



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation
Planning and Implementation Regional Group
(APANPIRG/35)

Bangkok, Thailand, 25 to 27 November 2024

Agenda Item 3: Performance Framework for Regional Air Navigation Planning and Implementation

3.6: Other Air Navigation Matters

**ICAO PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES LIAISON OFFICE
PROGRESS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES 2024/2025**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

The ICAO Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Liaison Officer, hosted by the Government of Fiji, was deployed to the Pacific in October 2023. Activities undertaken and planned in the 2024/2025 timeframe include a programme of visits to PSIDS, and planning and coordination of workshops, training and meetings intended to improve engagement between PSIDS and ICAO, and to provide targeted support in identified priority areas.

This paper informs APANPIRG of progress in the work of the PSIDS Liaison Office, the support provided by partner States, and urges partner States continue to provide voluntary contributions and in-kind support for PSIDS-related activities.

Strategic Objectives:

- A: **Safety** – Enhance global civil aviation safety
- B: **Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency** — Increase the capacity and improve the efficiency of the global aviation system
- C: **Security and Facilitation** — Enhance global civil aviation security and facilitation
- D: **Economic Development of Air Transport** — Foster the development of a sound and economically viable civil aviation system
- E: **Environmental Protection** — Minimize the adverse environment effects of civil aviation activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Responding to the recommendations of the ICAO Pacific Small Island Developing States¹ (PSIDS) Aviation Needs Analysis (the *PSIDS Study*) conducted in 2019, ICAO established the PSIDS Liaison Officer position.

¹ The 14 States categorized by the UN as PSIDS include Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue (ICAO non-member), Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

1.2 Following submission by States of their hosting offers, ICAO selected Fiji to host the PSIDS Liaison Officer.

1.3 The PSIDS Liaison Officer was appointed on 01 August 2023, and deployed to Nadi, Fiji, in October 2023.

1.4 The main functions of the PSIDS Liaison Officer include:

- a) enhance communications and coordination between:
 - i. ICAO and PSIDS;
 - ii. ICAO and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office² (PASO)
 - iii. ICAO, other UN organizations with offices in the PSIDS region, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), and other relevant international/regional stakeholders;
- b) liaise with the APAC Regional Office to enhance and facilitate technical assistance;
- c) facilitate continuous monitoring over the regional safety and security oversight support system.
- d) establish cooperation mechanisms with the various stakeholders in the Pacific;
- e) provide substantive support to PSIDS on technical matters; and
- f) analyze aviation programme activities and make recommendations on policy development and its implementation.

1.5 The PSIDS Liaison Office was formally opened by the ICAO Secretary General and the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation for Fiji on 16 August 2024.

1.6 This paper outlines the current work priorities of the PSIDS Liaison Office, the support provided by partner States, and requests that States continue to provide voluntary contributions and in-kind support for PSIDS-related activities.

2. DISCUSSION

Priorities in the Pacific

2.1 The PSIDS Study identified priority needs among the PSIDS including *inter alia*:

- direct safety and security oversight support, including the ability to delegate the conduct of some or all of the technical evaluations necessary for certification, licensing, approval, surveillance, quality control and follow-up activities requiring expertise and experience in the concerned technical domains;
- establishment of independent accident investigation functions;
- advice, training and opportunities for sharing of information and experience in safety oversight functions;
- establishment of national aviation planning frameworks; and

2 The Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), a regional safety and security oversight organization (RSSOO) established under the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST) to provide aviation safety and security services to 10 PSIDS, namely Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue (non-ICAO member), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

- SAMOA Pathway³ priority areas.

2.2 In recent meetings the PSIDS have also stated a list of collective priorities:

- Government Safety Inspector (GSI) training;
- State safety plans;
- Accident and incident investigation;
- Search and Rescue (SAR);
- Artificial intelligence;
- Infrastructure;
- Supply chain logistics; and
- Cyber security.

2.3 While taking into account the priorities stated collectively by PSIDS, ICAO also recognizes that the priorities of individual States may vary from the collective view, according to their unique local circumstances and challenges. Accordingly, the ICAO PSIDS Liaison Office is engaged in an ongoing process of gathering and updating detailed information on each of the PSIDS, to guide the continuous development and update of the ICAO work plan and the associated strategic plan of action.

