

**57th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Incheon, Republic of Korea
4 – 8 July 2022*

AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATES

**REGIONAL COOPERATION MECHANISMS TASK FORCE
PROGRESS REPORT**

Presented by Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat of the RCM Task Force

SUMMARY

The Paper provides an update of the work of the Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force (RCM TF), notwithstanding the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper also sets out the next steps to further develop the work of the RCM TF, including the implementation roadmap to take into account the developments and work done thus far.

REGIONAL COOPERATION MECHANISMS TASK FORCE - PROGRESS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The 54th Asia Pacific Director General of Civil Aviation Conference (DGCA/54) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in August 2017 established a task force to focus exclusively on strengthening and evolving existing regional mechanisms for regional cooperation, towards capability and capacity building and technical assistance. Please see DGCA/54 Action item 54/25 at Annex A.

1.2 The Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force (RCM TF) was thus formed in May 2018, comprising 11 members, namely Australia, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and the United States of America, with ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office (APAC RO) as the Secretariat. Singapore and New Zealand served as the Chair and the Vice Chair of the RCM TF respectively.

1.3 To recap, the Terms of Reference (TORs) of the RCM TF are as follows:

- a) Identify common and/or evolving needs of States/Administrations or a group of States/Administrations in the APAC region for capability and/or capacity development;
- b) Identify and enhance common mechanisms for regional co-operation to prevent overlaps and duplication;
- c) Identify and enhance mechanisms for funding of technical assistance;
- d) Propose recommendations for the approach and roadmap to strengthen existing regional mechanisms for regional cooperation towards capability and capacity building, and technical assistance; and
- e) Identify opportunities to improve and streamline the communication of work and outcomes of various ICAO regional working groups and taskforce.

1.4 The RCM TF has since met eight times in person and virtually and reports on its work to the DGCA Conference.

2. REVIEW OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY RCM TF

2.1 The RCM TF tabled an interim report on its work at DGCA/55 in Nadi, Fiji in October 2018, which addressed the two top regional priorities of capability and capacity building and technical assistance. Of note, the task force conducted a survey among APAC States/Administrations to determine the common and evolving needs of the Asia Pacific region, as well as put forth proposals for better governance of the existing regional groups.

2.2 At DGCA/56 in Kathmandu, Nepal, in August 2019, the RCM TF updated on further work done, specifically covering key tasks to address the needs of States/Administrations and the support mechanisms for technical assistance, and to enhance the governance of the regional groups and task forces, and communication platforms and channels for regional cooperation. DGCA/56 agreed for the RCM TF to undertake the final portion of its work, i.e., item 1.3(d) of the TORs, and provide a final report to the DGCA/57.

2.3 At its eighth meeting via teleconference on 3 April 2020, RCM TF discussed a draft Implementation Roadmap which was to be circulated to all task force members for their comments. Unfortunately, the work of the RCM TF had to take a pause in mid-2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to enable States/Administrations and ICAO APAC RO to refocus efforts and resources on aviation recovery and on the work of the Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) and ICAO Asia Pacific COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG).

2.4 After a two-year pause and as States/Administrations start to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is timely to resume the work of the RCM TF. The focus on aviation safety, aviation security and air navigation services remains relevant, with significant initiatives to be pursued:

- a) Implement the commitments made under the Beijing Declaration¹ adopted in 2018, in the areas of aviation safety, air navigation services, accident investigation, and human resource development, within a set but renewed timeframe, as well as the goals set out in the Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) adopted in 2021;
- b) Collaborate with the relevant entities on implementation of recommendations stemming from the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Aviation Needs Analysis Study² which had been stalled by the pandemic, which are key to addressing the aviation safety and security issues that the PSIDS have been facing; and
- c) Implement the APAC Seamless ANS Plan to continue building ANS capabilities and capacity to ensure safe and efficient air traffic operations throughout the APAC region for post-COVID traffic recovery and future growth.

