



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group
(APIRG/27)**

5 to 6 November 2024

Agenda item 3: Implementation of air navigation objectives, targets and indicators, including the priorities set out in the regional air navigation plan

DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) PERSONNEL SKILLS

(Note submitted by Cameroon.)

SUMMARY	
<p>This information paper focuses on Cameroon's initiatives in the development of SAR personnel skills.</p> <p>The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) recommend that the watch personnel of the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) and the Rescue Sub Centers (RSCs) be subject to the qualification and certification procedures by virtue of their particularly important functions.</p> <p>Similarly, Annex 12 recommends that RCC/RSC personnel involved in radiotelephony communications be able to use the English language, while the IAMSAR Manual highlights that SAR crews require training.</p> <p>To comply with this, Cameroon has put in place a qualification process and has developed a SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) training course, a SAR aircrew training course and an English language proficiency test for RCC and RSC personnel.</p> <p>Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3.</p>	
REFERENCE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appendix 12: Search and Rescue - Doc 9731: International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR).
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	A – Safety

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Each ICAO Member State, under Article 25 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, has an obligation to assist aircraft in distress on its territory through the provision of prompt and effective search and rescue (SAR) services. This requires the availability of adequate facilities and equipment 24 hours a day as well as trained staff.

1.2 The concerned personnel includes SAR Coordinators (SCs), SAR Mission Coordinators (SMCs), Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) and Sub-Rescue Centres (RSCs) personnel, Incident Coordinators (SSCs), Aircraft Coordinators (ACOs) and Search and Rescue Unit (SRU) personnel.

1.3 Paragraph 3.1.8 of the IAMSAR Manual, Vol. 1 provides that RCC and RSC personnel must be qualified and certified to carry out their duties, with an emphasis on SAR incident analysis, research planning, and SAR operations management.

1.4 Paragraph 2.3.3 of Annex 12 requires that RCC and RSC personnel be able to use the language used in radiotelephone communications, while paragraph 2.3.4 recommends that such personnel, when participating in radiotelephone communications, be able to use the English language.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. *Qualification des SMC*

2.1.1. The purpose of the qualification of an SMC is to validate the ability of the person concerned to perform certain functions, while the certification allows him to be qualified to carry out his or her monitoring duties.

2.1.2. During this process, a working knowledge of the English language is essential for SMCs who must be able to communicate with Mission Control Centers (MCCs), other RCCs/RSCs, air traffic services agencies, as well as ship captains and aircraft commanders.

2.1.3. In this context, Cameroon has developed a test called the "SAR Personnel English Language Proficiency Test" to assess the English language proficiency of personnel performing the functions of SMC in an RCC or RSC. The framework put in place is based on the definition of a level of proficiency in the English language according to the functions held in a center.

2.1.4. Similarly, a training course for SAR Mission Coordinators has been developed at the Training School of the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority, in accordance with the provisions of the IAMSAR manual, in order to provide States with appropriate training for SAR personnel. For the time being, the training is only available in French.

2.2. *Air SAR Crew Training*

2.2.1. Air SAR crews include pilots, navigators, observers, drop specialists, etc. Airborne SAR assets play a critical role and SAR crews are often responsible for conducting aerial search operations in harsh environments and conditions, including in mountains, forests, seas or desert areas.

2.2.2. It is therefore important that these crews are introduced to specific search and rescue methods and techniques, and trained to conduct SAR operations in optimal safety conditions.

2.2.3. To do this, Cameroon has developed training for SAR crews. The objective is to enable Army and private aircrew members to be equipped to conduct SAR operations safely and effectively.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to.

- a) take note of the contents of this information paper;
- b) Draw inspiration from the example of Cameroon to ensure the qualification of SAR personnel.