

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION



REPORT
SIXTH MEETING OF THE ICAO ASIA AND PACIFIC
COVID-19 CONTINGENCY AND RECOVERY PLANNING GROUP
(ACCRPG/6)

Web-conference, 28 August 2020

The views expressed in this Report are those of the Meeting
and not the Organization

Approved by the Meeting and published by the ICAO Asia and Pacific Office, Bangkok

ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
Table of Contents

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	ii
1. History of the Meeting	ii
2. Attendance	ii
3. Officers and Secretariat.....	ii
4. Language and Documentation	ii
REPORT ON AGENDA ITEMS.....	1
1. Opening of the meeting and working arrangements	1
2. Operators perspectives on challenges and way forward in implementing the CART Report Recommendations and Take-off Measures.....	1
3. ACCRPG Sub-Group reports and Work Program	3
4. APAC States’ progress on implementation of CART Recommendations.....	4
5. Any other Business	5
6. Next Meeting	5
APPENDICES	
A. List of Participants	
B. List of Presentations	

INTRODUCTION

1. History of the Meeting

1.1. The ICAO Asia and Pacific (APAC) Office hosted the Sixth Meeting of the ICAO APAC COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG/6) via web-conference from Bangkok, Thailand, on 28 August 2020.

2. Attendance

2.1. Over eighty-nine (89) participants registered to attend the Meeting from eighteen (18) Member States/Administrative Regions and eleven (11) International Organizations and aviation industry partners. The list of registered participants is at **Appendix A** to this Report.

3. Officers and Secretariat

3.1. Mr. Jim Wolfe, *Assistant Secretary, COVID International, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Australian Government*, and Mr. Conrad Clifford, *Regional Vice President, Asia Pacific, International Air Transport Association (IATA)*, presided as Co-Chairs of the Meeting.

3.2. Mr. Arun Mishra, *Regional Director, ICAO APAC Office*, acted as Secretary for the Meeting; assisted by members of the ICAO Secretariat.

4. Language and Documentation

4.1. The working language of the Meeting was English, inclusive of all documentation and this Report. The meeting considered eight (8) presentations as listed at **Appendix B** to this Report. The Meeting documentation is available at the ICAO APAC Office website (<https://www.icao.int/APAC/ACCRPG/Pages/2020-ACCRPG6.aspx>).

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEMS

1. Opening of the meeting and working arrangements

1.1. The Secretary officially opened the Meeting (web-conference) at 10:00 hrs. in Bangkok on 28 August 2020 (ICT, UTC+7). The Secretary and the Co-Chairs provided opening remarks and welcomed all participants to the Meeting.

Adoption of the Agenda

1.2. The Meeting adopted the Agenda as shown below:

- Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and working arrangements
- Agenda Item 2: Operators perspectives on challenges and way forward in implementing the CART Report Recommendations and Take-off Measures
- Agenda Item 3: ACCRPG Sub-Group reports and Work Program
- Agenda Item 4: APAC States' progress on implementation of CART Recommendations
- Agenda Item 5: Any other business
- Agenda Item 6: Next meeting

Review the Report of the previous meeting

1.3. The Secretariat disseminated a copy of the Report from ACCRPG/5 to all members and focal points of the ACCRPG and posted the Report on the ICAO APAC Office website (<https://www.icao.int/APAC/ACCRPG/Pages/2020-ACCRPG5.aspx>).

2. Operators perspectives on challenges and way forward in implementing the CART Report Recommendations and Take-off Measures

Presentation: *Delhi International Airport Limited – COVID Presentation (DIAL)*

2.1. Subsequent to Government of India's prohibition (due to COVID-19) of international and domestic aviation operations in late March 2020, India has since resumed limited (<=30%) domestic operations from late May 2020 and currently also conducts limited international operations, via special air transport "bubble" arrangements, with selected countries.

2.2. To support the resumption of airport operations, DIAL worked closely with India's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to implement COVID-19-related standard operating procedures (SOPs) designed to ensure the safety of passengers and staff. The SOPs focus on airport operations in the following areas: health screening, passenger isolation/quarantine, social/physical distancing, sanitization/disinfection, "contactless" processes, personal protective equipment (PPE), baggage handling, safe waste disposal, security screening and staff health and safety. The SOPs are based closely on the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) "Take-off" guidance and are structured around four themes: "Place", "Process", "Passenger" and "People".

2.3. In the resumption of airport operations, DIAL identified a number of key challenges, including the following:

- Designing and implementing health protocols and passenger processing procedures in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including both aviation and health experts;

- Arranging the necessary PPE and additional infrastructure and processes needed for sanitization and social distancing; and
- Managing the increase in processing times needed for international arrival passengers.

