

International Civil Aviation Organization



ICAO

WORKING PAPER

Nineteenth Meeting of the Meteorological Information Exchange Working Group (MET/IE WG/19)

Virtual meeting, 22 to 24 March 2021

Agenda Item 4: Meteorological information exchange in digital form

FAQs OF IWXXM IMPLEMENTATION

(Presented by Hong Kong China, the Chair of MET/IE WG and the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a draft version of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) resource to support IWXXM implementation in APAC Region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO Asia and Pacific (APAC) Office, has organized the following workshops of IWXXM implementation since 2017:

- Hong Kong, China (10 – 12 October 2017)
- Bangkok, Thailand (12 – 14 June 2019)
- Nuku‘alofa, Tonga (04 – 06 December 2019)
- Webinar (27 – 29 October 2020)

1.2 Outcome of the above workshops contained rich information on implementation details for IWXXM. It was proposed to consolidate the answers to questions raised during previous IWXXM workshops into a less formal reference document “IWXXM Implementation - FAQs” and publish it on “eDocument” of ICAO APAC website as a handy reference by States.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 As discussed in MET/IE WG/18, taking into consideration the considerable information collated from previous IWXXM workshops and related activities, the Secretariat and MET/IE WG would prepare and publish an “FAQ”-type resource to support States for the benefit of future IWXXM implementation support activities. The meeting agreed to the following action item:

Agenda Item 4

22-24/03/21

MET/IE WG/18 Action Item 11: IWXXM implementation – FAQs

Prepare and publish an “FAQ”-type resource taking into consideration the IWXXM-related matters discussed in the meeting and the considerable information collated from previous IWXXM workshops and related activities

2.2 A working draft version for the FAQs has been developed and provided in Appendix A. The FAQs are categorized into the following topics:

- The role of IWXXM in the international air navigation system
- IWXXM production
- IWXXM exchange
- IWXXM exchange testing
- IWXXM compression
- IWXXM versions
- IWXXM translation
- IWXXM validation and QC
- IWXXM extensions
- Guidance, education, capacity building
- End-user considerations
- Cyber security

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) review the working draft of FAQs in Appendix A and provide comments;
- b) consider merit in publishing the current draft FAQ;
- c) consider an action for refining the FAQ and republishing the FAQs; and
- d) discuss any relevant matter as appropriate.

IWXXM IMPLEMENTATION IN APAC REGION

**Frequently Asked Questions
(FAQs)**

Working Draft (March 2021)

Introduction

The majority of the information contained below are answers to questions raised during previous ICAO APAC IWXXM workshops or webinar:

- Hong Kong, China (10 – 12 October 2017)
- Bangkok, Thailand (12 – 14 June 2019)
- Nuku'alofa, Tonga (04 – 06 December 2019)
- Webinar (27 – 29 October 2020)

This FAQs are categorized into the following topics:

1. The role of IWXXM in the international air navigation system
2. IWXXM production
3. IWXXM exchange
4. IWXXM exchange testing
5. IWXXM compression
6. IWXXM versions
7. IWXXM translation
8. IWXXM validation and QC
9. IWXXM extensions
10. Guidance, education, capacity building
11. End-user considerations
12. Cyber security

For further detail, please refer to the aforementioned technical presentations and the following ICAO documentation:

- ICAO Doc 10003 – *Manual on the Digital Exchange of Aeronautical Meteorological Information*
- ICAO IWXXM Guidelines - *Guidelines for the Implementation of OPMET Data Exchange using IWXXM* (Refer <https://www.icao.int/APAC/Pages/eDocs.aspx> > MET)

1. The role of IWXXM in the international air navigation system

Q1: What's the relationship between the role of IWXXM and GANP?

- We are migrating from product-centric to data-centric in accordance with the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP). For more information on the latest GANP, refer to <https://www4.icao.int/ganportal/>

Q2: We need to transition from traditional alphanumeric code (TAC) form to IWXXM. Specifics to this transition include:

- Introduction of IWXXM.
- Proposal to remove generation of TAC as an Annex 3 standard from 2026.
- States should consider necessary systems changes to migrate to IWXXM data as an alternate information service by 2026.
- These Annex 3 changes do not preclude a State from generating TAC but there will be no ICAO requirement for international distribution or distribution to other States.