2.4 Information gathered thus far, and the outcomes of discussion at the PSIDS-ICAO Collaboration and Coordination Workshop held in Nadi, Fiji, 15-16 October 2024, indicate the following priorities:

- Governance;
- Aviation legislation;
- Treaty ratification, particularly the updated Pacific Islands Aviation Safety and Security Treaty⁴ (PICASST) and the amendment to Chicago Convention⁵;
- Aviation regulatory development;
- Independent accident investigation;
- USOAP CMA audit readiness;
- Civil Aviation Master Plan (CAMP) and National Air Navigation Plan (NANP) development;
- Aerodrome certification, operations and safety management;
- Aviation security; and
- Aviation medicine.

3 The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway is an international framework established by the Third Annual SIDS Conference (Apia, Samoa, September 2014) to support sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.

4 PICASST, the treaty governing the establishment and operation of PASO, was updated in 2022 and deposited with the Pacific Islands Forum depository. The updated treaty has yet to be ratified by all PASO member States.

5 As at September 2024 17 APAC States, including all 13 ICAO-member PSIDS, have yet to ratify the protocols amending Articles 50 and 56 of the Chicago Convention. Assembly Resolutions A39-5 and A39-7 refer.

Work Undertaken and Planned in 2024 and 2025

2.5 The following ICAO-supported, PSIDS-focused activities have been undertaken, or are planned, in 2024:

- Common aeronautical Virtual Private Network (CRV) Seminar and Twelfth Meeting of the CRV Operations Working Group (CRV OG/12), Denarau, Fiji, 22 to 26 January 2024;
- Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP) Auditor Training Course, Nadi, Fiji, 06 to 17 May 2024;
- ICAO GAT TRAINAIR Plus Government Safety Inspector – Airworthiness (GSI-Air) training course⁶, Nadi, Fiji, 15 July to 02 August 2024;
- PSIDS – ICAO Coordination Workshop, 15 – 16 August 2024;
- PSIDS SAR Capability Improvement Project (Phase 1⁷), 05 August to 18 October 2024;
- ICAO Instrument Flight Procedures Safety Oversight Workshop, 28 to 30 October 2024; and
- National Aviation Safety Plan Workshop, 18 to 21 November 2024,

2.6 The meeting is invited to note that while the hosting of activities in Nadi, Fiji, moderates the costs of attendance for most PSIDS, their constrained resources, both human and financial, can limit their opportunity to participate.

2.7 Noting the currently identified priorities, the following activities are planned or under consideration 2025, to be held in the Pacific:

- Aerodrome Safety Management System (SMS) and Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aerodromes Workshop⁸;
- Workshops and/or training in:
 - Governance;
 - Aviation Legislation;
 - Treaty Ratification;
 - Regulatory Development;
 - Accident investigation delegation;
- National Air Navigation Plan (NANP) Workshop; and
- Second PSIDS – ICAO Coordination Meeting.

2.8 A provisional activity schedule is provided in **Attachment A**.

6 Course provided free of charge by Singapore (Singapore Aviation Academy), and supported by voluntary contributions from USA

7 Funded by voluntary contributions from Saudi Arabia

8 Provided by Republic of Korea under the ICAO Developing Countries Training Programme (DCTP)

Partner State Support for PSIDS Liaison Office Operations

2.9 ICAO extends sincere gratitude to the Government of Fiji for generously hosting the PSIDS Liaison Office.

2.10 The substantial voluntary contributions of funds and in-kind support for ICAO-coordinated, PSIDS-focused activities by the following States is also gratefully acknowledged:

Australia, Singapore, USA, Japan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia.

2.11 Current and future financial support from partner States is crucial to the success of ICAO’s PSIDS Liaison Office initiative and the improvement of aviation outcomes in the Pacific.

2.12 Regulatory and technical training in air navigation fields including Air Traffic Management (ATM), Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), Search and Rescue (SAR), Aerodromes, Communications, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS), and Aviation Meteorology (MET) are also needed, as is the provision of opportunities for on-the-job training for PSIDS personnel following the successful completion of classroom training, particularly to support GSI capability improvement.

2.13 It should also be recognized that as the PSIDS Liaison Office work plan further develops there will be a growing need for appropriately qualified, experienced and Pacific-region aware personnel resources to undertake activities and projects supporting improvement in identified priority areas. ICAO strongly encourages APAC States having the requisite knowledge and understanding of PSIDS’ aviation development and challenges to provide in-kind support through provision of appropriately qualified personnel, either through temporary deployments or short to medium-term secondments, to undertake these activities and projects in the Pacific. Temporary assignments and/or secondment opportunities will be promoted through direct approach to relevant States, or through ICAO’s standard recruitment processes.

