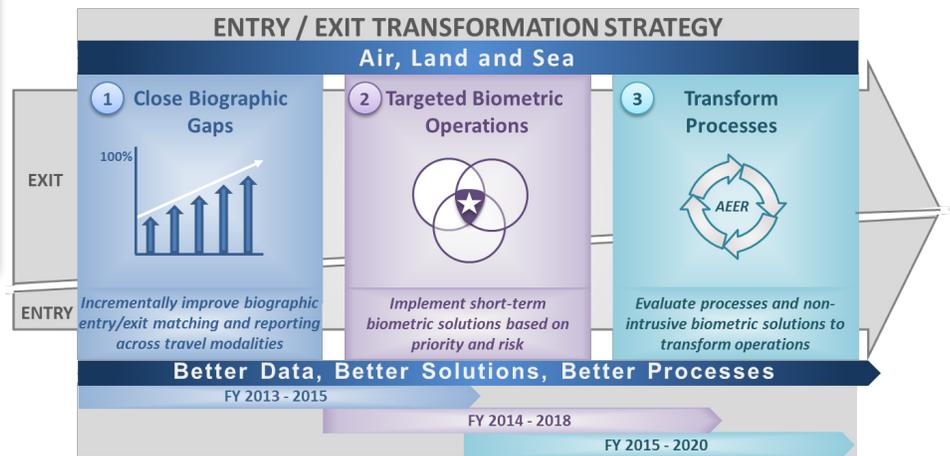
2. Targeted biometric operations

While CBP will focus on improving the existing biographic collection process, we will simultaneously

EXT Strategy

Completion of transition and effective resource allocation enables CBP to execute the EXT strategy to meet the mission, goals and objectives of the office

ENTRY / EXIT TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY
Air, Land and Sea

1 Close Biographic Gaps
100%
Incrementally improve biographic entry/exit matching and reporting across travel modalities

2 Targeted Biometric Operations
Implement short-term biometric solutions based on priority and risk

3 Transform Processes
AEER
Evaluate processes and non-intrusive biometric solutions to transform operations

EXIT
ENTRY

Better Data, Better Solutions, Better Processes
FY 2013 - 2015
FY 2014 - 2018
FY 2015 - 2020

Each EXT initiative aligns with the EXT strategy

For more information, visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Public Affairs at 202-344-1770.

04/14

FACT SHEET

target biometric operations in the air, land and sea environments to further support exit – from leveraging outbound operations by infusing a biometric collection in the air environment to testing facial or iris recognition on the move in the pedestrian environment – CBP will test emerging biometric technology in a variety of locations. The key here is to obtain data in a way that is truly useful and which adds law enforcement value while not disrupting travel or trade.

3. Transform Processes

By building on the two steps described above, CBP will revolutionize the total secure traveler process – transforming not only the departure process but also the arrival process – an end-to-end business transformation.

Having departure data is critical to the integrity of our immigration system. CBP will use a strategic phased approach to deploy a departure system that rings true of good government, smart planning and makes sense in terms of operations, cost and schedule. It will achieve every objective that Congress and the 9/11 Commission expect from us. We will continue to be transparent with our efforts to Congress and external stakeholders as we move forward through these phases.

Q: What is biographic information? What is biometric information?

A: Biographic information is text-based data that relays information about an individual. Common examples include name, gender, and date of birth, as well as data related to an individual's identity and travel documents, such as driver's license, passport, and visa.

Biometric information is the measurement of physical characteristics unique to an individual, such as fingerprints, iris scans, or facial recognition, for use in verifying the identity of individuals. CBP mainly uses the digital collection of fingerprints to match and verify an individual's identity, but is also exploring additional biometric technologies, including face and iris.

Q: Why is it difficult to implement a biometric exit system?

A: Biometric technology alone will not provide a solution to the entry/exit challenge. This is about the departure process, which is extremely sensitive to change. Any delays or negative impacts can quickly ripple across the entire air transportation system. Two key reasons help to explain why biometric exit data collection is difficult.

First, unlike entry, the ports were not designed to control the exit of individuals, nor does CBP (or the Federal government) own the airports. The nation's airports are privately owned and were not designed or built to control exit. Accordingly, there are no Federal inspection areas through which travelers must depart from the United States and no "controlled" space from which travelers must depart or face re-inspection from a CBP officer. As a result, CBP must carefully consider and explore how best to introduce biometric exit into existing port infrastructures which were not originally created or staffed for the direct processing of departing individuals. It is not feasible or responsible to install exit equipment in airports without a thorough evaluation of the potential impacts.

Second, only recently has face and iris biometric technology developed to the point where it is reliable enough to consider using in large-scale deployments. Previous biometric exit pilots relied on fingerprint collection, which is more time consuming and disruptive of port operations than the "standoff" biometric technologies of face and iris. ■