Q3: What's the next plan of ICAO on IWXXM in detail?

- Refer to presentation on GANP
- Following the initial IWXXM implementation, ICAO is planning to migrate IWXXM away from being product oriented (e.g. METAR, TAF) to be more service oriented. As a result, it is expected that new IWXXM reports for aerodrome observations and aerodrome forecasts will likely be introduced

Q4: How does the ICAO Meteorological Panel (METP) roadmap envisage architecture for exchange of IWXXM after 2026? AMHS or SWIM?

- The architecture will migrate into a SWIM architecture. The exact architecture is still being developed but here is the current draft proposal of timeframe and capabilities:

	Block 0 2013-2018	Block 1 2019-2024	Block 2 2025-2030	Block 3 and Beyond >2031
Communication Protocols	AFTN AMHS Basic	AFTN AMHS Basic AMHS FTBP AMQP/HTTP (optional)	AMHS FTBP AMQP/HTTP	AMQP/HTTP
Information Exchange Services	RODB TAC request/reply RODB IWXXM request/reply	RODB TAC request/reply RODB IWXXM request/reply RODB IWXXM notification (optional) WFS, WCS, WMS (optional)	RODB IWXXM request/reply RODB IWXXM notification (optional) WFS, WCS, WMS	WFS, WCS, WMS Other web services
Data Types	Gridded Objects	Gridded Objects	Gridded Objects	Gridded Objects
Data Addressing	AFS Addressing	AFS Addressing IP (optional) SWIM Registry (optional)	AFS Addressing IP SWIM Registry	IP SWIM Registry

Q5: How to manage TAC from now until 2026?

- No different to today

Q6: The timetable of IWXXM development in the future?

- The timetable is still being developed. Eventually all text Annex 3 products will either be migrated to IWXXM or they will be decommissioned. Annex 3 products are being implemented in IWXXM-form in a priority order. The remaining order is currently being reanalysed. The next products to be developed in IWXXM are SIGWX (high/mid & low). Regional Hazardous Weather Advisory products may follow.

Q7: Will future ICAO provisions for METAR/SPECI enable automated data via IWXXM?

- Yes
- While IWXXM provides opportunities for exchange of high-fidelity MET observation data, the METP is capturing user requirements which will either result in updates to existing IWXXM schema or more likely introduction of new IWXXM reports to meet these new needs.

Q8: How to transmit MET information (beyond Annex 3 products) in IWXXM (Radar, LLWAS, ATM-tailored Met Info, etc.)

- IWXXM is well suited to supporting point, line and polygon-based features. Other formats such as gridded (e.g. GRIB) formats and image (e.g. PNG) are better suited for some products and these will be implemented through SWIM which is beyond the scope of IWXXM.
- These requirements and services are being developed in ICAO METP and will be discussed further at other ICAO APAC forums such as the System Wide Information management (SWIM) Task Force (SWIM/TF) and other workshops.

Q9: What is the global/regional plans for transition to SWIM – roles of MET in SWIM?

- METP/4, Recommendation 5/5, endorsed the MET-SWIM Plan and MET-SWIM Roadmap and invited ICAO to upload the draft MET-SWIM Plan and draft MET-SWIM Roadmap to the ICAO METP website (both public and secure) and to distribute it to the Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs).
- “Plan for MET in SWIM” is available at: <https://www.icao.int/APAC/Pages/eDocs.aspx> > MET

Q10: Will displaying historic data become an issue for any tool in the future? It will need to be able to handle TAC as well as all IWXXM editions that may have been used.

- Potentially. This is being considered by both ICAO and WMO. This should also be considered by States. Often historic records are not kept in their WMO/ICAO format but instead as records in a database.

Q11: Meteorological services do more than just supply aviation data so will METAR format remain for non-aviation use?

- METAR/SPECI formats are used more broadly than aviation.
- WMO is discussing the introduction of IWXXM with its members and will do the same for removal of METAR. It's likely that IWXXM will be adopted more broadly than aviation.

