International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER (WP/14)

ASIA AND PACIFIC (APAC) TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE WORKING GROUP (MET/IE WG/24)

Nadi, Fiji, 21 to 24 April 2026

Agenda Item 3: **Quality Control, Monitoring, and Management of Meteorological Information Exchange**

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:

> ***MET SG/29 Action 21***
> *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 New Zealand presented to MET SG/29 on the development of the VONA Input System, created to assist the New Zealand and wider Pacific SVOs in creating and disseminating VONA, including dissemination via the AFS.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 At the time of writing, New Zealand has conducted two tests of VONA dissemination (5 March, 23 February) via the AFS, using the status indicator TEST and the headers WMNZ01 / LMNZ01

NZKL. The traditional alphanumeric code (TAC) form VONA was successfully received by all five APAC RODBs, as well as routed to the EUR region and made available on SADIS.

2.2 The IWXXM form test VONA was disseminated alongside the TAC version but had an error in that it did not use file transfer body part (FTBP) but instead IA5-TEXT body part. This is being rectified and another test VONA issued later in March.

2.3 The next New Zealand VONA test is also expected to include routing of the VONA messages to the Washington Inter-regional OPMET Gateway, with subsequent availability on WIFS being discussed.

2.4 Topics for consideration identified during VONA dissemination activities to date include:

- VONA messages will be hosted on WIFS and SADIS as they become available via AFS. Notification to SADIS and WIFS Providers is needed by States, so these providers can set up the VONA ingestion and ensure availability.
- Further distribution to users of VONA via AFS should be considered, incorporating vendor/user feedback.
- Thought needs to be given to how long a VONA remains available on the SADIS and WIFS platforms, noting that many volcanoes may remain at aviation colour code ‘green’ or ‘unassigned’ indefinitely, with no required VONA update frequency for these colour codes.

2.5 In addition to consideration for VONA retention on WIFS and SADIS platforms, consideration should also be given to how long a VONA should be retained by RODBs.

2.6 Guidance on issuing VONA via the AFS is provided in the new update to the *Handbook on the International Airways Volcano Watch* (Doc 9766, new version expected to be available here, early April). It includes information on the CCCC identifier to be used and how to register a new one, the number of headers to register (ii range), as well as suggestions as to how an SVO may work with an associated MET or AIS provider to send VONA via the AFS.

2.7 New Zealand can share its experience on assisting SVOs in creating and sending VONA via the AFS using a dedicated platform, while the United States can provide advice on registering new SVO CCCC identifiers in Doc 7910 and utilising email for the VONA to reach the appropriate IROG/RODB.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper; and

b) consider forming an action to consider how long a VONA should be retained by RODBs.

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