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*International Civil Aviation Organization*The Seventh Meeting of the Asia/Pacific
Aerodrome Assistance Working Group (AP-AA/WG/7)*Bangkok, Thailand, 27 to 30 May 2025***Agenda Item 3: Aerodrome Certification and Safety Management System****THE CHALLENGES AND IMPLEMENTED MEASURES FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF
MILITARY AERODROMES USED FOR CIVILIAN OPERATIONS**

(Presented by Malaysia)

SUMMARY

This paper shares the challenges and implemented measures for certifying military aerodromes that are also open to civil aviation operations. Key challenges include different requirements between military and civil aviation standards, the absence of mandatory certification for military facilities, complex decision-making structures, confidentiality concerns, infrastructure limitations and joint operations complexities. To address these issues, measures such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and regular consultations were implemented. These solutions improved coordination between civil and military authorities while ensuring compliance with international standards.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Malaysia's aerodrome network comprises of 42 airports which includes two military aerodromes that are open to civil aviation operations. These aerodromes serve a dual purpose, supporting national defense and security while at the same time facilitating civil aviation operations.

1.2 This is exemplified by Labuan Airport, a military aerodrome that is also open to civil aircraft. While the aerodrome operator manages civil aviation operations, the military retains control over specific sections, including the aerodrome's control tower, Airport Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS) and certain security-sensitive areas. This mixed-use jurisdiction poses unique challenges in regulatory compliance, operational coordination and certification processes, particularly when aligning with ICAO standards.

1.3 Therefore, this paper aims to provide an overview of the challenges encountered and the measures taken in the certification of Labuan Airport.

2. DISCUSSIONChallenges

2.1 In certifying a military aerodrome, one of the main challenges is reconciling the differing requirements between military and civil aviation standards. Labuan Airport is specifically designed to meet the operational needs of military aircraft which often differ from those of civil aircraft.

For instance, Labuan Airport requires specialized infrastructure such as cable arresters, safety nets and arrestor cable lights to support military operations. While these features are essential for military use, they are unnecessary for civil aviation and can create challenges in aligning the aerodrome with civil aviation standards in particularly when such infrastructure is located within the runway strips.

2.2 Moreover, certification requirements for military aerodromes are not mandated under Malaysian regulations. Without mandatory certification, Labuan Airport is not subjected to the same level of regular audits, inspections and compliance monitoring compared as civil aerodromes. As a result, aligning certification documents such as the aerodrome manual and Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) on both military and civil aviation requirements presents significant challenges. Additionally, some aerodrome facilities are not maintained in accordance with the standards outlined in the aerodrome maintenance program which potentially impacting the overall safety and operational efficiency.

2.3 Furthermore, the decision-making process for military aerodromes is inherently more complex due to the multiple layers of authority involved. Decisions must pass through higher levels of command before implementation. This challenge was encountered during the process of obtaining permission for the certification of Labuan Airport, where coordination among multiple agencies was required to align military and civil aviation requirements.

2.4 Another challenge is limited access to information, as most military documents are classified as restricted. Obtaining access to technical document requires a formal process, which can be time-consuming and complex.

2.5 A significant challenge lies in implementing corrective actions from audits. Delays occur because the military does not prioritize addressing audit findings, as there is no regulatory requirement for them to comply with civil aviation standards.

Measures

2.6 An essential step in addressing these challenges is the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between airport operators and military authorities. This agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of each party, facilitates coordination and financial arrangement. The MoU serves as a framework for collaboration, streamlining decision-making processes and expediting the implementation of corrective actions necessary for certification.

2.7 Additionally, regular consultations and discussions with stakeholders through Runway Safety Team (RST) meeting and airside safety committee meeting are held to address operational challenges and limitations, enhance coordination and ensure compliance with safety standards. These meetings provide a platform for the military authorities, aerodrome operators and airlines operating at Labuan Airport to discuss audit findings, share critical information and develop solutions. Through these engagements, stakeholders can collaboratively identify and implement measures that improve safety, efficiency and regulatory compliance.

2.8 The Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) for Labuan Airport contained updated essential information which includes details on objects located on the runway strip, cable arresters and arrestor barrier (safety nets). These updates ensure that pilots and airline operators are aware of critical infrastructure that may impact flight operations, enhancing situational awareness and safety.

2.9 Aerodrome operators, together with related stakeholders at Labuan Airport, conducted safety assessments to evaluate all identified hazards and determine their potential impact on flight operations. These assessments play a critical role in identifying risks associated with military and civil aviation activities, ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

2.10 By adopting these solutions, the certification process for military aerodromes that are open to civil aviation operations became more structured, ensuring a balanced approach that addressed the needs of both civil and military authorities. This approach improved coordination between both parties and established structured oversight mechanisms, facilitating a more efficient certification framework

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) share relevant best practices by other States in the Asia-Pacific Region;
- c) share relevant experiences in dealing with military authorities; and
- d) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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