

**61ST CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7 September - 11 September 2026*

AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATES

**PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DGCA
CONFERENCE TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS**

(Presented by the Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force)

SUMMARY

Following the recommendations of the 60th DGCA Conference in 2025, the Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force (RCMTF) has developed a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the DGCA Conference to articulate its purpose, representation, scope, governance, and desired outcomes. The ToR incorporates existing guidance, comments received, and proposed enhancements to strengthen the effectiveness and outcomes of the DGCA Conference.

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DGCA CONFERENCE TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation ('Conference') is a major civil aviation event in the Asia Pacific Region and has been held annually¹ since 1960. While the Conference has established practices and processes over the years, a formal Terms of Reference (ToR) would help consolidate these arrangements and support its continued effectiveness.

1.2 At the 60th DGCA Conference in Sendai, Japan in July 2025, the Conference recommended that the RCMTF undertake the following tasks:

- i. Formalize the establishment of a small team that would assist in the administration of the DGCA Conference, and to detail the scope of the small team, in conjunction with the ICAO Secretariat; and
- ii. Continue its work on the draft ToR towards strengthening the existing DGCA Conference based on comments received.
- iii. Continue its work to explore the value and practicality of the dedicated Forum including, scope, objectives and operational approach based on comments received, and to report back at the 61st DGCA Conference.

1.3 This paper addresses the recommendations relating to (i) and (ii). Recommendation (iii) is addressed separately in another paper.

Areas for Enhancements to the DGCA Conference

1.4 The RCMTF held four meetings to follow up on the Conference's recommendations. Key aspects of its discussions on strengthening the Conference are elaborated below.

1.5 The Conference is a long-standing international civil aviation forum of the region that is attended by States / Administrations accredited to the ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office and is represented at the Director General / Chief Executive level. The Conference discusses issues relating to safety, air navigation services, security and facilitation, economic development of air transport, aviation and environment and capacity development and implementation. It provides opportunities for exchanges of information, networking between States / Administrations, as well as interactions with ICAO (e.g. on training / capacity development) and International Organizations.

1.6 The Conference has a full agenda over its five-day meeting, with typically 70-80 working papers being tabled, making it increasingly challenging to have in-depth discussions even for priority areas that warrant closer attention. It is recognized that it would be beneficial to have greater focus on key / strategic issues faced by States / Administrations in the region. In the preparations for the 60th Conference, ICAO had sought States' support to provide a small team of experts to tighten the agenda and ensure a sharpened focus on key issues of regional interest, review papers to be tabled and track follow-up action items. The 60th Conference has asked for this arrangement to be formalized.

1.7 While the Conference meets annually, there are priority issues that benefit from ongoing steering by Directors General / Chief Executive and / or senior executives / subject matter experts. The Conference can decide to form Working Groups / Task Forces to progress priority issues between the Conference meetings, and report back to the Conference on the progress or decisions needed. The RCMTF is an example. Another example is the Asia Pacific Air Navigation Service Providers Committee, which was formed by the 57th Conference in 2022 and has since undertaken action-oriented initiatives towards the concept of operations for seamless air traffic management.

1.8 The Conference is an appropriate forum for Asia Pacific States / Administrations to

¹ The DGCA Conference was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

coordinate on issues of common interest, thus better representing the regional needs / positions in ICAO meetings and other global forums. This would, for instance, enable specific requests on required resources to be raised by the ICAO Council Representatives from Asia Pacific States at the ICAO Council's budget deliberations. It is recalled that the Conference has served as a platform for the ICAO Council Representatives from Asia Pacific States to communicate with States / Administrations on pertinent issues of the ICAO Council.

1.9 The Conference also affords an opportunity for participants to discuss aviation issues that may not fit into the formal Conference agenda. The host State may organize a side meeting for this purpose, if requested by a State. This practice is not new, for example, in the past Directors General / Chief Executive have attended closed-door sessions to discuss certain issues. The side meeting is ad hoc in nature and organized only if required.

1.10 Currently the Conference's action items constitute a long list including issues that require tracking and others for general noting, with a lack of continuity across the various Conferences. Moving forward, the action items should be more focused and clearly specify follow-up actions for States / Administrations.

2. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

2.1 The Conference has existing practices and a set of objectives, which have been developed into guidance material for use by the host State and Conference participants. These practices are not documented in the form of ToR. The 60th DGCA Conference in 2025 decided that it was timely to establish a set of ToR so that there is a clear and documented statement of its purpose, representation, and scope to ensure the effectiveness of the meeting and its discussions.

2.2 An expanded outline of the ToR was first tabled at the 60th DGCA Conference, drafted in line with existing guidance for the Conference, and incorporating additional details on the purpose, representation and administration of the Conference. The Conference tasked the RCMTF to continue its work on the draft ToR towards strengthening the existing Conference based on the comments received.

2.3 The RCMTF has developed the ToR using existing guidance material, the expanded outline of ToR tabled at the 60th DGCA Conference and the comments received. Where relevant, ToR of other regional meetings (e.g. Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group and Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific) have been used as a reference.