2.14 Accordingly, the meeting is invited to consider the following Draft Conclusion:

Draft Conclusion APANPIRG/35-X: Regulatory and Service Provider Personnel Support for ICAO PSIDS-Focused Activities	
<p>What:</p> <p>That, noting Pacific Small Island Developing States’ (PSIDS’) needs for regulatory and technical training, on-the-job training, and appropriately qualified experts to support ICAO-coordinated activities and projects, States are urged to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory and technical training opportunities in air navigation fields; • On-the-job training opportunities; and • Appropriately qualified personnel for temporary deployments or short-to-medium term secondments; <p>to support PSIDS-focused activities and projects.</p>	<p>Expected impact:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political / Global</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inter-regional</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ops/Technical</p>
<p>Why: To provide training opportunities and the availability of appropriately qualified experts to support improved aviation outcomes for PSIDS.</p>	<p>Follow-up: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required from States</p>
<p>When: 29-Nov-2023</p>	<p>Status: Draft to be adopted by PIRG</p>
<p>Who: <input type="checkbox"/> Sub groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APAC States <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ICAO APAC RO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ICAO HQ <input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>	

Air Navigation

2.15 While air traffic density managed by PSIDS is generally lower than in other parts of the Asia/Pacific Region, there are several fields of air navigation that are critical to current and future air connectivity and safety.

Aerodromes

2.16 Certification of aerodromes remains a challenge among PSIDS. 9 of the 13 ICAO-member PSIDS currently have APANPIRG Air Navigation Deficiencies recorded for failure to publish the status of aerodrome certification in the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP).

2.17 Aerodrome pavements are also an issue of concern. Pavement and substrate degradation caused by tides, tropical storms, storm surge and/or construction history risk loss of air connectivity, as demonstrated in late December 2023 when the sole international air service provider ceased all operations to the sole international aerodrome of one State due to pavement degradation. ICAO notes that the Asia Development Bank and World Bank have runway improvement projects under way in several States, and will be encouraging and supporting their further engagement in this field.

2.18 As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, an Aerodromes Safety Management System (SMS) and Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aerodromes (PANS-Aerodromes) workshop for PSIDS will be conducted in Q1/Q2 2025.

2.19 ICAO notes *Conclusions APANPIRG/34/4: ICAO Asia-Pacific Aerodrome Assistance Go-Team Methodology* and *APANPIRG/34/5: ICAO Asia/Pacific Wildlife Hazard Management (WHM) Go-Team Methodology*, and will be working to coordinate Go-Team missions to PSIDS.

Aeronautical Telecommunications Network

2.20 The meeting is invited to note that the current Aeronautical Telecommunications Network (ATN) serving PSIDS has availability, reliability and maintainability challenges which, combined with the unreliability of terminal equipment and applications in some PSIDS has resulted in unavailability of fixed telecommunications connectivity for the operational exchange of aeronautical data such as ATS messages, aeronautical information and meteorological information.

2.21 Further, the expected retirement of current PANS-ATM provisions for ATS messages when the full suite of ICAO provisions for Flight and Flow Information in a Collaborative Environment (FF-ICE) information exchange become applicable in 2024 will render the current ATN and the aeronautical applications connected to it obsolete. A study of aeronautical telecommunications and ATS applications in the Pacific, conducted by Japan, is currently in its early stages and is expected to result in a range of recommendations for technology update.

2.22 The related activities of the Asia/Pacific Common Aeronautical Virtual Private Network (CRV) Operations Group (CRV OG) are separately reported under Agenda Item 3.4. The ICAO PSIDS Liaison Office acknowledges the generous support of the USA in sponsoring, through ICAO Fund for Aviation Safety (SAFE) voluntary contributions, the attendance of one representative from each of the ICAO-member PSIDS at the CRV Workshop and CRV OG/13 meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, from 03 to 08 March 2025. PSIDS are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Search and Rescue

2.23 The ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue (SAR) Plan, developed by the Asia/Pacific SAR Task Force (now Asia/Pacific SAR Working Group – APSAR/WG) provides APANPIRG-agreed regional guidance and performance expectations for aeronautical SAR implementation. In line with the provisions of the Asia/Pacific Regional Air Navigation Plan Vol. II Part 3, and considering that aeronautical SAR is a safety-of-life obligation under the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS) of Annex 12 *Search and Rescue*, States having implemented less than 90% of the performance expectations of the SAR Plan have an APANPIRG ATM and Airspace Safety Deficiency recorded. As reported to this meeting under Agenda Item 4, 12 PSIDS have such a deficiency recorded.