2.4. To further facilitate public confidence in and the resumption of (domestic and international) air travel, DIAL recommends that States harmonize their policies on passenger testing and quarantine and consider adopting COVID-negative test report/certificate for travellers in lieu of mandatory quarantine.

2.5. To support the ongoing financial viability of airports, DIAL recommends that States consider various options including the deferment of concession fees and provision of loans.

Presentation: *Combating the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic: Hong Kong International Airport's Measures (HKIA)*

2.6. To support airport operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, HKIA implemented public health-related measures aligned with the ICAO CART Recommendations and “Take-off” guidance. The airport-wide measures include body temperature screening, cleaning and disinfection, physical distancing, PPE and mandatory mask-wearing.

2.7. Contactless processing of passengers at HKIA is facilitated through the concept of a “single token journey” through all the airport’s checkpoints, from check-in to boarding. The process is enabled through the deployment of automated technologies (including facial recognition technology) at each point: “smart” check-in kiosk, self-bag-drop, e-security-gate and e-boarding-gate.

2.8. While supporting airport operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, HKIA identified a number of key challenges and lessons learnt, including the following:

- Supplying the urgent demand for additional resources to implement health-related measures and the need to factor this into planning for future contingencies;
- Supplying the urgent demand for PPE and the need to stockpile sufficient supplies of PPE for future events; and
- Securing buy-in from airlines necessary to support the implementation of contactless processing systems and the need for customization of the systems to meet the airlines’ needs.

2.9. To further facilitate public confidence in and the stabilization of air travel, HKIA supports the promotion of initiatives such as “travel bubbles” and airport health accreditation (AHA). These initiatives will provide passengers with assurance on public health-related measures, which ensure the safety of people from COVID-19, and streamlined processing of passengers, which facilitates the ongoing convenience of air travel.

Presentation: *Malaysia Airlines Berhad COVID-19 Preventive Measures (MAB)*

2.10. MAB’s management of operations in the COVID-19 pandemic is facilitated by its holistic approach to operational safety and health principles in the preparedness for, response to and recovery from the pandemic.

2.11. MAB has implemented health-related measures, for passengers and crew, which are evidence based and aligned with the ICAO CART “Take-off” guidance, the Malaysian CAA’s COVID-19 guidelines and the four components and twelve elements of MAB’s own safety management system (SMS).

2.12. MAB identified several issues and challenges related to the implementation of the ICAO CART “Take-off” guidance or the CAA health-related measures or other consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the following:

- Assessment of health risk;
- Investment in contactless technologies;
- Requirements for COVID-19 testing of crew;
- Safety-related risks associated with the use of PPE on-board;
- Implementation of public health declaration cards;
- Requirements for temperature screening of passengers on-board;
- Carriage of alcohol-based hand sanitizer on-board;
- Maintaining flight crew competency and recent experience; and
- Adoption of new technologies (e.g., aircraft disinfection, COVID-19 testing, etc.)

Presentation: *Travel Bubbles, Risk Assessment Framework and Testing (IATA)*

2.13. A “travel bubble” (between countries) is fundamentally an international air travel agreement on COVID-19-related mitigation measures, which facilitates the reopening of international travel markets through the elimination or relaxation of mandatory 14-day quarantine/self-isolation of travellers.

2.14. The concept involves an escalating scale of public health-related measures linked to the level of infection risk and the differential in infection risk in the participating countries. Therefore, to support States with implementing travel bubbles, IATA recommends that ICAO should develop guidance on a common risk assessment framework incorporating a harmonized, universally-accepted metric for assessing COVID-19 infection risk.

2.15. Countries with similar levels of infection risk, and stable or decreasing rates of infection, could implement travel bubbles with basic public health-related measures for travellers, which do not include COVID-19 testing. Countries with significantly different levels of infection risk, and/or higher or increasing infection rates, could also implement travel bubbles with more stringent public health-related measures, which do include COVID-19 testing of travellers before departure and in some cases also on arrival.

3. ACCRPG Sub-Group reports and Work Program

Presentation: *Public Health Sub-Group (Public Health Sub-Group Rapporteur)*

3.1. The PH/SG convened online for its 7th meeting on 27 August. The top three challenges for States in resuming international air travel are: managing the various national requirements for COVID-19 testing and/or quarantine of travellers and how to facilitate travel for COVID-19-recovered persons who test positive; establishing structured communication between aviation and public health authorities; and implementing the ICAO CART guidance.

3.2. In order to support States with establishing structured communication between aviation and public health authorities, the meeting supported the PH/SG’s recommendation for ICAO to convene a special “roundtable”, in collaboration with the WHO. The roundtable would assist States in discussing and building consensus on aviation public health-related measures in the APAC region, such as pre-departure COVID-19 testing for travellers and acceptance of “discharge letters” for recovered COVID-19 travellers.

