

## **Chairperson's statement**

*Co-Chairs' joint personal statement; highlighting the most significant developments, challenges, achievements, etc.*

## **Executive Summary**

*Self-explanatory; major accomplishments, etc.*

## **ACCRPG information**

### Establishment

The ACCRPG is an expert group established through an initiative of the *COVID-19 Information Sharing web-conference for ICAO APAC Director-Generals of Civil Aviation (DGCAs)*, on 31 March 2020, to assist the DGCAs in coordinating their approach to the management of civil aviation through, and out of, the extraordinary circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Chairing and secretary and membership

The ACCRPG is Co-Chaired by 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)*.

Currently, the ACCRPG membership list includes nearly one-hundred-and-fifty (150) members from twenty-four (24) ICAO Member States and Special Administrative Regions and thirteen (13) International Organizations and aviation industry bodies.

### Objective

The ACCRPG's main objective is to assist DGCAs with coordinating Member States' implementation of the *ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Recommendations and guidance*. The ACCRPG makes recommendations/proposes actions for the DGCAs, as necessary, to facilitate the implementation by States of the CART Recommendations and guidance. The ACCRPG Terms of Reference are provided at the **Appendix A** to this Report.

### Sub-Groups

To facilitate its work based on the structure of the CART Recommendations and guidance, the ACCRPG established three sub-groups to focus on (i) aviation safety-related measures (SAF/SG); (ii) aviation public health-related measures (PH/SG); and (iii) aviation security- and facilitation-related measures (AVSEC-FAL/SG). Further details about the ACCRPG sub-groups are provided at the **Appendix B** to this Report.

## **ACCRPG Recommendations for the APAC DGCAs**

To support States' implementation of the CART Recommendations and guidance, the ACCRPG has made several specific recommendations for the APAC DGCAs and presented these in the ACCRPG initial and second progress reports (specifically in relation to the CART Phase I and II Recommendations and measures). The full list of ACCRPG recommendations from the ACCRPG initial and second progress reports is provided at the **Appendix C** to this Report.

In addition to the ACCRPG recommendations discussed above, this Report includes the following ACCRPG recommendations for the APAC DGCA's:

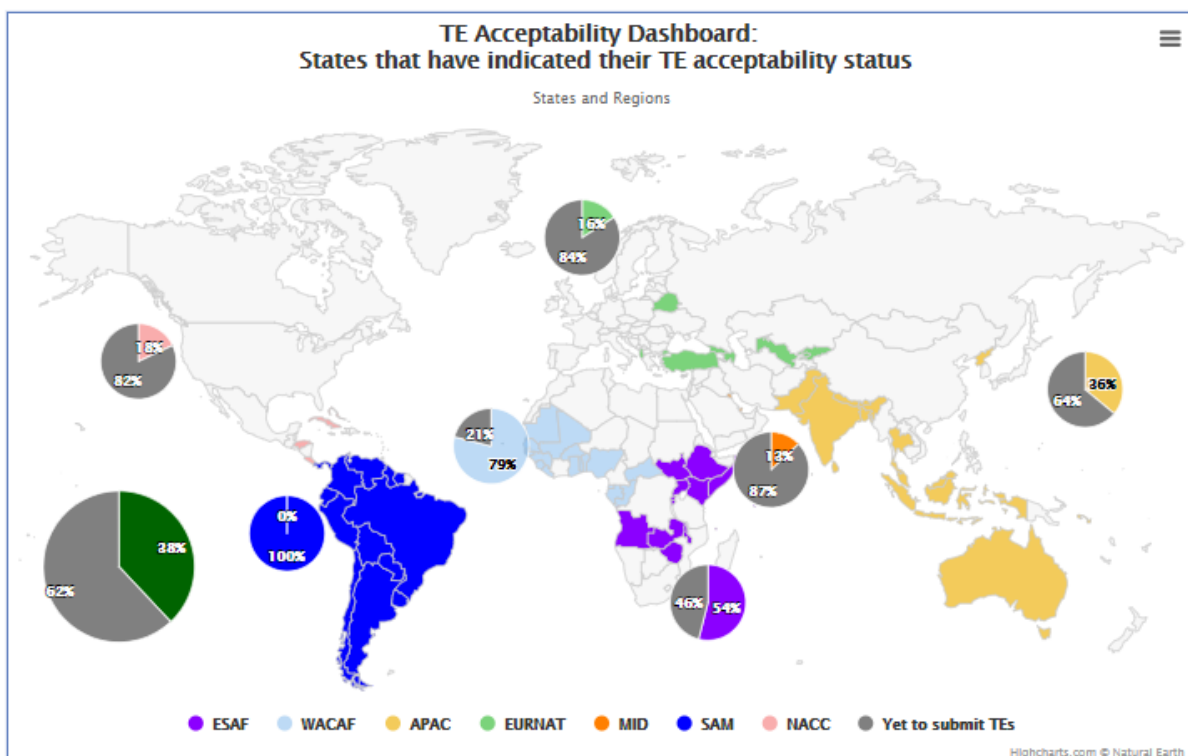
ACCRPG recommendation on Migration to the “Targeted Exemptions System”