Q12: What if meteorological fields evolve far faster than the standard IWXXM format wants to handle?

- Yes, this is possible. If users have local requirements, they can extend the IWXXM schema through extensions, as they do with the TAC today through remarks
- If the same extensions capability is required by multiple States, a regional extension or global optional parameter may be implemented
- Extending the schema does however come with a range of other requirements and costs for States and users, so careful consideration should occur before a State chooses to extend the schema.

Q13: Can we use TAC format (current format) before implementing IWXXM?

- TAC for OPMET is an ICAO standard in Annex 3 and will continue to be until 2026 (at least). So you will need to continue to provide TAC.
- IWXXM became an ICAO Annex 3 standard in November 2020.

Q14: If a State is yet to implement IWXXM, what should they do?

- If implementation of IWXXM is delayed (due to COVID or any other reason), a State should register a difference against the relevant Annex 3 provisions in the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) system with an estimated date of implementation.
- Please use the EFOD to file the differences including with Am. 79. Please note that, with reference to ICAO State Letter AN 11/55-20/50, ICAO created a COVID-19 Contingency Related Differences (CCRD) sub-system in the existing EFOD system to capture any differences from ICAO Standards on certification and licensing that may arise from mitigation measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is accessible via the USOAP dashboard. The CCRD specifically facilitates recognition or validation of licenses or certificates affected by the special measures.
- States can also look to arrange another State to perform TAC to IWXXM translation to support expedited IWXXM implementation.

Q15: When filing an EFOD against the standards, e.g. 3.1.2(VAA), or 5.1.3 on TCAC, where do we indicate our inability as a State to fulfil our role e.g. NOC, ROC, IROG, RODB?

- To notify ICAO of differences to SARPs (e.g., not implemented SARPs for IWXXM) - please use EFOD system.
- To notify ICAO (and other APAC States) of inability to fulfil role of NOC, ROC, IROG or RODB please inform ICAO Regional Office and MET/IE WG

Q16: Is the flexibility in the implementation timelines sufficient to allow for the impact of COVID 19. Applicable to both MET providers, COM and all users?

- Annex 3 amendment cycle changed to a 3-year cycle. Next main amendment is 2023 then 2026 etc.
- METP, in conjunction with WMO and IATA, are looking at impacts of COVID-19 - particularly on when Annex 3 provisions become applicable and how we will implement IWXXM and SWIM in a cost effective manner.
- ICAO & IATA are encouraging earlier adopters.

Q17: Any insight on what will be included in Annex 3, Amd. 80, 81, and 82?

- Amd 80 (2021) is only introducing changes to State of the Runway (no other changes).
- Amd 81 (2023), IWXXM and TAC are still standards. Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Meteorology (PANS-MET) is likely to be introduced.
- Amd 82 (2026), IWXXM is still a standard. ICAO & IATA are still looking at whether TAC remains as a standard (and a means of compliance if PANS-MET is implemented). Another critical thing we need to look at is the implementation of SWIM in this timeframe - particularly given COVID-19.

2. IWXXM production

Q18: Is it mandatory for IWXXM to be from source?

- No, but the best implementation is IWXXM generated at source
- Preference for IWXXM generated at source (best implementation), but IWXXM converted from TAC is better than no IWXXM
- In the future IWXXM will contain information not present in TAC, so it will not be possible to generate this from TAC.

Q19: If a parameter is missing in TAC (e.g., WX is missing in METAR) how to generate the report in IWXXM?

- There are all sorts of examples at <https://github.com/wmo-im/iwxxmtranslation/tree/master/Amd78-2018/metar>

Q20: Is it possible to make the IWXXM element "translatedBulletinID" mandatory for easy reference to the TAC bulletin?

- While the attribute "translatedBulletinID" is optional, its presence will be checked by schematron rule Common.Report-3 in iwxxm.sch. See the one for IWXXM 3.0.0 at <http://schemas.wmo.int/iwxxm/3.0/rule/iwxxm.sch>

Q21: Is there any experience or suggestions about how to convert the location of the significant weather in TAC report to lat&lon (or polygons) in IWXXM?

