



International Civil Aviation Organization

Aerodrome Safety & Planning Implementation Group

Fourth Meeting (ASPIG/4)
(Virtual Meeting, 14-16 March 2022)

Agenda Item 2: Regional Performance Framework for Aerodrome Safety

CERTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION OF WATER AERODROMES

(Presented by Saudi Arabia)

SUMMARY

General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia (GACA) has supported international standards and worked to make civil aviation aerodrome safety regulations consistent with the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). A series of measures to promote the implementation of aerodrome safety management have been carried out. In continuation to efforts of improving aerodrome safety regulations, GACA has developed its first-time regulations for the certification and authorization of water aerodromes in Saudi Arabia. GACA would like to share these practices and measures with MID Member States and partners in ICAO to promote safety in the emerging area of seaplane operations and the water aerodromes.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia (GACA) has been actively implementing the requirements of the ICAO in establishing Aerodromes Safety Management Systems. Saudi Arabia under its vision 2030 is developing more than 40 islands in Red Sea for high end environment friendly tourism and provide air connectivity through seaplane services and developing water aerodromes.

1.2 GACA launched a pilot project to establish regulations for water aerodromes in Saudi Arabia in line with sample guidelines and requirements of ICAO-APAC office for water aerodromes and has implemented certification and authorization of water aerodromes in January 2022 to ensure safety of seaplane and water aerodrome operations in the kingdom, which is expected to play a positive role in promoting the implementation of water aerodromes safety and improving the level of operation safety.

1.3 In the continuity of the GACA efforts to improve safety on aerodromes, heliports and water aerodromes, the GACAR Regulations for aerodromes and heliports are also updated by implementing all the Amendments of ICAO in Annex 14 Volume I and II, issued during 2020.

1.4 ICAO, through Resolution A40-8, instructed the ICAO Council to:

- (a) review the existing SARPs related to aerodromes; and
- (b) develop specific Standards and Recommended Practices to address the design, certification, management, safety and reporting requirements for water aerodromes operations.

1.5 In line with the ICAO-APAC guidelines and requirements for water aerodromes, GACA has developed its first-time regulation for certification and authorization of water aerodromes in Saudi Arabia for its upcoming water aerodromes in Red Sea Islands and adopted a series of measures to promote the implementation of the new regulations. GACA is desirous to participate and share its research work with ICAO-Air Navigation Commission (ANC) to improve and develop comprehensive SARPs for promotion and the safety of this emerging area of water aerodromes in the region and globally.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 ICAO Annex 14 – Aerodromes - does not differentiate between land and water as a surface from which aircraft can operate and defines that an aerodrome is a defined area on land or water. The operations of aircrafts on water differ significantly from those conducted on land and the physical characteristics of aerodromes on land that of the aerodromes on water. Considering that the numbers of water aerodromes are on increase globally, the concerns of safety for public use water aerodromes need to be addressed by making available the internationally accepted requirements and regulations for design and operations for the water aerodromes.

2.2 Considering that:

- a) there is no Annex or SARPs published by ICAO on water aerodromes;
- b) the use of seaplanes is on increase for public flying around the globe, particularly in the countries with Islands;
- c) water aerodromes are playing and forecasted to play bigger role in promoting civil aviation tourism and social integration internationally;
- d) the number of water aerodromes are increasing substantially and are likely to operate large size and capacity seaplanes for public flying on domestic and international sectors; and
- e) requirement of internationally accepted regulations for seaplane operations and SARPs for the water aerodromes are becoming of the importance for safety of the domestic and International Civil Aviation.

2.3 It is considered of paramount importance to have internationally accepted ICAO Annex and SARPs for safety and development of this emerging civil aviation sector of seaplane operations and water aerodromes.

2.4 Several States have developed their own regulations for water aerodromes for use as a local reference document, such as Canada, Indonesia, Maldives etc. and now Saudi Arabia. It is important to note that there are no uniform internationally accepted SARPs related to water aerodromes.

2.5 Saudi Arabia has more than 90 Islands and is planning to develop about 40 islands in Red Sea to promote high end environment friendly and responsible tourism under its vision 2030. GACA has developed comparatively a comprehensive regulation for water aerodromes based on its internal research work and guidelines of ICAO-APAC office. The water aerodromes are categorized under two categories considering their type of use and complexity of operations i.e., certification for Civil/Public use water aerodromes and authorization for General Aviation use water aerodromes and has implemented the new regulations in January 2022. Additional information on water aerodrome regulation are available on GACA website through the following link: <https://gaca.gov.sa/web/en-gb/page/laws-regulation>.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information provided in this paper;
- b) invite MID States to share experience in developing the regulations for water aerodromes certification and authorization; and
- c) invite ICAO MID Office to coordinate with ICAO HQ to review the existing SARPs related to aerodromes and to develop specific SARPs for the design, operation, safety management, and certification of water aerodromes.

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