



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

The Fourth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Aerodrome Design and Operations Task Force (AP-ADO/TF/4)

*Hybrid Meeting, Chiang Rai, Thailand, 10 to 13 January 2023***Agenda Item 6: Any other business****AERODROME ACTIVITY IN THE PACIFIC**

(Presented by Pacific Aviation Safety Office)

SUMMARY

This paper presents an overview of aerodrome and ground aids activity undertaken by the Pacific Aviation Safety Office since 2020 and an overview of 2023 activities. The paper is designed to provide ICAO APAC States an update on Pacific activities and allow alignment of AP-ADO/TF Tasks with PASO activities.

The meeting is invited to note the activities and also discuss how aerodrome issues in the Pacific States can be integrated into APAC tasks and guidance material.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) is an international organisation providing aviation safety and security services for Member States in the Pacific; www.paso.aero

1.2 PASO is the sole international organisation responsible for regional regulatory aviation safety oversight support services for the 10 Pacific States who are signatories to the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST).

1.3 The current PICASST signatories are the Pacific nations of Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Associate Members of PASO are Australia, Fiji and New Zealand. Government representatives from these nations make up the PASO Council.

1.4 PASO is a [Regional Aviation Safety Oversight Organization \(RSOO\)](#) recognised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

1.5 A number of international agencies support PASO and PASO States including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA Australia), Civil Aviation Safety Authority of New Zealand (CAANZ), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the World Bank (WB).

2. DISCUSSIONBackground

2.1 In 2021 the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) initiated direct support to PASO under the COVID-19 PASO Support Package project to ensure regulatory activities for PASO States could continue.

2.2 Under this funding the role of Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA) Technical Advisor was established as a permanent position with a fixed term period.

2.3 This role involved supporting PASO Member States with their Aerodromes and Ground Aids requirements including certification, surveillance, training and technical assistance in accordance with an approved workplan.

2.4 The funding was from March 2021 to January 2022, and as the programme was successful it was extended to December 2022 and is expected to continue in 2023.

2.5 Aerodrome certification is a priority for PASO and the PASO States to comply with ICAO requirements, align with regional strategies and plans (including the Beijing Declaration), and for the safe operation of aircraft. Certification of aerodromes is a problem for some PASO States whose airports are listed as non-certificated mainly resources and infrastructure issues.

2.6 PASO has been providing oversight of aerodromes since it was established including auditing and carrying out surveillance on all aerodromes, including those that are yet to be certificated.

Activities

2.7 Appendix A list the activities undertaken by the AGA Technical Advisor over and above standard auditing and surveillance activities.

2.8 The main activity was undertaking regulatory audits and surveillance on behalf of the State to comply with the Aerodrome rules and regulations. Most PASO States have adopted the New Zealand Civil aviation Rules and Advisory Circulars.

2.9 Training, mentoring and onsite assistance was provided with the use of Zoom initially under COVID restrictions and then in person whilst onsite.

2.10 Assistance was provided to States on ICAO requirements especially surveys, responses to proposed amendments and related AGA requirements. Assistance was provided to PASO states to update the ICAO APAC Regional Air Navigation Plan and the respective Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP).

2.11 Major emphasis was placed on Global Reporting Format training and implementation. As of 31 December 2022, PASO AGA Technical Advisor had provided generic training by Zoom to all States, and specific onsite training to six states and three more will receive specific onsite training in early 2023.

2.12 PASO AGA Technical Advisor has also assisted with GRF reporting and updating to ICAO APAC as well as helping ensure States are ready to implement. A PASO GRF Implementation and Training Pack was provided to all PASO States.

2.13 Aerodrome State Profiles have been developed for each State which includes the State contact info, aerodromes list, applicable aerodrome rules, location and aircraft operations including activity and types. The profile then details the ICAO APAC Regional Air Navigation Plan detail, ICAO aerodrome deficiencies and outstanding ICAO aerodrome requirement, this is used to work with the State on AGA planning.

2.14 Details on certification status, last audit or surveillance and outstanding Findings are also provided. This is used to continually monitor State progress, assistance needs and also acknowledging improvements.

2.15 The AGA Technical Advisor also attended ICAO APAC Aerodrome meetings and symposium providing updates to both PASO States on ICAO activities and also ICAO on work in the Pacific. The OLS Symposium was also attended, and a change outline document provided to PASO States.

2.16 PASO also published a Non-Certificated Aerodrome Guidance Material document in March 2022 to assist States for the smaller aerodromes to ensure they meet a minimum design and operations standards.

Associated Activities

2.17 PASO also initiated, under World Bank funding, off site certification audits (OSCA) during the COVID-19 lockdowns of PASO States. The OSCA allowed regulatory oversight to continue with the technical specialist in their respective country of residence and using onsite CAA personnel to do audits of areas they were not technical specialists on.