Presentation: *Safety Sub-Group* (Safety Sub-Group Rapporteur)

3.3. The SAF/SG reported that, with respect to ICAO CART Recommendation 1, since the last meeting of the ACCRPG there has been no change in the proportion of APAC States (85%) that have updated the COVID-19 Contingency Related Differences (CCRDs) in the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) subsystem.

3.4. With respect to CART Recommendation 3, the SAF/SG is reviewing recommendations and guidance from the Boeing company on the storage of alcohol-based hand sanitizer on-board aircraft. Singapore is preparing guidance on the proper use of PPE by crew (including face masks) and Malaysia is drafting a document on operators' assignment of crew members to flight duty while exercising CCRDs.

Presentation: *Security and Facilitation Sub-Group* (Security and Facilitation Sub-Group Rapporteur)

3.5. The AVSEC-FAL/SG convened online for its 7th meeting on 19 August. Deliverables for each of the CART Recommendations have been achieved. However, in the interests of identifying potential challenges/obstacles which may have, or may, arise as the Pandemic situation evolves, APAC States were asked to consider their most pressing challenges and submit these to the AVSEC-FAL/SG. Major challenges/obstacles as identified by the AVSEC-FAL/SG for APAC States in the resumption of international air travel include the following:

- Implementation of appropriate public health-related measures at security screening points;
- Maintaining security screening staff competency;
- Maintaining security oversight activities;
- Lack of harmonization with respect to States' requirements of pre-departure COVID-19 testing of travellers; and
- Lack of consensus among States on how to facilitate travel for COVID-19-recovered persons who test positive.

3.6. The AVSEC-FAL/SG will continue to work with ICAO and all relevant partners in order to address existing or potential challenges which are linked to the CART security- and facilitation-related Recommendations or that may have been identified independent to the Recommendations.

4. APAC States' progress on implementation of CART Recommendations

Presentation: *Covid-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC) – APAC State Activity Status* (Secretariat)

4.1. To date, only twenty-eight (28) of the thirty-nine (39) APAC States had nominated a CRRIC Focal Point/s to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of each State's information shared via the CRRIC.

4.2. The eleven (11) APAC States yet to nominate a CRRIC Focal Point are Cambodia, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Palau, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

4.3. A recent ICAO analysis of CRRIC State Activity Status indicated that the numbers of APAC States which have either used the CRRIC to complete the CART Recommendation Gap Analysis or review the public health risk mitigation measures or been active users of the CRRIC were well below the average compared with other ICAO Regions.

4.4. The CRRIC “Best Practices” tool allows States to share their best practices related to the implementation of the CART recommendations. States can choose to share their best practices documents with Member States only (restricted to the CRRIC website) or with the general public (also published on the CART public website).

5. Any other Business

5.1. No business discussed under this agenda item.

6. Next Meeting

6.1. The Co-Chairs reminded the ACCRPG sub-groups to refer to Appendix D to the ACCRPG/4 Report and to report on progress in identifying challenges and potential solutions for restarting aviation services. *Note: for ease of reference, a copy of the Appendix D to the ACCRPG/4 Report is attached to this Report.*

6.2. The Co-Chairs and Secretariat proposed that the Group reconvene online for its next meeting (ACCRPG/7) on 25 September 2020. ACCRPG members may propose agenda items for ACCRPG/7.

ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

SIXTH MEETING OF THE ICAO APAC COVID-19 CONTINGENCY AND RECOVERY PLANNING GROUP (ACCRPG/6)

List of Participants

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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ACCRPG/6 – REPORT
APPENDIX A

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LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

Agenda Item	Title	Presenter(s)/Author(s)
PRESENTATIONS		
2	Delhi International Airport Limited – COVID Presentation	Delhi International Airport Limited
2	Combating the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic: Hong Kong International Airport’s Measures	Hong Kong International Airport
2	Malaysia Airlines Berhad COVID-19 Preventive Measures	Malaysia Airlines Berhad
3	Travel Bubbles, Risk Assessment Framework and Testing	International Air Transport Association
3	Progress Report - Public Health Sub-Group	Public Health Sub-Group Rapporteur
3	Progress Report - Safety Sub-Group	Safety Sub-Group Rapporteur
3	Progress Report - Security and Facilitation Sub-Group	Security and Facilitation Sub-Group Rapporteur
4	Covid-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC) –APAC State Activity Status	Secretariat

CHALLENGES IN RESTARTING AVIATION SERVICES

The assist the ACCRPG Sub-Groups with identifying and focusing on three most challenging impediments in restarting aviation services, the Co-Chair proposed that the ACCRPG Sub-Groups consider the following challenges (presented in the form of **Objective, Challenges and Potential Solutions**):