CART Phase 3 Recommendation 12 (revised) underlined the need for harmonizing all the states globally in the Safety Alleviations granted to Industry in order to facilitate and sustain it, beyond 1st of April 2021 utilizing the new platform system “Targeted Exemptions System”.

During transitioning from CCRD system to TES, states are strongly encouraged to move forward by terminating CCRD Alleviations latest by 30th June 2021 giving due considerations to safety implications that may become evident as a result of long term deviations to standards relating to competency of certificate holders. If desired, states may have the option of granting Targeted Exemptions (TEs) under the TES to the most essential and urgent segments of their Industry for a limited period of time through the new system.

(<https://www.icao.int/safety/OPS/OPS-Normal/Pages/TEAcceptability.aspx#>)

As a minimum, states are encouraged to submit “Targeted Exemption Acceptability Form” (TEAF) on the new system, as soon as possible, supporting harmonization of the states on the TES. Currently, submission of TEAF by APAC Regional States is progressing well, though there is need for improvements. At the time of the report APAC region has achieved 36% status where 14 states have already submitted and 25 states need paying immediate attention in submitting the Form ASAP.



**Other key ACCRPG accomplishments**

ACCRPG conducted the following high level and technical level information sharing activities and events to facilitate implementation by APAC States of the ICAO CART Recommendations and guidance:

- Ten (10) plenary meetings of the ACCRPG [concerning all CART Rec’s. and related guidance]

- Thirteen (13) meetings of the ACCRPG SAF/SG [concerning CART Rec's. 1, 2, 3, 12 and related guidance]
- Eleven (11) meetings of the ACCRPG PH/SG [concerning CART Rec's. 4, 5, 13, 14 and related guidance]
- Nine (9) meetings of the ACCRPG AVSEC-FAL/SG [concerning CART Rec's. 6, 7, 8, 9 and related guidance]
- ICAO APAC Office webpage for *COVID-19 BCP Measures and Guidelines Information Sharing* (<https://www.icao.int/APAC/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>) [concerning all CART Rec's. and related guidance]

ACCRPG supported ICAO's development, and APAC States' adoption, of the *COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre* (CRRIC) as the primary (COVID-19-related) information sharing platform for Member States, including the following achievements:

- All APAC States (except one) having designated a focal point for, and being active users of, the CRRIC [concerning all CART Rec's. and related guidance]
- 72% of APAC States having completed the "Gap Analysis" for CART Phase I Recommendations [concerning CART Rec's. 1-11 and related guidance]
- 31% of APAC States having completed the "Gap Analysis" for all CART Phase I, II and III Recommendations [concerning CART Rec's. 1-20 and related guidance]
- 64% of APAC States having fully reviewed the CART, take-off guidance document, public health risk mitigation measures [concerning CART Rec's. 4, 5, 13, 14 and related guidance]

ACCRPG facilitated ICAO's development, and APAC States' implementation, of the following ICAO *Implementation Packages (iPacks)*:

