International Civil Aviation Organization
Asia and Pacific Office

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**

AIR NAVIGATION SERVICE PROVIDERS' ROLE IN REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

Managing and assuring the safety of operations has long been a focus of Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) worldwide, with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) having provided the guiding principles and the mandate for member organizations to use. Currently gaps exist in the Asia and Pacific Region when it comes to ANSP inclusion into regional safety matters. The Regional Aviation Safety Group Asia and Pacific (RASG-APAC) is said to comprise all States/Administrations in the APAC region, appropriate International Organizations and other Partners who could provide support to enhance safety in the APAC region. ANSPs are a key stakeholder to developing an integrated, data-driven strategy and work program that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety. Their valuable perspectives in identifying and mitigating regional aviation safety risks are a key component of creating effective solutions. Actions should be taken to establish a framework and processes that account for the ANSP contributions and perspectives in managing regional aviation safety. Additionally, efforts to strengthen the coordination of regional safety concerns between the RASG-APAC and the APANPIRG by developing concrete and direct mechanisms of information sharing should be considered. Finally, a focused workshop should be conducted on ATM Safety Management that dives into the practical application of SMS in the ANSP operational environment.

REFERENCES

− Annual Safety Report 2023, Asia Pacific Region
− Regional Aviation Safety Group Asia and Pacific Regions (RASG-APAC), Second Edition – 10 January 2021.
− Report of the APRAST/20, 7-11 August 2023

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Safety information is an important input for any safety management process. The commitment of aviation stakeholders to analyse safety performance through fact-based data, to mitigate root causes and system weaknesses in a timely manner, and to measure system improvements and monitor for effectiveness are common objectives of all aviation stakeholders. Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) are a key source of input to all these processes, and their valuable perspectives in identifying and mitigating regional aviation safety risks are a key component of creating effective

solutions in the Asia and Pacific region. The Regional Aviation Safety Group Asia and Pacific (RASG-APAC) is said to comprise all States/Administrations in the APAC region, appropriate International Organizations and other Partners who could provide support to enhance safety in the APAC region. ANSPs are a key stakeholder in this partnership and are a necessary element to developing an integrated, data-driven strategy and work program that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety. The complex interrelationships and interdependencies between all aviation stakeholders, especially those of ANSPs, is something that should be considered if the region is to manage aviation safety thoroughly, comprehensively, and effectively.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council at the fourth meeting of its 190th Session held on 25 May 2010 approved the establishment of Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific (RASG-APAC), with the main purpose of developing an integrated, data-driven strategy, and implementing a work programme that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety. This approach was designed to reduce the commercial aviation fatality risk in the APAC Region and promote States and industry safety initiatives in harmony with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR). It was also noted by the Council that safety is a shared responsibility involving all aviation stakeholders.

2.2   RASG-APAC is said to comprise all States/Administrations, appropriate International Organizations and other Partners who could provide support to enhance safety in the APAC region. In the generic terms of reference for regional aviation safety groups, the importance of collaborative and proactive contributions by States, service providers, airspace users, international and regional organizations, and industry are highlighted.

2.3   In section 5.3.1. of the RASG-APAC Procedural Handbook, it points out that State Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs), supported by service providers as necessary, should amongst other things, a) support the implementation of effective safety management and collaborative decision-making processes to mitigate aviation safety risks, and b) contribute information on safety risks as part of their safety management activities. Safety management systems (SMSs) are how service providers effectively manage their safety program, and so it makes good sense to include their inputs regarding the practical application of SMS when developing mitigations to target identified safety concerns that have a service provision component.

2.4   A review of the Annual Safety Report 2023 for the Asia Pacific Region, composed by the RASG-APAC, found minimal references to ANSPs nor did it highlight ANSP contributions to enhancing regional safety performance. While there has been the establishment of the Asia and Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Team (APRAST) and their corresponding working groups ((Safety Enhancement Initiative Working Group (SEI WG), Safety Reporting Programme Working Group (SRP WG) and Standing Working Group for the Asia Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Plan (AP-RASP)), the focus of these activities has had minimal involvement with ANSP community. There is much more that ANSPs can contribution to identifying solutions to help reduce regional aviation safety risks and enhance overall safety performance, so establishing solid processes to facilitate collaboration between ANSPs and the groups identified above should be a key regional objective.

2.5   The importance of including ANSP perspectives in regional safety matters has recently been emphasized, as well as the desire for the region to have a more inclusive approach to safety management. During the recent APRAST/20 meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand 7-11 August 2023, it was noted there is a necessity to solicit and include ANSP perspectives when developing safety enhancement initiatives to reduce regional aviation safety risks. Paragraph 6.1.11 of the meeting report noted that States/Administrations would coordinate internally to bring along representatives, including air navigation service providers to participate in relevant Safety Enhancement Initiative Work Group meetings. Additionally in Annex A of the same report outlining the governance guidance for cross-

border data sharing, section 5.4.5 highlighted the need of ANSPs to provide summary safety information to generate meaningful metrics that can be integrated with other sources of critical safety information. To date the actions above have been limited in effectively addressing the identified gap, therefore work remains to achieve the desired outcomes.

2.6   To support the previous point, Appendix C to the Report of APRAST/20, List of Updated RASG-APC/12 Decisions and Conclusions, Decision RASG-APAC 12/10 APAC Activities on ATM Safety Management – WP/21, documented an action of a workshop conducted in ICAO APAC Regional Office from 02-04 August 2023. While in the report it advises "the nominal part of this workshop was on safety culture," the title and focus of the workshop was State Safety Plan Implementation. The original RASG-APAC 12/10 decision was "APAC Activities on Air Traffic Management Safety Management," however the action taken was not targeted toward the ANSP community nor dealt with the practical application of applied SMS in the ATM environment. The region remains in need of a focused workshop on ATM Safety Management that dives into the practical application of SMS in the ANSP operational environment.

2.7   The RASG-APAC, like Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs), allows the reports of RASGs to be reviewed by the Air Navigation Commission on a regular basis, and by Council as deemed necessary, thus providing interregional harmonization related to flight safety issues and a means to monitor implementation of the GASP/GASR. Currently in the APANPIRG framework, there is only one group with safety accountabilities, the Regional Airspace Safety Monitoring Advisory Group (RASMAG). One of the responsibilities of the RASG-APAC is to coordinate with the APANPIRG on safety issues (RASG-APAC Procedural Handbook, Section 3.4.2.f), however there continues to be ambiguities on how this is practically achieved.

2.8   The items of concern identified in this paper can be taken in a positive view as they lay out issues that can be addressed rather quickly given the right focus and attention. ANSPs are a key stakeholder to developing an integrated, data-driven strategy and work program that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety, and their contributions and perspectives with identifying and mitigating regional aviation safety risks are extremely valuable to the Asia and Pacific aviation community. Developing an inclusive framework and processes in both the RASG-APAC and APANPIRG that includes the collection, analysis, and distribution of critical safety information from ANSPs is in the interests of all regional stakeholders and supports the goal of continuous improvement of regional safety management.

3.   ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1   The Meeting is invited to:

a) Note the information provided in this paper.

b) Establish a framework and processes that account for the ANSP contributions and perspectives in managing regional aviation safety.

c) Strengthen the coordination of regional safety concerns between the RASG-APAC and the APANPIRG by developing concrete and direct mechanisms of information sharing between the APRAST and relevant contributing bodies of the APANPIRG (e.g., RASMAG, AOP SG and to report together to the RASG-APAC and APANPIRG on their joint work/discussions.

d) Conduct a focused workshop on ATM Safety Management that dives into the practical application of SMS in the ANSP operational environment.

— END —