



**MET PANEL (METP)
MET OPERATIONS GROUP (MOG)
VOLCANIC ASH (VA)**

SECOND MEETING

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 27 to 28 April 2016

Agenda Item 4.5 MOG Work plan and Activities

Activity 3.5 of the IAVW Workstream: Common web page for VAACs

Common web page for VAACs

SUMMARY

This study note pursues the work described in conclusion 7/22 of the IAVWOPSG. An update on the development of a common web page is provided, and a discussion regarding the best way to progress on this topic is included.

(Presented by the ad-hoc group consisting of members from Australia, Canada (Rapporteur), France, Germany, United Kingdom and the United States)

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 At the 8th meeting of the International Airways Volcano Watch Operations Group (IAVWOPSG/8), 17 to 20 February 2014, Melbourne, Australia, the topic of a common web page for viewing the output from more than one dispersion model was addressed. This topic would be examined by an ad-hoc group consisting of members from Australia, Canada (Rapporteur), France, Germany, United Kingdom and the United States).

1.2 Given that a prototype web page was not yet in place in time for IAVWOPSG/8, it was agreed at that meeting that work on conclusion 7/22 should still be pursued and reported back to IAVWOPSG/9 meeting, and that conclusion 7/22 should remain valid. Given the dissolution of the IAVWOPSG since that time, this topic is now pursued within the framework of the Meteorology Operations Group.

1.3 A prototype web page was developed by the staff at NOAA's Air Resources Laboratory (ARL) and publicized to the ad-hoc group in December 2014. Members of the group were invited to provide comments about the page, several of which did. These comments were relayed to the developers of the web page, who then acted to include many of these suggestions to improve the site.

1.4 It is suggested that the step in the process would be to test out the web page by doing an exercise, which would allow for more feedback and decide how to develop the site further and make it as operationally relevant as possible.

1.5 Part of this next step would be to identify which group or organization would be responsible for maintaining and developing the site as well as organizing the exercise. The developers at ARL no longer have funding to work on this and are therefore not in a position to take on this responsibility. One possibility is that the maintenance and development of the site be taken over by the VAACs. If this route is chosen, it would be important to identify which VAAC(s) are responsible for the web page.

1.6 It is also important to consider the cost of maintaining and developing such a web page versus the benefit obtained from it in terms of information exchange and frequency of use. Historically, VAACs have developed other methods of exchanging information between them in order to coordinate responses to an eruption. If the cost of maintaining a common web page is high and the benefit low, is it better to simply keep using the more informal methods that have been used in the past?

1.7 Discussions amongst the VAACs on this topic have led to other suggestions, such as using platforms already established which have no overhead costs associated with it and are easy to use and implement. Examples include group pages such as those that exist on Yahoo, and a What's App Messenger group. Such tools are already used by certain VAACs and other organizations involved in responses to volcanic ash. If such a platform were to be used, it would be necessary to ensure that access was restricted to only the parties that are intended to have access to this information.

1.8 A number of other questions came up as well. Is there a need or desire for VAACs to see the model output from other centres? What model outputs should be shared and in what format? Should information on the observed volcanic ash be shared as well? Is there sufficient time to examine this during operational responses? These are all important questions to discuss further and come to consensus on.

2. CONCLUSIONS

2.1 In view of the foregoing, the group is invited to discuss the state of the common web page and decide whether or not work on conclusion 7/22 should still be pursued and reported back to the next meeting of the MOG.

3. ACTION BY THE METP-WG/MOG

3.1 The METP-WG/MOG is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this Study Note;
- b) agree whether or not conclusion 7/22 remains valid and should be pursued.