2.5 The TORs of RCM TF remain valid and important. The progress and next steps are highlighted below:

- a) Identify common and/or evolving needs for capability and/or capacity development. While the needs survey was done three years ago, most identified needs in aviation security, air navigation services, human resource development and environment remain relevant today. A follow up survey may be necessary considering the changes in operating environment brought about by the pandemic.
- b) Identify and enhance common mechanisms for regional cooperation to prevent overlaps and duplication. Existing regional cooperation mechanisms such as APANPIRG and RASG continue their work even during the pandemic. An effective governance framework has been put in place to keep regional groups within the approved scope of work, limit overlaps and gaps and enhance communications. For example, ICAO APAC RO has incorporated the sample templates for reports, records of outcomes and actions from meetings in its communications. Nonetheless, more work needs to be done to enhance coordination between these regional groups to further build capabilities and performance within the APAC region.
- c) Identify and enhance mechanisms for funding of technical assistance. There is now a greater emphasis to improve cooperation for funding and technical assistance to address States' needs after more than two years of the pandemic. The RCM TF had earlier identified 21 sources of potential funding, of which half are within the ICAO framework. The support available ranges from funding to contribution in-kind, and includes training assistance, financial support, loans and grants. The work done so far in this area can be further updated to identify additional sources of technical assistance. These include:
 - Use of ICAO iPacks introduced by ICAO during the pandemic to support States in their recovery efforts;
 - Strengthening of the COSCAPs and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO)³ to enhance assistance in aviation safety related areas; and

¹ The declaration was endorsed at the APAC Ministerial Conference hosted by the People's Republic of China.

² The study, supported by the 39th ICAO Assembly, commenced in March 2019 and covered an overall needs analysis of the PSIDS.

³ PASO is an International Organisation providing quality aviation safety and security service for Member States in the Pacific.

- Development and conduct of customised training programmes such as the ICAO-Singapore Directors General of Civil Aviation Programme on Aviation Resilience, which was a key outcome of the ICAO High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC).
- d) Propose recommendations for the approach and roadmap to strengthen existing regional mechanisms for regional cooperation towards capability and capacity building, and technical assistance. There is an opportunity for the RCM TF to review and refresh the Implementation Roadmap to take into consideration the developments and needs arising from the pandemic. The Implementation Roadmap can also be further simplified to focus on key areas of priorities for the Asia Pacific region, such as capabilities and capacity building and enhancing technical coordination. In addition, the ICAO Council had recently supported the ICAO Secretary General’s new Implementation Support Policy to better consolidate resources within the ICAO Headquarters and its regional offices to support States.
- e) Identify opportunities to improve and streamline the communication of work and outcomes of various ICAO regional working groups and taskforces. The pandemic has seen accelerated adoption of digital communications by many States/Administrations in meetings and training. This underscores the importance of having reliable internet connectivity and communication technologies, for greater cooperation among States/Administrations. Of note, ICAO has also taken efforts to improve communications within the ICAO Council, and with Member States. These efforts include:
- Broadcast recordings of Council sessions on ICAO TV;
 - Montreal Group’s proposal to enhance communications between the Montreal Group and APAC States to provide regular written reports highlighting key Council discussions with a particular focus on the region and to convene a session at each DGCA Conference between the Montreal Group and APAC Member States on key issues discussed in the Council; and
 - Montreal Group’s paper on logistics and information on the High-Level Meeting on a Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG), including the structure of the LTAG using six building blocks to better prepare the Asia Pacific region for the discussion

2.6 Taking into consideration the above, the RCM TF will reconvene in the second half of 2022 to resume its work. States/Administrations who are interested in the work of the RCM TF are welcome to join the task force. The RCM TF will continue to enhance the existing regional mechanisms to enhance coordination among States in the region.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the progress of the work of the RCM TF notwithstanding the 2-year pause due to the pandemic; and
- b) Urge States/Administrations to continue contributing towards the work of the RCM TF.

— END —

Action Item 54/25 of the DGCA/54 held in in Nadi, Fiji in October 2018

Agenda Item 9: Other Business		
DP/9c/3	Action Item 54/25	<p>Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC) Feasibility Study – Progress Report</p> <p>Noting that APCAC Taskforce has determined that there was insufficient basis to establish an Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC), the Conference:</p> <p>a) Agreed 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; and</p> <p>b) Encourage States/Administrations to participate in the new Taskforce.</p>