



International Civil Aviation Organization  
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ICAO

## Thirteenth Meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia and Pacific Regions (RASG-APAC/13)

Hong Kong, China, 18-19 December 2023

### Agenda Item 5: ICAO / Member State / Industry Presentations

#### IMPROVING PROCESSES AND OUTPUTS FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY TEAM (APRAST)

*(Presented by APRAST Co-Chairs)*

##### SUMMARY

APRAST is a key platform to advance aviation safety in the Asia-Pacific region. A decade from its establishment, it is timely to review potential areas of improvement to ensure continued effectiveness and relevance.

This paper presents proposed improvements to APRAST's procedures to facilitate the streamlining of processes and more efficient development of substantive outputs for the benefit of the region.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The first RASG-APAC Meeting (RASG-APAC/1) in October 2011 established APRAST as a sub-regional mechanism for regional safety outputs. Since its inception, APRAST has made significant contribution to enhancing regional safety, such as the development and implementation of Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs) to address top regional safety risks, development of guidance materials, conduct of workshops and sharing of best practices. APRAST has also established the APAC Regional Aviation Safety Plan (AP-RASP) and consistently delivered the Annual Safety Report to proactively identify safety risks and the contributory factors.

1.2 In light of the evolving aviation landscape and the changing needs of this region, it is timely to review APRAST's working processes to ensure continued effectiveness and relevance of its outputs for the benefit of the Region.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### *Key Issues and Proposed Improvements*

2.1 At the APRAST/20 meeting held in August 2023, the APRAST and WG Co-chairs held several discussions on ways to improve processes and drive more effective implementation of its work programme. The key issues and proposed improvements are summarised as follows:

#### a) Ensuring greater continuity amongst APRAST WG members/contributors.

The development and review of APRAST deliverables, such as SEI and AP-RASP targets, require discussions and follow-ups across multiple meetings. Continuity is therefore

important to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the deliverables. Since States/Administrations are not required to nominate specific individuals to attend APRAST meetings and the various workgroup discussions, maintaining an optimal level of continuity to support APRAST outputs can be challenging as there has been a lack of certainty in APRAST and working group attendance. For instance, at the recent APRAST/20 Meeting, over a third of the delegations were new to APRAST. As a result, significant time was spent during the break-out sessions to introduce new participants and familiarise them with the APRAST procedures and projects.

It is proposed to have **formalised, named members to ensure more consistent attendance and greater continuity amongst APRAST WG members and contributors**. This approach is similar to how ICAO ANC panels are organised, where State-nominated individuals with appropriate subject matter expertise are to contribute substantively in panel activities, and members who are unable to contribute may have their membership withdrawn<sup>1,2</sup>. Notable collaboration groups like the Safety Management International Collaboration Group (SM ICG) also adopt a similar approach. APRAST attendees need not be assigned roles similar to other experts groups, *viz.* members, advisers or observers, nor would participation at APRAST be solely limited to the named members. Nevertheless, APRAST should ensure that the main nominated individuals and action custodians have the support of their States to be able to commit to attending APRAST meetings regularly and contribute substantively to APRAST discussions.

To this end, we propose for **APAC RO to invite States to nominate their core APRAST members**, including existing APRAST WG Members / Action Custodians, and for **APAC RO to remind States, for example when sending out State Letter invites, that their named Members are expected to attend APRAST Meetings regularly**. This will help to raise levels of continuity and certainty amongst APRAST contributors for more effective work.

#### **b) Providing more timely insights and updates**

Regional SEIs are developed in order to guide States and industry on the actions to take to mitigate an identified safety risk or issue. However, the SEI development process, as stipulated in the RASG-APAC Procedural Handbook, is a rigorous but long process. Subjecting the development of all APRAST guidance and outputs to this same process limits APRAST's ability to provide timely updates and insights regarding more immediate issues, such as regional hotspots or emerging trends.

It is proposed that **APRAST, through its SEI WG, be permitted to establish a mechanism that allows Critical Safety Information to be drafted by the SEI WG and disseminated directly to States through APAC RO**. Recent examples of such critical safety information being highlighted by States includes trends in severe adverse weather, GNSS interference, and visual approach aid alignment issues. This will enable the dissemination of insights and updates to alert States in a timelier manner, as opposed to the longer SEI development process. Such a mechanism is similar to what is available at the Regional Aviation Safety Team – Pan America.

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<sup>1</sup> Ref. 3.2.1 "Participation in panels shall be limited to the following individuals: 3.2.1.1 Panel members. Nominees from States and international organizations selected by the ANC to serve on the panel. The panel member has the right to vote and move or second motions or amendments."

<sup>2</sup> Ref. 7.1 "If a panel member fails to contribute to the work of the panel or fails to attend two consecutive meetings, ICAO may ask the State or international organization concerned whether it wishes to maintain its nominee on the panel. If no reply is received within three months, it will be assumed that the State or organization wishes to withdraw its nominee."

*Implementation of the Proposed Improvements*

2.2           APRAST is empowered to address the aforementioned areas of improvement by streamlining its processes and WG functions, based on the new Empowerment Framework approved by RASG-APAC/12 in 2022. The Framework aimed to simplify processes by enabling APRAST to adopt Decisions and Conclusions related to:

- i. Any amendment to ToRS (Terms of Reference), including extension of time of WG/TF formed under the relevant subgroup; and
- ii. All technical and operational aspects of Subgroup's work within its TORS.

2.3           To ensure that the changes are introduced effectively and lead to positive results, it is proposed that the adjustments detailed in Paragraph 2.1 (a-b) be trialled for subsequent APRAST Meetings, and for the relevant APRAST and Working Group ToRs to be updated if the changes are shown to be sustainable and effective.

**3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1           The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Support the proposed improvements to APRAST procedures detailed in Paragraph 2.1;
- b) Encourage APRAST representatives to participate and attend APRAST meetings consistently; and
- c) Note that APRAST may edit its ToRs, where appropriate, to reflect these changes.

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