

**54<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*

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**AGENDA ITEM 9:        OTHER BUSINESS**

**ASIA PACIFIC CIVIL AVIATION COMMISSION (APCAC)  
FEASIBILITY STUDY – PROGRESS REPORT**

(Presented by the Chair of the APCAC Task Force)

**SUMMARY**

The paper outlines the progress of the APCAC Task Force undertaking a feasibility study into the potential establishment of a Civil Aviation Commission for the Asia Pacific Region.

## **APCAC FEASIBILITY STUDY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 At the 53<sup>rd</sup> Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in August 2016, the Conference noted the progress of the APCAC Task Force (APCACTF) undertaking a feasibility study into the establishment of a Civil Aviation Commission for the Asia Pacific Region. The Conference also noted that the APCACTF Expert Group would call for a meeting, and invited other States to join the Expert Group.

1.2 Subsequently, the APCACTF Expert Group met at the ICAO Regional Office in Bangkok on 23 March 2017 (attended by 4 of the 12 members), to update on the progress of the first phase of work and next steps in relation to consideration of progressing the feasibility study.

1.3 The initial body of work consisted of the following steps:

1.3.1 Task 1: Endorsement of key regional priorities, including an Asia Pacific States survey;

1.3.2 Task 2: Summarising the existing coordinating forums in the Asia Pacific collaboration framework, including a brief description of the role of each forum;

1.3.3 Task 3: Mapping the endorsed issues to the existing framework;

1.3.4 Task 4: Exploring options to enhance the existing framework to better address the endorsed issues;

1.3.5 Task 5: Examining the role, operations, benefits and challenges of other Civil Aviation Commissions; and

1.3.6 Task 6: Assessing the findings and determining the next steps.

### **2. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS TO DATE**

#### Task 1: Endorsement of key regional priorities, including a survey of Asia Pacific States

2.1 In December 2015, the Expert Group, supported by the ICAO Regional Office, conducted a survey of Asia Pacific States/Administrations to determine the objectives, interests, opportunities, and challenges each State/Administration is facing, and the priority of each issue.

2.2 Fifteen States/Administrations responded to the survey to rank a set of issues in order of importance with “1” being the highest priority.

2.3 The two key priorities identified by responding States/Administrations were:

- assistance to build their capabilities to improve safety and security (including implementation of USOAP and USAP corrective action plans); and
- additional capacity building to develop the next generation of aviation professionals and address emerging regional and global challenges.

The full list of the top ten priorities identified in Task 1 is found in the table below.

Priority	Sets of Issues
1	Assist States to build their capabilities to improve safety and security, regulatory oversight, and effectively implement ICAO mandated requirements, in particular the GASP and the GANP
	Implementation of USOAP and USAP Corrective Action Plans
	Adequate infrastructure investment in aviation safety facilities and technology
	Specific technical assistance/cooperation from APRO and States to implement USOAP and USAP Corrective Action Plans to improve regional safety and security standards
	Improve aviation regulatory performance by Developing State specific National Civil Aviation Policy and Strategic Plan
2	Additional capacity building to develop the next generation of aviation professionals, particularly in the areas of regulatory oversight, accident investigation, pilot training, air navigation, maintenance, cyber security, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS); utilising train the trainer principles where appropriate
	Funding and provision of fundamental training and honing skill sets of technical and operational staff on the ICAO safety and security requirements to equip them to be effective regulators, including on-site training, to support their respective aviation operations and systems
3	Optimise/improve existing regional platforms for coordination on technical and operational matters
	ATM Modernisation and harmonization
4	Information Sharing
5	Air Services Liberalisation
6	Harmonize civil aviation policies and practices
	Enhance regional cooperation
	Eliminate differences between data transmission systems, used in Air navigation operation of Asia Pacific Region and Europe (i.e. AIDC – OLDI : Foot - Meter)
	Considering the fact that airways are set up in direct roads, States of Asia Pacific Region should decrease unnecessary round flights, and in order to provide economic and environmental efficiency, re-establish coordinates of entry 'exit' points and predetermine air navigation fees
7	Consensus building on key aviation issues
8	Identify matters of common interest
9	Opportunity to provide an Asia Pacific position in international fora
10	Enhance regional search and rescue
	Environmental impacts

#### Task 2: List of existing coordinating forums in the Asia Pacific collaboration framework

2.4 The ICAO Regional Office developed a list of the coordinating forums within the Asia Pacific Region, and the role of each forum. The list was extensive and complex, numbering some 20 groups, with a further 27 sub-groups.