2.24 The PSIDS SAR Capability Improvement Project, developed to respond to the low SAR implementation among PSIDS and funded by voluntary contributions from Saudi Arabia, commenced in August 2024. The externally recruited SAR expert has visited five of the PSIDS, and engaged in online coordination and analysis with the remaining eight. The report from Phase I of the project, including recommendations for national and sub-regional SAR implementation in the Pacific, will be released in due course after review by the ICAO Air Navigation Bureau. Each of the PSIDS will also receive a State-specific report and recommendations.

2.25 The draft report highlights significant gaps in national SAR planning and implementation including *inter alia*:

- legislative framework;
- formal inter-agency agreements;
- coordination and alignment of aeronautical and maritime SAR functions;
- establishment of national SAR planning and coordination bodies;
- compliance with Annex 12, the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR Manual (ICAO Doc 9731, jointly published by ICAO and the International Maritime Organization – IMO) and the Asia/Pacific SAR Plan;
- formal inter-State agreements on SAR services, establishment of Rescue Coordination Centres and and Sub-Centres, areas of responsibility and operational coordination;
- SAR staffing, training and personnel qualifications;
- Empowerment and authority of SAR functions; and
- SAR Exercises (SAREX).

2.26 Phase II of the project is under development and is expected to commence in early-to-mid 2025, subject to the availability of funding.

PSIDS Attendance Meetings of APANPIRG and its Technical Bodies

2.27 As reported in the PSIDS Study, the PSIDS are generally constrained by the unavailability of sufficient funds and personnel from full participation in ICAO regional meetings such as APANPIRG. This is demonstrated at this meeting, where only three participants from two of the 13 ICAO-member PSIDS are registered to attend. The ICAO PSIDS Liaison Office therefore serves to represent the interests of the mostly absent PSIDS, and to report back to them on relevant outcomes. To meet this purpose an online meeting of ICAO and PSIDS will be held in Q1 2025 to brief them on APANPIRG/35 outcomes, and to discuss planning for implementation of relevant regional initiatives and the development of corrective action plans for air navigation deficiencies.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Encourage all Pacific Small Island Developing States to ratify the protocols amending Articles 50 and 56 of the Chicago Convention (Assembly Resolutions A39-5 and A39-7); and
- b) Encourage partner States to continue to provide financial support for PSIDS-focused activities and PSIDS Liaison Office operations; and
- c) Adopt the Draft Conclusion proposed in paragraph 2.14.

— END —

ATTACHMENT A: ICAO PSIDS Liaison Office Work Plan – Provisional Activity Schedule

Activity	Timeframe	Notes
2025		
Aerodrome Safety Management System and Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aerodromes (PANS-AD) Workshop	March – April 2025	Carried over from 2024 Developing Countries Training Programme (Republic of Korea)
Government Safety Inspector Training (oversight area TBC)	March – July 2025	OJT opportunities following course completion to be coordinated.
Aviation Legislation Workshop	March – June 2025	Delivered in conjunction where appropriate
Regulatory Development Workshop	April – July 2025	
Treaty Ratification Workshop	May – August 2025	
Governance Workshop	May – August 2025	
Second PSIDS – ICAO Collaboration/Coordination Meeting	August 2025	
USOAP and/or USAP CAT Missions	TBD	
2026		
Accident and Incident Investigation Workshop	TBD	May include items carried over from 2025
USOAP CMA Workshop		
National Air Navigation Plan Workshop		
Aerodrome Certification Workshop		
Aviation Medicine Workshop		
Lead Auditor Training		
<p><i>General Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops nominally 1-week duration; - Activity scheduling dependent on relevant global and regional events including, but not limited to, ICAO Assembly, APAC DGCA Conference, APANPIRG, RASG. - Subject to further coordination between ICAO and PSIDS, and partner/donor States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional activities to be included where identified/prioritized; - Number and timing of activities may be limited by PSIDS’ capacity to support travel, or to release staff. - All activities will require support from partner States (funding, and SMEs) 		