2.18 The OSCA process was developed in accordance with international guidance, tested in several States in February/March 2021 and then implemented in April 2021 with associated online training. The audit used Zoom video meetings, WhatsApp to share documents as well as photos and relied on the on-site staff providing timely information.

2.19 The staff involved PASO Inspectors, PASO operations staff and State staff had to complete and pass an online training on OSCA to allow them to undertake the offsite auditing.

2.20 Over 100 OSCA tasks have been completed with key observations being:

- More preparation time needed
- Takes longer than an onsite audit
- Available technology in the State is a challenge when undertaking an OSCA
- States need to be fully committed and engaged to make OSCA work

Pacific AGA Challenges

2.21 The Pacific States face a range of challenges from the low aircraft volumes, infrastructure challenges and resource pressures. Some States only have a few international operations per week, and some have only one per month. Often the State is so small that the Aerodrome operator, Air Navigation Service Provider and the CAA are one organisation with the ability to separate difficult.

2.22 Applying the ICAO Annex 14 requirements to Pacific States can be a challenge especially in regard to resources. For instance, rescue and firefighting equipment and staffing to meet the category of large jet aircraft is resource and financially demanding when there are only 2-3 such aircraft operations per week. Having a fully operational safety management system can be a challenge given the size and scope of the organisation.

2.23 Retaining trained and competent staff is also a challenge, especially when they often hold multiple positions and are required to keep up to date on various technical areas.

2.24 Access to land and ability to remove obstacles, especially coconut trees, is a challenge with some neighbouring land being tribal or multiple ownership. This is a real challenge for runway end safety areas and also obstacle limitation surfaces, the proposed ICAO OLS changes will be of great assistance.

2.25 Maintaining the runway surface, lighting and navigation aids in Pacific climates is also an issue, especially with tropical cyclones and the cost of getting technical staff to the Island for maintenance and repairs.

2.26 GRF has been particularly problematic as the states have very limited flight numbers and limited infrastructure for reporting, many States have an aerodrome flight service and there are no full-time airfield staff. Tropical storms can come and go quickly but the GRF does provide for water only situations, but the traffic volumes do make the GRF problematic to implement fully.

2.27 Certification of Aerodromes has been a challenge but thanks to PASO oversight, DFAT and World Bank support progress is being made.

2.28 Ensuring State Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) is correct and updated as many States use one provider from New Zealand. Often the State does not understand their responsibilities to update the AIP data and regularly review.

2023 Activities

2.29 2023 is already set to be busy with certification and surveillance audits. GRF implementation is a high priority along with attendance at ICAO APAC meeting.

2.30 An AGA training programme is to be developed for State personnel using online training platforms and onsite activities.

2.31 Assistance to States on ICAO correspondence and assistance on the proposed changes to Obstacle Limitation Surfaces requirements.

2.32 In 2023 it is hoped that certification of Kiribati (2), Nauru and Tuvalu international aerodrome will be completed which would mean all PASO States have certificated aerodromes.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) discuss the challenges that Pacific States face;
- c) discuss lessons learnt while certifying aerodromes that have been difficult to meet Annex 14 requirements: and
- d) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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APPENDIX A

AGA Technical Advisor 2022 Work Plan

ID	Task Description	Output
1	Tailored GRF training to States.	PASO GRF Training Programme to Niue, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, PNG.
2	State Support on Implementation and ICAO requirements	GRF Implementation Plans Notification to ICAO incl Difference Assistance as required
3	ICAO Meeting Attendance, assistance to States on meeting requirements and summary to States of outcomes	Attend ICAO Asia Pacific 6 th Meeting of Aerodrome Operations and Planning Subgroup (AOP/SG/6) 27-30 June 2022 Planning, attendance, reporting
4		Review ICAO Asia Pacific 3 rd meeting of the Aerodrome Design and Operations Task Force (AP-ADO/TF/3) held February 2022
5		Review Fourth Meeting of Asia/Pacific Aerodrome Assistance Working Group (AP-AAWG/4) held March 2022
6		GRF Webinar: Ten Months into GRF, Challenges Met and Lessons Learnt in Asia-Pacific 29 September 2022, Time: 09:00 – 12:00 Bangkok
7	Review ICAO Asia Pacific Deficiency list and assists States to address	Ensure States provide updated details on any areas of ICAO Deficiency especially Aerodrome Certification and AIP Aerodrome data
8	Other AGA assistance as required	

Notes:

- Engage with each State on their GRF status, areas of assistance and related items
- Develop for each State an AGA Status and Improvement Plan – One page identifying level of involvement, ICAO differences status and planned areas of improvement.
- Establish a GRF Implementation Matrix covering all States so we can assess progress and identify States level of assistance
- As required ensure any other ICAO AGA issues are identified – the new ICAO Obstacle Limitation Surface criteria is one area to monitor and provide assistance.

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