#### Task 3: Mapping the endorsed issues to the existing framework

2.5 While priority issues raised by the survey can be mapped to the current framework, some of the lower priority issues, such as identifying matters of common interest, and consolidating an Asia Pacific position for international forums, could not.

2.6 More importantly, in analyzing the current complicated Asia Pacific framework, it became apparent there is an opportunity to put in place an overarching coordination mechanism to act as a formal conduit between the roles and responsibilities of these groups and the DGCA Conference.

2.7 There is potentially, therefore, a role for a coordinating mechanism to examine the requirements of States in the region requiring capability and capacity building support, and ensure that support is provided in a manner that best suits the needs of the respective States.

#### Task 4: Exploring options to enhance the existing framework to better address the endorsed issues

2.8 The APCACTF Expert Group has acknowledged the opportunity to enhance the existing framework in a systematic way to provide more effective assistance and capacity building to improve safety and security, regulatory oversight and effectively implement ICAO mandated requirements (in particular the GASP and the GANP) to States in the region.

2.9 Task 4 builds on the work done in Tasks 1, 2, 3, in particular, how existing platforms are addressing the two key regional priorities of the region identified in Task 1: (i) assistance to build capabilities to improve safety and security and (ii) capacity building to address emerging challenges. The findings were drawn from responses to a survey covering the following five key areas from Chairs of 16 of the 47 ICAO Working Groups/Task Force (WG/TFs), as the remaining 31 WG/TF Chairs had requested for more time to provide their responses to fully identify and reflect the possible areas of improvement of existing mechanisms and platforms.

2.10 The responses received affirmed that there is a robust and comprehensive regional structure in place to address all of the region's priorities; in short, the regional structure works. Collectively, the existing WG/TFs are addressing all of the region's priorities, as previously identified in Task 1 and all WG/TFs are addressing the top 2 key regional priorities of assistance and capacity building. The responses also confirm that the region does not lack platforms for information-sharing and regional cooperation, and that existing efforts, such as the provision of tailored assistance and support to States, have had a significant and positive impact to the region. For example, the technical assistance programmes delivered by COSCAP-SEA, and GO-Teams pioneered by APRAST have enabled beneficiary States to raise their USOAP CMA Effective Implementation scores, as well as resolve key audit findings and observations.

2.11 The ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office is central to supporting WG/TFs with technical support, providing overall coordination and monitoring assistance, and disseminating developments among WG/TFs and States. There is room to expend more resources to increase the ICAO Secretariat's manpower to support the WG/TFs and to improve existing communications infrastructure such as enhancing the ICAO Regional Office website. Enhancements to existing regional platforms, such as the restructuring of the Asia Pacific Directors-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Conference, have been welcomed as means to improve regional technical coordination, and more of such enhancements could be explored for other key platforms.

2.12 Respondents were almost unanimous in identifying the key challenges to WG/TFs effectiveness: the lack of suitable and sufficient expertise, low State response/participation rates and frequent representational changes, as well as limited communication and coordination within and between WG/TFs. The general consensus is that these challenges are largely due to resource constraints faced by many States, both in terms of finances and manpower. Furthermore, WG/TFs attempts to employ alternative communication platforms such as tele/web-conferencing have been hindered by the lack of effective infrastructure. Respondents also highlighted the need for greater synergy and coordination between the various WG/TFs, which would help to reduce overlap and alleviate pressures on States' resources.

2.13 Overall, the APCACTF Expert Group recognised the opportunity to enhance and strengthen the existing framework in a systematic way, to better address the region's priorities. Specific recommendations were also identified in the interim report for further discussions by the APCACTF

Expert Group as solutions to improve regional aviation cooperation, coordination and assistance on operational and technical matters. In the meantime, Singapore as the Task 4 lead, will compile and analyse the responses from the remaining 31 regional working groups, and circulate the subsequent findings to the Expert Group members for comments to complete the work of Task 4.