- It's always easier to start with a polygon in the TAC SIGMET message. So where possible it is preferred that a polygon is used. However, Annex 3 still allows us to write "S OF", "W OF", "ENTIRE FIR" etc. In that case the FIR boundary needs to be used to help make up the polygon.
- The line will intersect with the FIR and together they will form a closed polygon covering the meteorological phenomenon involved. There are many software libraries out there to help you do the intersection and return the polygon to you.
- There is also a wiki page summarizing the way geometric objects are described in different IWXXM reports. You may want to take a look at <https://github.com/wmo-im/iwxxm/wiki/Geospatialobjects-in-IWXXM>

Q22: When we would like to disseminate IWXXM reports, is it always necessary to aggregate the reports? I wonder whether we must use <collect:...> schema even if we would like to send non-regular reports, such as SIGMET, SPECI and TAF AMD.

- Only METAR and TAF needs to be aggregated.
- All IWXXM messages, no matter aggregated or not, will have to be encapsulated with COLLECT before sending out through AMHS.

3. IWXXM exchange

Q23: Should TAC over AMHS be distributed independently of IWXXM, or part of IWXXM?

- TAC and IWXXM should be distributed independently, in parallel
- For every TAC message, there should be corresponding IWXXM report, and visa-versa
- Inclusion of TAC inside (the comments part of) IWXXM is not recommended. WMO have done this in their examples such that users can clearly see the corresponding TAC and IWXXM information
- Note: When producing IWXXM from TAC, and the translation cannot be reliably performed, the original TAC is included in the message with no further information

Q24: How to manage exchange of TAC and IWXXM concurrently within COM networks?

- The TAC and IWXXM messages have different (but correlated) headers, such that they will not be confused e.g. an Australian TAF TAC bulletin and IWXXM collective would have the WMO headers of FTAU31YBBN and LTAU31YBBN, respectively.

Q25: Will IWXXM be disseminated by Regional OPMET Centres (ROCs) in the same way as ROBEX Handbook?

- IWXXM exchange shall differ from traditional OPMET exchange, whereby:
 - There is no distributing responsibility for originating stations and National OPMET Centres

- other than to get their products to their Regional OPMET Centre (ROC);
- Originating ROC distributes every type of IWXXM OPMET to all other ROCs in the APAC region; and
- ROCs will distribute received IWXXM messages to the NOC and users in their respective area of responsibility.

Q26: How will ROCs identify whether recipients are capable of receiving IWXXM?

- Refer to the [Online Register of APAC IWXXM Exchange Status](#)

Q27: What is the status and capability States with respect to AMHS with FTBP in the APAC region?

- Refer to the [Online Register of APAC IWXXM Exchange Status](#)
- Refer to papers, presentations, discussions, reference material, networking contacts in the previous IWXXM workshops and MET/IE WG meetings

Q28: What protocol is used between the MET/IWXXM generation system and the AMHS for exchange of IWXXM?

- Entirely the prerogative of the State, but AMHS/FTBP is preferred. A secure method of transfer is recommended. ICAO does not require AMHS/FTBP for exchange within the State.

Q29: What is the bandwidth requirement for exchange of IWXXM using AMHS Extended services?

- Depends on amount of IWXXM reports exchanged and what other data is sent on the link, but IWXXM is approximately 10x data volume of TAC and IWXXM will be sent in addition to TAC and other data
- States should ensure there is adequate capacity in their communication links to support the new IWXXM data

Q30: What is the dependency of the exchange of IWXXM within the Region and Globally?

- The exchange of IWXXM within the Region and Globally is dependent on the ROCs and RODBs being IWXXM-exchange capable and therefore ROCs and RODBs need to be the first to implement support for IWXXM and AMHS+FTBP+IHE.

Q31: What is the technical specification for gateways system that will translate TAC to IWXXM format?

- There is no single technical specification. There is a functional description of the capability with the IWXXM Guidelines but interface specification may vary between different solutions/vendors and may include web service, AFTN links, or various other interfaces.

