



# ICAO

## INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

### Twenty Fifth Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/25) and Eighth Meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI/8), Joint sessions

*(7 and 11 November 2022)*

#### **Agenda Item 7: Review and update of the Work Programme of APIRG and its Contributing Bodies**

#### **HYBRID ICAO EVENTS**

*(Presented by South Africa)*

<b>SUMMARY</b>	
This working paper highlights the benefit of continuing with the “Hybrid” events post COVID in order to facilitate greater participation including significant cost savings.	
Action by the Meeting	
a) note the information contained in this paper; and	
b) support the continuation of “Virtual” and or “Hybrid” events for all meetings going forward, where it can be accommodated, to ensure greater participation of the various States under the auspices of No Country Left Behind (NCLB)	
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	A, B, D and E

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Due to the impact of COVID-19, many organisations across the world were required to review their operations and implement mechanism to ensure business continuity, during a period where travel and in-person meetings were not permitted.
- 1.2 As restrictions lifted across the world, it allowed for the introduction of “Hybrid” events where attendance to the events was divided into two groups, with one group attending the event in-person and the second group attending the event through a virtual platform.
- 1.3 ICAO adopted the virtual attendance principle to allow participation to attend events “virtually” by developing comprehensive Guidelines for Virtual Meetings in support of the shift towards digital transformation.

## **2 DISCUSSION**

- 2.1 Virtual events and meetings have become the new norm in terms of business operations, not only due to cost savings but also to ensure continuation of business. Especially from an ICAO viewpoint where global and regional meetings are attended by stakeholders from across the world.

- 2.2 The logistics on travel and venue arrangements have significantly been reduced due to the introduction of virtual meetings and events.
- 2.3 Virtual events and meetings have both advantages and disadvantages as listed below:
  - 2.3.1 **Advantages:** lower expenses, everyone can be involved, more environmentally friendly, shorter sessions, more frequent meetings, and the chance to record meetings and collaborate in real time.
  - 2.3.2 **Disadvantages:** interactions between participants are more challenging as a result of visual and audio interaction only. There is no human interaction. It is therefore less dynamic and heavily dependent on technology, which is mainly internet connectivity, and team members may be in different time zones.
- 2.4 When an event is planned, the agenda and associated programme timetable of the event for a virtual meeting must be designed to provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate participants across different time zones.
- 2.5 Lifting of travel restrictions allowed meetings to be held in-person with the benefit to accommodate participants virtually as well, which is known as “Hybrid” events.
- 2.6 Hybrid events are thus the convergence of virtual and in-person events that allow audiences to access the event virtually and participate no matter where they are. Hybrid events can therefore cater for unlimited attendance ensuring maximum effectiveness of the event.
- 2.7 ICAO has held many successful events using both the “Virtual” and/or “Hybrid” methodology. There is therefore a need to continue using the “Virtual” and/or “Hybrid” methodology in the post-pandemic environment to assist not only with the recovery of the aviation industry through the reduction of costs, but to also support environmental sustainability through the reduction of emissions.

### 3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Although many events and meetings have returned to normal operations as encountered in the pre-pandemic environment, there is still a requirement to continue using the “Virtual” and/or “Hybrid” methodology for events and meetings going forward as and when possible.
- 3.2 “Virtual” and “Hybrid” events require a different skill set to ensure all participants are fully engaged and that participants accessing the event remotely are not excluded and disengaged in comparison to the participants attending the event physically.

### 4. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 4.1 The Meeting is invited to:
  - a) note the information contained in this paper; and
  - b) support the continuation of “Virtual” and or “Hybrid” events for certain meetings going forward, where it can be accommodated, to ensure greater participation of the various States under the auspices of “NCLB”.