- Implementation completed by the following States:
  - Lao PDR – iPack on *Strengthening National Air Transport Facilitation Committees for the Restart and the Resilience of Civil Aviation* [concerning CART Rec. 6 and related guidance]
  - Nepal – iPack on *Aviation Safety Risk Management related to COVID-19 for CAAs*
- Implementation in progress by the following States:
  - Bhutan – iPack on *COVID-19 Aviation Security Quality Control Oversight*
  - Papua New Guinea – iPack on *COVID-19 Aviation Security Quality Control Oversight*
  - Fiji – iPack on *Aerodrome Restart*
  - Solomon Islands – iPack on *Strengthening National Air Transport Facilitation Committees for the Restart and the Resilience of Civil Aviation* [concerning CART Rec. 6 and related guidance]

ACCRPG supported two APAC States (Bangladesh and Bhutan) with facilitating cross-border access to flight simulation training devices [concerning CART revised Rec. 12 and related guidance]

ACCRPG supported ICAO with the development and/or conduct of information sharing initiatives and events, as listed below, to facilitate the implementation by APAC States of the ICAO CART Recommendations and guidance:

- 23 June 2020 – *Webinar on Facilitation Tools in Response to COVID-19: Strengthening International and Inter-Agency Cooperation* – to promote the ICAO iPack on *Strengthening National Air Transport Facilitation Committees for the Restart and the Resilience of Civil Aviation* and facilitate the establishment by APAC States of a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC), or equivalent [concerning CART Rec. 6 and related guidance]
- 13 August 2020 – *APAC Regional Webinar on Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Civil Aviation and the Financial Alleviation Measures*
- 08 October 2020 – *COVID-19-Related ATM Economics Seminar*
- 29 April 2021 – *Webinar on CCRD transition to the Targeted Exemptions* (revised Rec. 12)
- 06 May 2021 – *APAC Regional Workshop on CRRIC Updates* [revised CART Rec's. 12 and 14, new Rec. 15, 16 and 17; Public Health Corridor Application; State Testing and Quarantine Protocols Application]

ACCRPG supported information sharing initiatives and events, as listed below, to facilitate enhanced collaboration between civil aviation and public health authorities on the removal of impediments to aviation recovery and strengthening public confidence in air travel:

- 16 July 2020 – Thirteenth CAPSCA-APAC (Special) meeting with the theme "*Harmonized Implementation of CART Take-of/Guidance for air travel through COVID-19*"
- 5 October 2020 – Joint WHO-ICAO Webinar, themed "*Considerations and Challenges in Resuming Air-Travel in the Context of COVID-19 - Multi-Sectoral Approach*"
- 4 November 2020 – Aviation/Public Health Experts' Roundtable Discussion on the theme "*Future of Aviation: Facing the New Normal with COVID-19*"
- (<https://www.icao.int/APAC/Meetings/Pages/2020-Roundtable.aspx>)

ACCRPG supported ICAO with the development, and/or promotion for use by States, of guidance material, as listed below, to facilitate States with the restart of the international air transport sector and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis:

- Contributed to the development of the CART (revised) Recommendation #12 on cross-border access to flight simulation training devices, and the ICAO (Operational Safety) website resource: *Developing a COVID safe plan for the purpose of training or Pilot Proficiency Checks using FSTDs in another State or region*
- Contributed to the development of the CART (new) Recommendation #18 on access for air crew to vaccination
- Contributed to the development of the CART (third edition) take-off guidance document on the use of Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) on board, and promoted for use by States the ICAO (ACCRPG)

website resource: *Safety considerations for use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer in aircraft. Sensitive information (ICCAIA)*

- Promoted for use by States the CART take-off guidance document (subset): *Guidelines for AVSEC Contingency Measures During the COVID-19 Pandemic*
- Promoted for use by States the ICAO (Security) website resource: *The Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccines and Air Cargo Security*

## **Challenges**

### **Engaging States to ensure the CRRIC has the most up-to-date information**

Maintaining engagement by States in the process of sharing up-to-date information in the CRRIC facilitates the identification by all stakeholders of gaps in the implementation by States of the ICAO CART Recommendations and measures, and needed support, and enables ICAO to provide appropriate, targeted and timely guidance, training and assistance to Member States.

The number of APAC States that reported the challenges and issues for implementation of the public health risk mitigation measures contained in the CART take-off guidance document (in the CRRIC) was only 14 (or 34%) of the 39 APAC States and 2 SARs.

The low responsiveness of States in reporting information in the CRRIC, as discussed above, indicated either a lack of engagement by States in the work of the ACCRPG or the existence of significant challenges for States at a national level.

