

International Civil Aviation Organization

ICAO

INFORMATION PAPER (IP/09)

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

Bangkok, Thailand, 20 - 24 July 2026

Agenda Item 7: Aviation Exercises for Volcanic Ash and Meteorological Events**PLANS FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA VOLCANIC ASH EXERCISE**

(Presented by New Zealand)

SUMMARY

This paper provides an overview of a planned volcanic ash exercise, based on a simulated eruption of the Papua New Guinea volcano Rabaul.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Papua New Guinea has [39 Holocene volcanoes](#) – defined as those erupting within the last 12,000 years and are considered as "active or potentially active". Of these, 10 have erupted in the past decade and 17 in the past century. Given that volcanoes with recurrence intervals of tens to hundreds of years are considered as "frequently erupting", these figures highlight the country's high level of volcanic activity and associated aviation hazards.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Papua New Guinea currently holds deficiencies in the provision of volcano observation information provision and in the provision of volcanic ash SIGMETs.

2.2 Papua New Guinea Civil Aviation Safety Authority (PNG CASA) and Papua New Guinea National Weather Service (PNG NWS) which hosts Meteorological Watch Office (MWO) Port Moresby, in coordination with Rabaul Volcano Observatory, volcanic ash advisory centres (VAACs) Darwin and Wellington, and Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, are planning a volcanic ash exercise, simulating an eruption of the volcano Rabaul.

2.3 The simulated eruption of Rabaul is expected to provide an opportunity to demonstrate information flow and coordination between the State volcano observatory, MWO Port Moresby and VAAC Darwin, as well as the air navigation service provider (ANSP) Niusky and local airline Air Niugini. The exercise will further support the resolution of Papua New Guinea's deficiencies.

2.4 It was originally intended that the exercise would be carried on 24 June 2026, however the eruption of Titan Ridge – beginning in May 2026 – has led to the postponement of the exercise until later this year, with the date to be determined in coordination with PNG CASA and PNG NWS staff. With the additional planning time now available, the exercise may be extended to neighbouring ANSPs and MWOs, as well as other airline operators.

2.5 In addition to the stated expectations, the Rabaul exercise will also allow an opportunity to demonstrate quantitative volcanic ash concentration information (QVA) provision by VAAC Darwin. QVA provision for significant ash clouds becomes a Recommended Practice for all VAACs¹ in November 2026.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information contained in this paper.

¹ Currently QVA provision is a Recommended Practice for VAACs “in a position to do so”, which currently includes VAACs London and Toulouse.