Q32: How do we ensure that there is no message lost in the AMHS when handling TAC & IWXXM format during the Transition period (mixed environment)?

- This has been designed into the system architecture for this transition period. Once IWXXM is implemented, there shall be one IWXXM message for every TAC message. If converting from TAC to IWXXM and poorly formed TAC is identified, then a partially translated IWXXM will be generated. Refer to IWXXM Guidelines.

Q33: Do we need to save all of the converted data in IWXXM to our disk storage? Since the size of the converted data in IWXXM is larger than TAC format but the content is same.

- ICAO requires States to archive all aviation products for at least 28-days. Longer is recommended for various reasons, including investigations and verification.

Q34: What is the maximum size permissible for IWXXM attachments in AMHS?

- AMHS network should support the transfer of IWXXM messages with a maximum file size of 4 MB including FTBP of up to 2 MB [*Guidelines for the implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM*, 4.1.5, refers]

Q35: What if the bandwidth of a comms link is insufficient to satisfy IWXXM requirements in some existing AMHS circuits?

- Yes, bandwidth is likely to be insufficient in some APAC links
- Upgrades of these links may be required and can be addressed through either through capacity changes of the existing links or the use of the CRV
- Higher than 64 Kbps is recommended, and the required bandwidth is dependent on the use on the link.

Q36: May I know who is actually responsible for technical implementation of AMHS in a particular member country? Is it responsibility of MET or COM?

- Annex 3 [2.1.4] requires that each Contracting State shall designate the authority, hereinafter referred to as the meteorological authority (MA), to provide or to arrange for the provision of meteorological service for international air navigation on its behalf. Therefore, the (MA) has a clear role and responsibility in ensuring the dissemination of MET information in IWXXM form. It follows that the MA has a responsibility in ensuring that the required mechanism/s are in place (e.g., AMHS + FTBP) to enable the State to disseminate the required MET information in IWXXM GML form. It will almost undoubtedly require close liaison between those concerned with the supply (e.g., MET service provider, COM service provider) and those concerned with the use of meteorological information.

Q37: The exchange of IWXXM requires full path of FTBP-capability communications from originator to destination. It's hard to ensure the whole path is FTBP-ready especially during interruption or reply to an RQX.

- Agree. This is the case until all of the AFS network is AMHS FTBP.

Q38: Is there any document describe more detail about RQX and RQM, which explain the IWXXM step before passing AMHS?

- Please refer to IWXXM Guidelines:
 - 2.8 International OPMET Databank, Operational principles: - OPMET Databank Requests
 - 5.1.5 International OPMET Databank, Operational principles: - DB Requests

Q39: Can AFTN links support the relay of IWXXM?

- Due to technical differences between the old and new formats, aeronautical meteorological information in IWXXM form cannot be transmitted in the same way as it is in Traditional Alphanumeric Code (TAC) form via the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunication Network (AFTN). Instead, the ICAO guidance identifies the Air Traffic Services Message Handling System (AMHS) as a mechanism for the exchange of IWXXM information using the extended AMHS File Transfer Body Part (FTBP) feature over the Aeronautical Fixed Service (AFS).
- In addition, due to the much larger file sizes associated with IWXXM, the ICAO guidance indicates that the total size of an AMHS message (including FTBP) should be up to 4 MB.

Q40: When the IWXXM bulletin is needed to be disseminated to many destinations, could all of the addresses be added in one AMHS message (like sending an e-mail)?

- Many addresses can be added in one AMHS message. For your system it will just be one message being sent out, but it may end up at 20 destinations.

Q41: Are there any ICAO procedures or guidelines that any NOC has to follow if there is a need to request IWXXM translation services from ROC? If so, any template or predefined form that could be used?

- Please refer to IWXXM Guidelines, including sections 6.3.1: Prerequisites for Translation Centres; and 6.3.7: Translation Agreement.

Q42: Our system now sends out 2 body parts for IWXXM message, one as ATS headers with no msg and second as FTBP. Are ATS Headers needed for Basic AMHS with FTBP as originators/recipients.