### **Engaging States in the use of the public health corridor application**

Maintaining engagement by States in the process of sharing up-to-date information in the CRRIC, *Public Health Corridor Application*, on the public health corridor agreements that States have put into place is beneficial for all stakeholders. In the APAC Region, Australia and New Zealand have shared details of the “*New Zealand safe travel zone*”. However, the availability of information in the CRRIC on public health corridor agreements in other States is very limited.

The low utilization by States in reporting information in the *Public Health Corridor Application*, as discussed above, is indicative of the complexities States might be facing in putting into place such public health corridor agreements amidst a backdrop of continuing recurrence of “waves” and “surges” in the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Collaboration between public health and aviation authorities**

ACCRPG recognizes the importance of enhanced collaboration between civil aviation and public health authorities towards the removal of impediments to aviation recovery and strengthening public confidence in air travel. Enhancing the collaboration between civil aviation and public health authorities at national level remains a critical enabler for the cross-border commercial passenger air travel, especially in the context of successful roll-out of the Public Health Corridors (PHCs) as recommended by CART.

### **Availability of resources in States**

Of the challenges reported by States regarding the implementation of public health measures at airports, constraints in the available financial resources, infrastructure and other resources emerged as a common issue.

### **Quarantine and testing implementation measures**

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## **Way forward**

### **Promoting public health corridors**

Promoting the establishment by States of public health corridors (PHCs), subject to adjustment as per evolving epidemiological situation of the participating bilateral or multilateral States, stands as a positive step to revive restart or expansion of cross-border commercial passenger air travel.

Strongly encouraging States to consider implementing the ICAO PHC iPack (currently under development by ICAO) will facilitate the restoration of international travel through mutually accepted public health measures and bilateral or multilateral agreements.

### **Evolving the ACCRPG with the global situation**

The first meeting of the ACCRPG steering group (ACCRPG/SG/01), online, 4 March 2021, noted that the emergence and spread of the more-easily transmissible variants of the COVID-19 virus, and the varying situation between States with regards to the prevalence of infections, capacity of the States to respond to infections and rate of administration of vaccinations by States, would require the ACCRPG to keep monitoring global and regional developments and make adjustments, as necessary, to the group's current approach to providing assistance to the DGCA's.

Taking into consideration that, more than twelve months' after the collapse due to the emergence of the pandemic, international air traffic remained largely constrained by COVID-19, and that the status quo could not remain for the long term, the ACCRPG should consider its focus is on facilitating States with safely resuming international travel using best practices.

As the ICAO, WHO and partners continue to work on updating the CART Recommendations and measures, especially with regards to COVID-19 vaccination and testing, the ACCRPG remains well placed to play a key role in facilitating national and regional compliance of States in the APAC Region.

Taking into consideration the enormous complexity of stakeholders' dialogue on matters affecting international civil aviation recovery, and the need to carefully manage the regional conversation, the ACCRPG would benefit from "steering group" discussions with a policy perspective to complement the existing arrangement of technical discussions.

To better prepare the APAC Region to deal with the long term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for future pandemics, the ACCRPG should consider establishing linkages with the other established ICAO and related forums, including RASG-APAC, APANPIRG, RASCF, CAPSCA-AP, etc.

### **Proposal to update the ACCRPG terms of reference**

In view of the discussion above, the first meeting of the ACCRPG steering group (online, 4 March 2021) recommended that the ACCRPG should review and develop a proposal to update the terms of reference to reflect the ongoing relevance of the group's work in 2021 in line with the evolving global environment dominated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ACCRPG should leverage lessons learned and experience gained in its first year, including broad representation by APAC States and stakeholders, information sharing activities and timely discussions on emerging and evolving issues. In 2021, the ACCRPG should refocus its objectives on the way forward, including more focus on outputs from the information sharing activities. The ACCRPG should continue to engage APAC States more actively through the sharing of positive case studies and increase the input from stakeholders outside the established aviation-centric membership.

A draft proposal for updates to the ACCRPG terms of reference is provided at the **Appendix D** to this Report.

**Partner list**

*Consider listing partners, e.g., CAPSCA, etc. List the presentations/orgs/States at ACCRPG and/or sub groups with link to ACCRPG website ; include ATM activity; ICAO secretariat support*