SAFETY		
Objective	Challenges	Potential Solutions
1. Each APAC State to provide input into and regularly update safety-related information for the key ICAO databases – CCRD and CRIC	Dedicated resources required to input into the ICAO databases – CCRD and CRIC. Achieving consistency between States in reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of advice to all APAC States on how to implement information into ICAO databases. • Sharing of experiences between States that have already put in information to ICAO and those still to do so. • Standard ICAO reporting templates should reduce burden on States in providing information and increase consistency of information provided.
2. Timely APAC State and industry responses to specific COVID-19 safety-related issues	Level of resources available to States and industry with significant downturn in demand and employment across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and industry commitment to maintain key safety personnel and core safety regulatory and oversight resourcing levels. • Sharing of experiences between States and guidance material on handling of emerging COVID-19 safety-related issues.
3. APAC States and industry have safety guidance material and checklists readily available to handle recovery of aviation demand	Loss of key safety personnel to implement measures needed to facilitate recovery of aviation demand. Normal safety guidance material not updated to reflect COVID-19 related risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and industry ensure that key safety personnel are retained and/or readily accessible to facilitate recovery in aviation demand and hence demand for safety personnel • Review and update as appropriate of existing guidance materials to address risks related to COVID-19.

AVSEC FAL		
Objective	Challenges	Potential Solutions
4. APAC States adopt consistent approaches to health requirements placed on passengers, airlines and airports having regard to the	There are a range of different health related measures that can be adopted by States and industry to reduce the health risk of COVID-19 as well as build public confidence in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop best practice guidance material covering the key health measures for passengers, airlines and airports, building on existing material and supplemented by specific advice covering COVID-19 as appropriate.

ACCRPG/4 – REPORT
APPENDIX D

AVSEC FAL		
Objective	Challenges	Potential Solutions
different and changing levels of risk being experienced in different States.	international aviation travel. e.g. health declarations, health screening, aircraft and airport physical distancing, personal protective equipment and personal hygiene, and surface cleaning measures. Lack of a consistent approach impacts on compliance levels by passengers and airlines but recognising that each State has the right to develop nationally appropriate health responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of experiences between States in terms of measures that have worked well and those that have proven less successful.
5. Ensure APAC State Health authorities and other relevant agencies are involved in decision making processes for SEC FAL matters and measures to be introduced	Traditionally limited involvement by State Health Authorities in aviation SEC FAL related matters, Some health measures may challenge commercial and operational viability of airline and airport operations. Lack of an effective National Air Transport Facilitation Committee or equivalent that includes health and other relevant agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop best practice guidance material which helps APAC States effectively and efficiently implement health measures into the airline and airport operating environment. • Sharing of experiences between States in terms of health measures that have proven compatible with good security and facilitation outcomes and those that have not. • APAC States establish an appropriate and effective coordination mechanism for all relevant agencies and industry that handle health and related matters.
6. Ensure APAC States and aircraft operators take into account COVID-19 impacts in protection against acts of unlawful interference and the handling of unruly passengers.	COVID-19 assumed to be “just another” potential cause of risk to aviation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use by industry of IATA guidance for cabin operations during & post-COVID-19 which has been updated to highlight potential new causes of unruly behaviour. • Development of advice for States as appropriate to cover COVID-19 impacts in regulatory and procedural requirements covering acts of unlawful interference and handling of unruly passengers.

ACCRPG/4 – REPORT
APPENDIX D

Public Health		
Objective	Challenges	Potential Solutions
7. APAC States adopt consistent practices in terms of health requirements for international air crew movements.	Different and changing levels of risk being experienced in different States leading to different health measures being applied to air crew by different States..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of experiences between States in terms of health measures applied to crew that have proven compatible with good commercial and operational outcomes • States continuing to prioritise importance of international air freight services facilitated by effective and efficient air crew movement practices that minimise risk to the crew, airport employees and the community.
8. APAC States to encourage establishment of safe travel corridors to enable the movement of people between States in a way that is safe and ensures public health requirements are met.	Need for States to agree on terms and conditions of when a safe travel corridor can be established (including health benchmarks) and when the corridor may need to be suspended or can be reopened if COVID-19 circumstance change in either State. Potential inconsistency between different States in core health benchmarks that need to be met to establish a safe travel corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share details of safe travel corridors in the region once established, including the process adopted to develop the safe travel corridor • Consideration of development of guidance to States on what matters should be covered in future safe travel corridors.
9. APAC States have access to provide guidance material for specific modules covered in CART “Take Off” guidance document	Based on the Public Health sub-group survey, challenges in implementing some of the CART guidance modules have been identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share details of initial State experiences with implementation of the four “Take Off” modules (airport, aircraft, crew and cargo). • Develop guidance material on specific module items that are providing problematic in the Asia Pacific region.
