

**Task Force to Strengthen and Evolve Existing Regional Mechanisms for
Regional Cooperation, towards Capability and Capacity Building
and Technical Assistance (RCM TF)**

**Record of Discussion of 13th Meeting
Virtual Format, 23-24 May 2024**

1. The 13th RCM TF meeting was held on 23 – 24 May 2024 virtually. The list of meeting participants is in **Appendix 1**.
2. In his opening remarks, Chair welcomed India to the RCM TF. Chair noted that the examination of the feasibility of an APCAC was at an important phase of work leading up to the DGCA/59 meeting in Cebu, the Philippines in October 2024.

Agenda 1: Adoption of Provisional Agenda

3. The meeting adopted the agenda as attached in **Appendix 2**.

Agenda 2: Adoption of Record of Discussion of RCM TF/12 Meeting

4. The meeting adopted the record of discussion of the RCM TF/12 meeting as attached in **Appendix 3**.

Agenda 3: Matters Arising from RCM TF/12 Meeting

5. The meeting noted the matters arising from RCM TF/12 meeting as attached in **Appendix 4**.

Agenda 4: Implementation Roadmap

Agenda 4a: Status updates on Recommendations in Implementation Roadmap – led by Singapore

6. The meeting noted the status updates for the Implementation Roadmap, as attached in **Appendix 5**, with highlights as follows:
 - i. Recommendation A.2 and A.3: APAC RO updated that the work to align COSCAPs and to prioritise CAT missions was ongoing. On CAT missions, APAC RO stated that priority was given to States with USOAP audits scheduled in the following year. The meeting agreed for Recommendations A.2 and A.3 to be closed and tracked under the respective relevant workstreams.
 - ii. Recommendation A.4: APAC RO noted that the Pacific Small Island Developing States Liaison Officer was appointed in August 2023. The meeting agreed to continue tracking this recommendation.
 - iii. Recommendation C.1: APAC RO informed that it would upload the latest list of available technical resources and mechanisms that could address the needs of the APAC region on the RCM TF/13 Meeting website. The meeting agreed to close Recommendation C.1.
 - iv. Recommendation C.2: The meeting agreed to close Recommendation C.2.
 - v. Recommendation E.3: The meeting agreed to close Recommendation E.3 and noted that the technical forums were tracking and maintaining their own lists of focal points.
7. Bangladesh sought clarification on the ongoing process in relation to Recommendation E.1. APAC RO commented that the discussion on the survey on ICAO Engagement would briefly cover State Letters.

Chair requested for details on the discussions from previous RCM TF meetings on Recommendation E.1, to be shared with Bangladesh.

Agenda 4b: Discussion on Recommendation B.2 (Training Framework and DGCA/58 Action Item 58/37) – led by Working Group (Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore, USA)

8. Singapore presented a paper which outlined the plans for the implementation of the Regional Training Cooperation Framework, as attached in **Appendix 6**.
9. The paper called for the RCM Task Force to:
 - a. Endorse the plans to implement the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Training Symposium and the Train-the-Trainer Programme (TTP) under the Regional Training Cooperation Framework to enhance training cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.
 - b. Participate in the Regional Training Cooperation Framework Working Group through nominating a representative to participate in the meetings to support the implementation of the initiatives.
 - c. Nominate prospective instructors for the TTP.
10. APAC RO clarified whether the responsibilities of the Working Group under the Regional Training Cooperation Framework included looking at new initiatives outside of the current scope. Chair referred to Paragraph 2.1 of Appendix 6 and explained that the Working Group's Terms of Reference included proposing additional coordination activities under this framework.
11. The Republic of Korea (ROK) suggested including Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) in the Working Group to broaden its scope. Chair explained the intent to include key industry partners other than States/Administrations in this Working Group and agreed to ROK's suggestion.
12. APAC RO noted that the US had kickstarted its TTP with some training in Dhaka and Bangkok and highlighted the lack of nominations of instructors from States/Administrations for the TTP. Chair noted the importance of having trainers within the region, instead of only relying on trainers from other regions. Chair suggested that the working group look at ways to incentivise instructors and advised APAC RO to continue its efforts to request for nominations of instructors. Chair also welcomed encouraging States/Administrations to nominate women to join TTP where possible.
13. The meeting endorsed the initiatives and the action items in the paper on the implementation of the Regional Training Cooperation Framework and requested for APAC RO to send a State Letter to invite nominations for the Working Group. The meeting noted that the APRO would not issue a separate State Letter regarding the nominations for TTP but would continue to promote TTP each time when the course be initiated.

