

International Civil Aviation Organization

ICAO

WORKING PAPER (WP/17)

ICAO ASIA AND PACIFIC (APAC)
THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE METEOROLOGY
SUB-GROUP (MET SG/30)

Bangkok, Thailand, 20 - 24 July 2026

Agenda Item 5: Planning and Monitoring**UPDATE ON VONA DISTRIBUTION**

(Presented by New Zealand)

SUMMARY

This paper provides an update on progress towards the creation of distribution guidelines to support the global availability of volcano observatory notices to aviation (VONAs), including consideration of how long RODBs may need to make VONA available for.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 International flights that move from one ICAO region to another require meteorological information along the entire route, for their flight planning and control. This includes information on elevated volcanic activity, so that appropriate risk mitigation measures may be enacted.

1.2 The Recommended Practice for State volcano observatories (SVOs) to use the VONA template for providing information on observed volcanic activity became applicable in November 2025, in Amendment 82 to Annex 3. While Annex 3 requires VONA to be sent to associated VAACs, MWOs, NOTAM offices, ACCs/FICs and, in accordance with regional air navigation agreement, international OPMET databanks, there is no agreed method for ensuring availability of VONA outside of the ICAO region in which it was generated.

1.3 The 29th Meeting of the Meteorology Sub-group (MET SG/29) of APANPIRG agreed the following action:

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The meeting requested an ad hoc group of New Zealand, Australia, and the United States to investigate and document appropriate methods for disseminating VONA messages from the APAC Region to ensure global accessibility.

1.4 An update on this action was presented to the 24th Meeting of the Meteorological Information Exchange Working Group (MET/IE WG/24) – refer MET/IE WG/24 [WP/14](#) and subsequent discussion recorded in the MET/IE WG/24 meeting [report](#).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Discussion at MET/IE WG/24 on the proposed mechanisms of global VONA dissemination, led to the following issues being identified:

- States need to advise SADIS and WIFS providers of the VONA headers being used, to enable VONA ingestion. This should be already addressed via the current METNO process.
 - [APAC ROBEX Handbook](#) Appendix E, section 4 *METNO Process* requires IROGs to “*distribute the METNO to neighbouring IROGs and SADIS/WIFS as required*”.
- Consideration is required as to how long VONA should be retained by RODBs, as VONA may be issued only very infrequently but remain valid until a subsequent update is issued, meaning they should be retained for extended periods. APAC RODBs at MET/IE WG/24 indicated that they could retain VONA for periods of up to approximately three months, therefore three months is the VONA retention period that is being considered.
- A VONA WMO header may be used for multiple volcanoes, which (under current methods) would not allow previous volcano data to be accessed by the existing ROBD request reply service. Headers would therefore need to be volcano-specific to be retrievable. The implication is that States with >99 volcanoes may need to use a regional location identifier in the specific VONA header, in addition to the country location identifier.

2.2 The ICAO Meteorology Panel (METP) Working Group – Meteorological Operations Group International Airways Volcano Watch Work Stream (WG-MOG IAVW) has an activity to consider recommending a frequency of update for VONA, when the aviation colour code is set to NIL, GREEN or UNASSIGNED. Information from MET/IE WG/24 and MET SG/29 considerations will be shared with the group to inform those discussions, while the issue of the potential need for unique VONA headers for individual volcanoes will also be raised.

2.3 Also of consideration is how VONA from other ICAO regions will be distributed through the APAC region. It is proposed that the VONA are distributed in a similar manner to space weather advisories, where the relevant APAC IROG will pass to the APAC ROCs any VONA received from its partner IROGs. The APAC ROCs will then share the VONA with NOCs within their area of coordination. Of potential interest, this manner of dissemination is consistent with how *all* meteorological information is distributed through the Europe region.

2.4 Further discussions are planned with APAC RODBs, SADIS and WIFS providers, and other regions to determine and document a globally consistent way of distributing VONA, therefore an update on discussions and draft guidance material is anticipated to be provided to MET/IE WG/25 for consideration.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) consider any further issues or opportunities in global VONA dissemination.
