



Agenda Item 2: Safety Oversight
2.5 Safety – related topics

IATA - AVIATION ENGLISH SOLUTION

(Presented by IATA)

Summary

This information paper introduces the IATA Aviation English Solution designed for pilots and air traffic controllers to meet the new ICAO language proficiency requirements. IATA is committed to improve safety in air transportation and has developed an Aviation English Solution that fully complies with the ICAO Manual on the Implementation of Language Proficiency Requirements. The purpose of the Solution is to bring all pilots and air traffic controllers involved in international operations up to the new ICAO standards before the March 2008 deadline.

1. Background

1.1 Between 1976 and 2005, more than 1100 passengers and crew lost their lives in accidents in which investigators determined that air traffic control (ATCO) communications had played a contributory role (source: ICAO Journal). In order to improve air transport safety, new ICAO English language proficiency standards have recently been adopted (Amendment 164 to Annex 1). The new rules outline the minimum level of English language proficiency (level 4 – operational) required by pilots and air traffic controllers with a compliance date of March 2008. As a result, applicants for, and holders of air traffic controller and pilot licenses must demonstrate their ability to speak and understand the language used for radiotelephony communications according to ICAO's six (6) proficiency criteria: **pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interactions.**

2. Concept

2.1 In order to support the aviation community in their preparation to comply with the new ICAO proficiency requirements, IATA has partnered with Berlitz, the world-renowned language services provider, to develop a complete Aviation English Solution consisting of the three (3) following services:

1. An **Assessment Service** to determine the initial English proficiency level according to all six (6) ICAO proficiency criteria.

2. A customized **Language Training Programme** to bring pilots and air traffic controllers up to ICAO's level 4 standard (operational).
3. **Proficiency Testing** to validate the English proficiency level according to all six (6) ICAO proficiency criteria.

Industry Benefits

1. With the **IATA Assessment Service**, organizations can accurately determine which candidates (pilots or air traffic controllers) require training and how much training is needed so that they meet the minimum ICAO standards. With this information, organizations can map out a training action plan to meet the ICAO deadline and ensure their training dollars will be invested where they are most needed.
2. With the **IATA Aviation English Language Training Programme**, organizations can provide their pilots or air traffic controllers with customized training that will enable the quick improvement of their English speaking and listening abilities using the proven Berlitz Method©.
3. With the **IATA Proficiency Test**, organizations can validate the proficiency level of their pilots or air traffic controllers according to the criteria established in the ICAO language proficiency requirements. Organizations can therefore comply with the requirements and thus contribute in improving air transport safety.

The IATA-Berlitz Partnership: Roles and Responsibilities

2.2 Both IATA and its partner, Berlitz, have combined their respective strengths to develop the **Assessment Service**, the **Language Training Programme** and the **Proficiency Test** - IATA as the aviation training expert and Berlitz as the language training expert. IATA has selected six (6) recognized subject matter experts, including three (3) experienced pilots and three (3) air traffic controllers, to provide the Berlitz linguistics and instructional design experts with the input required to develop all three components of the Aviation English Solution, strictly following the guidelines of the **Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements**.

2.3 The **Assessment Service** is delivered through a calling centre in Canada where candidates (pilots or air traffic controllers) undergo a 15-minute oral assessment led by a professional rater. The discussion is aviation-related and is intended to measure the candidates' level of proficiency based on the ICAO proficiency variables: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interactions. Once their interview is completed, candidates receive individual reports outlining their results and training recommendations.

2.4 Once the assessment is completed, candidates that are found to require training go through a customized **Language Training Programme** that can be delivered in-company, over the Internet, or through immersion in an English-speaking country, to meet any organizations' needs and budgets. The training modules are tailored to reflect the working environment of pilots and air traffic controllers who learn how to communicate effectively in English in a variety of aviation-related situations including regular operations, irregular operations and emergencies. Standard ICAO phraseology is used wherever applicable. The objective of the training programme is to bring all candidates up to the minimum ICAO level 4 standard.

2.5 Once the training programme is completed, candidates go through a proctored **Proficiency Test** to validate their proficiency level. The test is also delivered through the phone by professional raters through a calling centre in Canada but has a duration of thirty (30) minutes. Throughout the interview, pilots and air traffic controllers are being asked specific questions about pre-recorded pilot-controller communications and aviation-related pictures where both their plain English and usage of ICAO phraseology are being assessed. Once the proficiency test is completed, candidates receive individual reports outlining their result on each of ICAO's six (6) proficiency variables and obtain an overall score.

3. Suggested action

3.1 Bringing all pilots and air traffic controllers up to the new ICAO standards before the March 2008 deadline requires extensive planning. It is therefore advisable that all airlines and ANS providers assess the English level of their staff in order to map out a clear training action plan.