2.4 The ToR includes the proposed enhancements to the DGCA Conference covered in the previous section of this paper, viz:

- i. Establishing a small team to support ICAO with agenda-setting and follow-up, aimed at sharpening the focus of the Conference's discussions;
- ii. Provision for the Conference to set up Working Groups / Task Forces to tackle specific issues, aimed at being action-oriented to progress issues between the Conference's meetings and returning to the Conference for decisions;
- iii. Provision for the Conference to coordinate regional positions on issues of common interest for representation at ICAO meetings or other global forums;
- iv. Provision for the host State of the Conference to hold ad hoc meetings on the sidelines of the Conference, if requested by a State, to discuss issues of common interest that may not fit into the formal Conference agenda; and
- v. Having more focused action items, aimed at being clearer on what States / Administrations need to follow up on.

2.5 The ToR is intended to be a living document, to be periodically reviewed by the Conference. The proposed ToR for the DGCA Conference is attached as **Annex A**.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The DGCA Conference plays an important role serving the civil aviation needs of Asia Pacific States / Administrations, with the strong support of ICAO and active participation of International Organizations. In the coming years, as the range and complexity of civil aviation issues continue to grow, the Conference will be strengthened with a formalized ToR that consolidates existing practices and incorporates enhancements to support its continued effectiveness.

4. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

4.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) endorse the proposed ToR for the DGCA Conference, as set out in **Annex A**; and
- b) adopt the proposed ToR for the 62nd DGCA Conference.

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ANNEX A: PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

Purpose

1.1 The Conference provides a platform for Directors General / Chief Executives of Civil Aviation to discuss civil aviation issues and facilitates bilateral and regional cooperation in areas of common interest.

Participation

1.2 Participants of the DGCA Conference comprises:

- i. Directors General / Chief Executives of Civil Aviation, or equivalent senior officials and their designated representatives from aviation and related Government agencies, from States / Administrations accredited to the ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office;
- ii. States of service providers in this air navigation region and part of this region's Air Navigation Plan²; and
- iii. The ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

1.3 Observers of the DGCA Conference could comprise International Organizations and other ICAO Member States, which may be invited by the host State in consultation with the ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

Scope

1.4 The Conference's scope is as follows:

- i. Address strategic and policy issues relevant to civil aviation in the Asia Pacific region, in alignment with the ICAO Strategic Objectives and other important initiatives;
- ii. Provide overall guidance and promote harmonization and coordination of ICAO Standards, Recommended Practices, and related procedures in the Asia Pacific region.
- iii. Review the work and outcomes of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference, Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG) and the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific (RASG-APAC)
- iv. Enhance coordination of civil aviation activities in the Asia Pacific region and facilitate bilateral and regional cooperation to build capacity and capability.
- v. Serve as a platform for the ICAO Council Representatives from Asia Pacific States to communicate with the Conference on pertinent issues of the ICAO Council.
- vi. Where appropriate, coordinate regional positions on aviation issues of common interest, for consideration by ICAO and other global forums.
- vii. Develop and track progress of specific Action Items arising from discussions at the Conference, in support of regional progress and coordination.

2 Examples of such States include France, United Kingdom and United States.

Roles and Responsibilities

Host State

1.5 The Conference host shall provide an appropriate venue to accommodate the Conference proceedings. The Conference will be chaired by a senior aviation official from the host State, as elected by the Conference.

ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office

1.6 The ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office will be the Secretariat for the Conference and provide administrative support to the Conference Host.

1.7 The ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office will work with the small team on the scheduling of the DGCA Conference, and to ensure focused Conference discussions and practical follow-up outcomes.

Small Team

1.8 A small team comprising experts nominated by States/ Administrations will work alongside the ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office and the host State to support the Conference with a view to enhancing its effectiveness.

1.9 The role of the small team includes shaping the Conference agenda to ensure that discussions remain focused on regional priorities, reviewing working papers submitted for consideration, and developing and reviewing Action Items to guide follow-up actions after the Conference.

Working Groups / Task Forces

1.10 The Conference may establish Working Groups / Task Forces comprising experts to progress priority issues for consideration by the Conference or Working Group / Task Force as a whole.

1.11 States / Administrations and International Organizations may be invited to provide experts to participate in these Working Groups / Task Forces, as required. The composition, representation and participation of these parties will be agreed upon by the Conference.

Side meetings

1.12 The Conference host may support the organization of side meetings as may be requested by any State / Administration of the Conference to address civil aviation issues of common interest that fall outside the scope of the main Conference agenda.

Outcomes

1.13 Papers submitted to the Conference should aim to identify key issues for discussion and propose specific actions for consideration by the region.

1.14 The Conference will conclude with a list of focused and practical Action Items agreed upon by the Conference. The list of Action Items can be directed at Asia Pacific States / Administrations, ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office and Bureaus APANPIRG or RASG-APAC, Working Groups / Task Forces established by the DGCA Conference, and International Organizations.

1.15 The status of the Action Items are to be updated in the DGCA Conference Action Items tracker tool to facilitate tracking and management of implementation progress.

Review of ToR

1.16 The Conference ToR may be reviewed once every three years to ensure that they continue to be effective in addressing regional priorities and formulating policy or action.

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