Agenda 4c: Discussion on Recommendation E.4 (Survey on Enhancing Communication Channels) – led by New Zealand

14. New Zealand presented the preliminary analysis and insights from the Survey on Enhancing Communications Channels, as attached in **Appendix 7**. The survey was conducted from 28 December 2023 to 23 February 2024.
15. Chair noted the good response rate, with 33 States/Administrations having submitted their responses.
16. APAC RO suggested to analyse the results holistically, rather than by individual questions, as there could be common underlying issues or trends which had led to the responses, including internal issues with technical knowledge and the lack of resources in States/Administrations.

17. Bangladesh commented that State Letters came in various formats. Hence, it would be beneficial if guidance materials could be developed for States/Administrations to respond to State Letters in a similar format.
18. Chair noted that the survey had used State Letters as a proxy for communications between ICAO and States/Administrations, and the recommendations should seek to improve communications and engagement in the region.
19. ROK shared about its IT tool, used to process State Letters and offered to share this with interested States/Administrations who were interested in using this for their own State Letter processing.
20. New Zealand commented that the issue of resources in handling State Letters was separate from processes. The elements to consider included how the State Letters were drafted, the processes used by States/Administrations and the system used to process State Letters.
21. APAC Regional Director (RD) suggested for the working group to provide recommendations for improvements to ICAO's engagement with States/Administrations. He suggested discussing further during the next RCM TF meeting ahead of the presentation of the working paper to DGCA/59 conference.
22. New Zealand would update the results from this survey at the DGCA/59 Conference, and invited RCM TF members to participate in the drafting group to develop the paper. China and Singapore indicated interest in participating in the drafting group.

Agenda 5: Examination of Feasibility of Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC)

Agenda 5a: Recap of endorsed methodology to examine the feasibility of an APCAC – led by Chair

23. Chair re-capped the scope of the examination of feasibility of Asia Pacific Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC) and noted that the discussion at RCM TF/13 would focus on Part 3 of the study.

Agenda 5b: Endorsement of Part 2 Report – led by New Zealand

24. New Zealand, as lead of Part 2 of the examination of the feasibility of an APCAC on identifying the problems and opportunities, presented its report as attached in **Appendix 8**.
25. The meeting noted that Singapore had separately provided editorial amendments to the Part 2 report. New Zealand would circulate the revised report after the RCM TF/13 meeting.
26. The meeting endorsed the Part 2 report, provided no further comments from RCM TF members after the re-circulation of the revised report.

Agenda 5c: Discussion of Part 3 workstream – led by Singapore

27. Singapore, as lead of Part 3 of the examination of the feasibility of an APCAC on identifying the problems and opportunities, presented its draft report outline as attached in **Appendix 9**.
28. Chair emphasised that this was a working draft and invited RCM TF members to further improve it.
29. Japan supported the direction of the work on the Part 3 report, and queried whether the proposed enhancements to DGCA Conference meant an additional separate meeting prior to the Conference, or for a meeting to be held on the sidelines of the Conference. Chair noted that second-order details would need to be worked out, noting that the workstream was not considering a separate meeting. Australia

suggested a closed session as a potential enhancement to the DGCA Conference, that would involve only States/Administrations and could serve to allow the States/Administrations to agree on issues as a collective.