- IHE and FTBP should be used for the IWXXM exchange over AMHS.
- IWXXM messages should be exchanged using extended AMHS FTBP (single body part) with IPM Heading Extension (IHE). You may refer to ICAO document ‘Guidelines for the implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM’.

4. IWXXM exchange testing

Q43: TEST message addresses: is anyone considering being a test (AMHS) endpoint for any parties/countries to send their test IWXXM?

- It is recommended that the RODBs plus any additional volunteer States conduct coordinated testing of IWXXM exchange of AMHS+FTBP as early as possible, if not already done so.

Q44: How to conduct simulations (tests) of sending/exchanging OPMET data thru AMHS in IWXXM format?

- As answer to Q43 above
- Ref: *Guidelines for the implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM*

Q45: Where can one find the knowledge of Tests Performed?

- Singapore is maintaining a log of international IWXXM exchange testing on behalf of MET/IE WG
 - MET/IE WG Activity 7.2: Undertake IWXXM tests with other centres
 - MET/IE WG Activity 7.6: Maintain a register of IWXXM tests conducted, detailing Met software, UAs and MTAs tested

Q46: What is the common issues observed during IWXXM exchange test over AMHS?

- Two body parts are observed, while IWXXM shall contain single body part which is an FTBP
- Required fields are missing or in incorrect format, such as Precedence, Precedence-policy-identifier 1.3.27.8.0.0 and Authorization Time (should ends with “Z”)
- Reference: Appendix A of "Guidelines for the Implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM "

5. IWXXM compression

Q47: Will compression always be required?

- Gzip compression has been adopted for IWXXM compression
- Compression shall always be done unless a specific agreement has been reached with the corresponding NOC or ROC to perform the compression on behalf of the originating State
- Basic AMHS might provide an acceptable alternate solution (To be confirmed) where there are difficulties implementing the FTBP, the link has ample capacity to support the transmission of uncompressed IWXXM data and an agreement is in place for the aggregator to preform compression/decompression on behalf of the originator

Q48: Is there any rough estimate on the file size of IWXXM for METAR or TAF? Wondering if AMHS/ROC/NOC/RODB in APAC be able to support IWXXM messages exchange with large file size.

- a sample METAR bulletin with 6 reports in it makes a ~30k IWXXM file - which becomes ~3.7k compressed

6. IWXXM versions

Q49: What version of IWXXM is recommended to be used?

- ICAO Doc 10003 – *Manual on the Digital Exchange of Aeronautical Meteorological Information*, stipulates that to meet the requirements of Amendment 79 to Annex 3, only Version 3 of IWXXM, or later, shall be exchanged on operational networks from 5 November 2020
- WMO envisage limited changes to version 3 in the coming few years.

Q50: Is IWXXM version 3 supporting image data? How it works?

- IWXXM will not support image data, but in the future, it is likely to support SIGWX forecasts (i.e. object data).
- Other formats GRIB/PNG will support image data.

Q51: How is IWXXM version be upgraded?

- Versions of IWXXM are independent of changes to Annex 3, therefore whilst Amendment to ICAO Annex 3 occur every 3-years, updates to IWXXM are not expected to occur every 3-years
- WMO manage the version of IWXXM
- Typically, multiple versions of IWXXM will be allowable at any one time, and future versions of the *Guidelines for the implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM* will specify which versions are acceptable to meet Annex 3 requirements

7. IWXXM translation

Q52: How are Translation Centres are established?

- Translation Centres will likely be required
- ROCs, RODBs are encouraged to provide translation services
- Each State is responsible for arranging the provision of IWXXM, and where required, an agreement with another State to provide TAC to IWXXM translation on their behalf
- Formal agreement is required
- More information on translation function, Translation Centre pre-requisites and Translation Centre Agreement is in the presentation on translation from TAC to IWXXM in the IWXXM Guidelines.

Q53: After translation (from TAC to IWXXM), can the data be sent direct to the aggregator or does it need to be returned to the originator to then send it to the aggregator?

- Either scenario is acceptable, depending on the arrangement between the originator and the translator

Q54: Will the conversion apply in both formats at the RODB?

