



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The First Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Volcanic Ash Exercises Steering Group
(VOLCEX/SG/1)**

Manila, Philippines, 27-29 May 2015

Agenda Item 3: Review Background Information

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE APAC VOLCEX/SG

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents an overview of the establishment of the Asia/Pacific volcanic ash exercises steering group (APAC VOLCEX/SG).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Guidance material for conducting volcanic ash exercises in ICAO regions was introduced in 2010 in ICAO Doc 9766 – *Handbook on the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW)*, Second Edition 2004; Appendix F – *Guidance for Conducting Volcanic Ash Exercises in ICAO Regions*.

1.2 In accordance with Doc 9766, Appendix F, “A volcanic ash exercises steering group may be established by a PIRG¹ to coordinate all aspects of the organization and conduct of the exercises”. This paper presents an overview of the establishment of the ICAO Asia/Pacific volcanic ash exercises steering group (APAC VOLCEX/SG).

2. DISCUSSION

Establishment of volcanic ash exercises steering group in EUR/NAT Region

2.1 The ICAO European and North Atlantic Volcanic Ash Exercises Steering Group (EUR/NAT VOLCEX/SG) was established in 2008 with the objective of improving the response to volcanic eruptions and volcanic ash clouds by the relevant service providers and airspace users in the EUR and NAT Regions through organizing regular volcanic ash exercises, in order to validate and continually improve the regional volcanic ash contingency plans and procedures.

2.2 The EUR/NAT VOLCEX/SG is primarily concerned with exercising the responses to volcanic activity by stakeholders within the areas of responsibility of the volcanic ash advisory centres (VAACs) in London and Toulouse.

2.3 In 2012, the EUR (EAST) VOLCEX/SG was established to organize and conduct regular volcanic ash exercises in the far east of the Russian Federation, based on volcanoes on the Kamchatka Peninsula, which are located under the area of responsibility of VAAC Tokyo. With the establishment of the EUR (EAST) VOLCEX/SG, and formal representation on that group by Japan, regular inter-

¹ Planning and Implementation Regional Group (of ICAO)

regional (e.g., EUR and APAC) coordination was initiated on volcanic ash exercises.

Establishment of volcanic ash exercises steering group in APAC Region

2.4 As a participating member of the EUR (EAST) VOLCEX/SG since 2012, Japan has participated in the volcanic ash exercises in Kamchatka (VOLKAM exercises) in 2013, 2014 and 2015, which focus on scenarios affecting the North Pacific (NOPAC) air traffic routes and involve inter-regional coordination between the ICAO far-east EUR Region, the northeast APAC Region and the northwest NAM Region.

2.5 Based on experience gained through the VOLKAM exercises, in 2014, at the Eighteenth Meeting of the APAC Meteorology Sub-group (MET SG/18), Japan discussed the necessity and benefits of conducting volcanic ash exercises in other parts of the APAC Region where many active volcanoes are located; including some that have erupted emitting huge amounts of volcanic ash in recent times (MET SG/18, WP/16 Refers).

2.6 In view of the discussion above, MET SG/18 formulated a draft decision for the establishment of a volcanic ash exercises steering group in the APAC region, which was subsequently reviewed and adopted by the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of ICAO APAC Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG/25), in its Decision 25/47 – *Establishment of a Volcanic Ash Exercises Steering Group in the APAC Region*.

2.7 The terms of reference for the APAC volcanic ash exercises steering group, as adopted in APANPIRG Decision 25/47, are based on the guidance in ICAO Doc 9766, Appendix F, which state that “*The steering group should have representatives from, as a minimum, the volcanic ash advisory centres (VAACs) concerned, air navigation service providers (ANSPs), airspace users and regulators*”.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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