30. Japan further suggested to engage the APAC Air Navigation Commissioners during the DGCA Conference as they would provide insights from ICAO HQ as well.
31. Japan clarified on whether seeking additional resources for the region and the APAC RO referred to seeking support and budget allocation from ICAO HQ. On this, the meeting noted that discussions for the budget for the next triennial would commence in fall 2024.
32. Japan commented that the APAC region did not have a function to represent the region outside of ICAO Headquarters, noting that Civil Aviation Commissions (CACs) of other regions made speeches representing the collective interests of their States at international forums, whereas only a small number of APAC States were represented individually. Similarly, ROK expressed the need for a regional voice for the APAC region, citing that some CACs had made known their requests for additional seats on the ICAO Council. Bangladesh encouraged States to ratify the protocol to amend Article 50(a) on the expansion of the ICAO Council and added that the region would need to work together to secure an additional seat for the APAC region. ROK commented that while the discussion focused on the examination of the feasibility of APCAC, existing mechanisms would need to be strengthened as well.
33. New Zealand mentioned that it was not necessary to have a CAC to have a regional voice, and other mechanisms could achieve the same outcome at a lower effort and cost.
34. China suggested to align the language in the pre-conditions of Options 2 and 3 of para 1.3.1 of the draft outline to “The region...”, as it might be too strict to require all States to commit to the potential initiatives. On the potential initiatives in relation to the APANPIRG and the RASG, China highlighted the need to consult technical divisions as these forums were technical in nature.
35. Australia suggested that the Part 3 Workstream elaborate on the evaluation criteria further, and to explain how the evaluation would be done. Depending on the evaluation methodology, some potential initiatives, particularly those technical in nature, might not fully achieve priorities of the region. Australia highlighted the need to differentiate the role that the regional office could play from the role that could be performed by an APCAC. In response to Australia, Singapore suggested that given there were several initiatives to enhance existing mechanisms, the evaluation could be done as a whole rather than individually.
36. APAC RD shared the importance of international cooperation in aviation and noted the increased cooperation in other regions. He urged the RCM TF to provide concrete recommendations to the DGCA Conference to enhance cooperation in the APAC region and shared his view that strengthening existing mechanisms seemed like a more feasible and practical approach. The APCAC would require political will and possibly a treaty, which was challenging to achieve in the near term. He shared a proposal to set up a permanent office to strengthen the preparatory and follow up work of the DGCA Conference, including monitoring the progress of the Ministerial Declaration and DGCA decisions. This office could possibly represent the region at international meetings.
37. Malaysia suggested to include availability of human resources in the evaluation of the options.
38. New Zealand urged the Part 3 workstream to conduct a robust analysis on the potential initiatives identified based on the opportunities identified in Part 2, and not to rule out any potential initiatives.

New Zealand suggested that Part 3 workstream could include the table of mechanisms in the Annex of Part 2 report for its evaluation.

39. Australia sought clarification on the process undertaken in developing the four evaluation criteria. Singapore responded that these were based on issues which States/Administrations might be concerned with. Australia shared that an APCAC served a different function from ICAO regional offices in that the APCAC might reflect the priorities and objectives of the States/Administrations, rather than focus on implementing regional priorities as defined at the global level at ICAO HQ. Chair requested that the Part 3 workstream refine the language on “gaining ICAO’s support”. Australia added that the evaluation criteria should be fleshed out.
40. Chair expressed the need for Part 3 workstream to consider the time frame and outcomes in evaluating the various initiatives. Specifically, as an APCAC could not be formed so quickly, Chair commented that the region should think of a mechanism, other than an APCAC, to communicate its intent in securing an additional seat in the expanded ICAO Council.
41. Australia queried on the next steps for the Part 3 workstream. Singapore explained that the Part 3 workstream would take in comments from the RCM TF/13 meeting and further develop the paper to address the comments. The Part 3 workstream would meet before the next RCM TF meeting and would present the detailed paper in July 2024. The intent was to discuss the draft Part 3 report at the July 2024 RCM TF meeting and to hold further virtual meetings if required to finalise the feasibility study report, prior to the DGCA/59 Conference.
42. New Zealand explained that the DGCA Conference would need to make decisions based on the recommendations arising from the examination of the feasibility of an APCAC and urged the RCM TF to think through carefully how the decisions would be framed.

Agenda 6: Other business

43. Australia requested to join the Part 3 workstream and Singapore welcomed its participation.

Agenda 7: Date and Venue of next meeting – RCM TF/14

44. The meeting noted that the RCM TF/14 meeting would be held in-person on 4 – 5 July 2024 at the ICAO APAC Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

Closing Remarks

45. The RCM TF expressed its sincere appreciation to Mr Parakrama Dissanayake for his strong support and contribution to the work of the task force and wished him the best for his retirement.

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