#### Task 5: Examining the role, operations, benefits and challenges of other Civil Aviation Commissions

2.14 An overarching coordination role is a feature of other regional Civil Aviation Commissions covering the European CAC (ECAC), African CAC (AFCAC), Latin America CAC (LACAC) and Arab CAC (ACAC). These regional commissions have made a positive contribution to capability and capacity building in their regions.

2.15 The Expert Group were however, unable to obtain information on the financial contributions and operating costs of the CACs. Some APCACTF Expert Group members highlighted that a lack of sufficient personnel and financial resources in the CACs had impeded their effectiveness, and noted that some States in Asia Pacific were already facing challenges with their annual ICAO contributions. Some members also highlighted the difficulties faced by the CACs in coordinating the differing positions of Member States on key issues, even though some CACs were supported by existing political platforms such as the African Union and European Union, which were intended to provide political direction on aviation issues. It was also noted that no such structures exist in the Asia Pacific Region.

#### Task 6: Assessing the findings and determining the next steps.

2.16 There was no agreement on the findings or the next steps, and one member also highlighted that Task 4 had not yet been completed for a comprehensive assessment to be made of the findings. A number of Expert Group members expressed the need for the APCACTF to first be updated on the progress of the Expert Group's work, to give directions as to the next steps.

### **3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

3.1 Discussions at previous DGCA conferences and work undertaken thus far has indicated that there are a number of opportunities to enhance State and Regional safety and air navigation outcomes in the Asia Pacific, with a number of States within the Asia Pacific Region requiring further targeted assistance so as not to be left behind. Ongoing and increasing resource constraints across most States means that the provision of any further capacity development assistance must be identified strategically and delivered in the most effective and efficient means possible.

3.2 Some possible means reflected under Task 4 included the strengthening of the ICAO Regional Office as the focal point for regional coordination efforts, expanding resources for capacity development and technical assistance to States, and enhancing sharing and exchanges for better coordination.. Additionally, the provision of tactical regional support during the year to DGCA in the form of strategic advice on current and emerging issues and priorities across the region may enhance the effectiveness of the DGCA given the limited time available to them. This support would complement the ICAO Regional Office's strong logistical support to the annual DGCA Conference.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 There has been much progress made in the Tasks 1-5 undertaken in Phase 1 of the work of APCACTF Expert Group, with significant information and insights gained, thanks to the valuable contribution of States and regional working groups in the region. Work on the feasibility study has revealed that there is a continuing need to find improved means of coordination and support for many States in the Asia and Pacific region to build their capabilities to improve safety and air navigation. In particular, there was agreement that the region's top two key priorities are: i) assistance to build their capabilities to improve safety and security (including implementation of USOAP and USAP corrective

action plans); and ii) additional capacity building to develop the next generation of aviation professionals and address emerging regional and global challenges.

4.2 The Taskforce noted that the majority of members were of the view that presently there was insufficient basis to establish an Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC). The Taskforce noted the challenges in the region reported by States and that there are various regional cooperation and collaboration mechanisms to address these challenges. The majority of taskforce members felt that there is scope to enhance and strengthen these mechanisms, to improve their effectiveness and thus achieve the region's priorities in an expeditious manner. The Taskforce also noted the shortage of resources to continue the feasibility study whilst bearing in mind the need to continue working on building and enhancing existing regional capacity and capability building mechanisms, including the provision of technical assistance.

4.3 Bearing the regional priorities in mind, the Taskforce agreed on the need to focus on a coordinated regional approach towards capability and capacity building, and technical assistance. The effort should be on strengthening and evolving existing platforms and mechanisms for regional cooperation, so as to provide more effective support for the region. This would help to optimize regional resources, and avoid needless duplication of effort.

## **5. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

5.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the extensive body of work that has been undertaken during the study in identifying regional priorities and potential improvements to the current regional framework.
- b) Note that the Taskforce concluded that presently there was insufficient basis to establish an Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC).
- c) Agree to conclude the APCAC feasibility study and establish a new Taskforce to focus exclusively on strengthening and evolving existing regional mechanism for regional cooperation, towards capability and capacity building and technical assistance.
- d) Encourage States/Administrations to participate in the new Taskforce.

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