- Translation of TAC to IWXXM is OK, if necessary, but the distribution of IWXXM to TAC is not permitted when the original TAC from source is available

Q55: What happens to regional countries that will not be able to change to IWXXM?

- Each State is responsible to arrange translation services as necessary
- Translation Centres will likely be required
Caution: National extensions can be implemented (for differences to Annex 3), but this requires additional effort and cost by the State and should only be implemented in the globally agreed standard way
Caution: Original TAC must be well structured and reliably structured for it to be reliably converted to IWXXM
- Refer to presentations on Translation of TAC to IWXXM in IWXXM workshops for more details

Q56: To provide translation for other States, it is understood that agreement is required. Is there any agreement form/example which State can refer to?

- For guidance on what an agreement should contain, please refer to the IWXXM Guidelines, including the following:
 - Section 6.3.7: Translation Agreement - Provides a list of elements that should be contained in the service agreement between the Translation Centre and applicant State
 - Section 5.1.3: Data Translation Centre - A data translator converts TAC data into IWXXM on behalf of their State and/or another State (i.e. when the data producer is unable to do so). A bi-lateral or regional agreement should be defined for such circumstances.
 - Section 6.3.1: Pre-requisites for Translation Centres - Provides a list of items considered pre-requisite for data translation centres.
 - Reference from EUR/NAT region regarding the translation service request form: [Link](#)

Q57: When could the IWXXM attribute "translationfailedTAC" be used?

- If the wrong codes in TAC lead to incomplete (partial) translation, it should be considered as translation failure and indicated by "translationfailedTAC".

Q58: Where can we obtain converted file that including TAC and XML (TAC to XML)? We need to check (validation) translator of IWXXM (TAF/TAF AMD, METAR, SPECI, SIGMET, AIRMET).

- Apart from some examples under <http://schemas.wmo.int/iwxxm/3.0/examples/>, there are some additional examples at <https://github.com/wmo-im/iwxxm-translation> which may want to try with your translator.

Q59: Some bulletins contain METARs and TAFs from multiple States. If some of these States require translation services and others generate their own IWXXM, what are the options for aggregation - or, if not possible due to current ROC capabilities, creating new bulletins?

- It is recommended that the existing bulletin gets split into two separate bulletins, one containing IWXXM generated as source, the other containing data for sites that are generated in TAC and translated to IWXXM. An aerodrome (METAR or TAF) data should only exist in one bulletin.
- The ICAO APAC Region has an opportunity, through the MET/IE WG, to develop a proposal/s to update or revise the current ROBEX scheme and ROBEX Handbook to guide States towards the most appropriate solution for ICAO APAC OPMET bulletins.

Q60: For an incomplete TAC to IWXXM (Partial) translation, where does the error message send to if the ROBEX generated TAC bulletin is generated from a ROC noting that NOC is the originator of the TAC message?

- The error message should be sent to the TAC originator if it is confirmed that the incomplete translation is caused by invalid TAC format.

8. IWXXM validation and OC

Q61: How will IWXXM extensions pass validation?

- Extensions should be implemented in a consistent way
- States implementing extensions are also required to develop a schema and recommended to develop Schematron. The schema and Schematron need to be web-accessible such that validation of extensions can be performed.
- Validation should be performed on the extended data

Q62: At this stage, do we need some other IWXXM validation apart from schema and schematron, such as bulletin is out of period or correction received but no prior initial message?

- As this moment the team considers it more important to deal with integrity of IWXXM messages. There will likely be separate checks of business rules as part of a mature QC process.

Q63: Where can I find a tool to validate IWXXM?

- There are a number of open source and commercial tools to validate IWXXM messages. One open source tool you may want to check out is CRUX from NCAR at <https://github.com/NCAR/crux>

9. IWXXM extensions

Q64: How to deal with differences to Annex 3 / IWXXM extensions?

- ICAO does not recommend States extend the IWXXM schema to include additional information
Caution: National extensions can be implemented (for differences to Annex 3), but this requires additional effort and cost by the State and should only be implemented in the globally agreed standard way

Q65: Can IWXXM Extension be used to transfer information outside State? If so, is there any specific body like FIXM CCB to validate such Extension for wider user?

- There is no Change Control Board (CCB) for IWXXM. Changes are managed through WMO and ICAO.
- The Meteorology Panel Working Group on Meteorological Information Exchange (WG-MIE) has been looking at the topic of Extensions. There are a number of WMO Task Team on Aviation Data (TT-AvData) experts that are also experts on WG-MIE.

Q66: Is there a mechanism to indicate that an IWXXM Extension must be understood by the consuming system? That is, the extension cannot be ignored as there are possible safety issues.

- Yes. There is indeed a directive in the extension part of the IWXXM schema requesting validators/parsers to have access to external schemas being used, otherwise it will return an error.
- This is also why a producer needs to think twice before producing an IWXXM message with extensions requiring external schemas. Downstream users will get an error when trying to consume the message if they cannot get hold of the schemas of the extension.

10. Guidance, education, capacity building

Q67: Will the ROBEX handbook be updated to support the exchange of IWXXM at the RODB?

- Yes; MET/IE WG, Activity 9.4: Review and update ROBEX HB and ICD, including aligning with OPMET bulletin contents and changes associated with IWXXM
- Note, much of the IWXXM related technical detail will not be incorporated into the ROBEX Handbook but instead be contained within the *Guidelines for the implementation of OPMET data exchange using IWXXM* is the main source of guidance

Q68: Where can I find the sharing of lesson learnt from States that have progress on the IWXXM implementation on challenges faced & recommended solutions for best practice?

- Refer to presentations, discussions, reference material, networking contacts
- Refer to the log of testing, coordinated by Singapore

Q69: Are there any guidelines on IWXXM Visualisation & display?

- METP Working Group on Meteorological Requirements and Integration (WG MRI) has this within their scope and its likely to be included within the new ICAO *Procedures for Air Navigation Services for Meteorology* (PANS MET)

11. End-user considerations

Q70: As an end-user, how will IWXXM format affect us?

- As the TAC will continue at least until 2026, initially there will be no effect on users. However, users wishing to benefit from utilizing IWXXM will be required to either develop new capability or upgrade their systems to support the ingestion of IWXXM data.
- IWXXM is based on XML and will simplify the development of new airline and pilot applications
- Data volumes are substantially larger than TAC and the use of IWXXM may impact some users and their communication links (e.g. to aircraft)

Q71: Some airlines have flight planning departments. How will IWXXM be integrated into their flight planning systems?

- Users are required to:
 - Arrange access to IWXXM from one or many sources
 - Manage non-translated TAC in IWXXM
- Users are recommended to:
 - Take appropriate malware and anti-virus precautions if ingesting compressed files
 - Validate received IWXXM
 - Manage off-line copies of all required schema's & code tables
- IWXXM is considered to be beneficial to users, flight planning systems, but TAC will remain available until at least 2026

Q72: What is the implication for States & RODB that unable to comply with the IWXXM implementation timeline?

- In November 2020, it became an ICAO requirement to implement and exchange IWXXM
- Depends on the State and their required function. RODBs are critical in the ROBEX scheme – so consequences of non-compliance will be significant
- States should file not compliance with Annex 3 in the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD)

Q73: On consumers' aspect, I think consumer (e.g. airlines) will not be able to connect to AMHS, where and how can they get IWXXM information?

- Quite a few airlines are connected to the AFS via their domestic COM Centre; others connect to the AFS via SITA gateways. The airlines can upgrade their AFTN connections to local COM Centre to AMHS FTBP, but this might be an investment that is hard to commit to at this moment. Some States also provide access to OPMET information via web services or similar. Alternative source of IWXXM data will be through WIFS and SADIS.

12. Cyber security

Q74: What is the recommended/appropriate cyber security strategy for IWXXM?

- Scan attachment at Message Transfer agent and isolate/remove infected file before distributed further (e.g. to end users)
- Users systems should scan at either user server or terminals depending on implementation architecture and risk appetite
- Testing should be conducted to assess the impact of scanning at various stages in the ROBEX scheme