

**59<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Cebu, Philippines  
14 to 18 October 2024*

**AGENDA ITEM 7: AVIATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BY THE EUROPEAN  
UNION TO SUPPORT GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMITMENTS**

(Presented by EASA)

**SUMMARY**

The paper highlights the importance of international cooperation in addressing the global environmental challenges for aviation. Over the past decade, the European Union has allocated over €30 million outside of Europe to support civil aviation environmental projects globally, focusing on the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), the implementation of the CORSIA framework and the development of State Action Plans to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Future efforts (2025-2027) will focus on implementing CORSIA's offsetting mechanisms and increasing SAF production, with SAF seen as a key opportunity for economic growth and job creation in partner states. Effective coordination and collaboration are essential to maximise the impact of these initiatives.

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BY THE EU TO SUPPORT GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper describes the European Union's (EU) efforts to support high levels of environmental protection and to promote a consistent application of international environmental standards globally. Whilst the paper is not exhaustive, it references to International Cooperation initiatives by the EU, including its Member States, institutions, and other stakeholders.

1.2 Developing and implementing sustainability standards and initiatives requires new technical skills and processes. The challenge is heightened when new areas of expertise are involved or when quick deployment across various organisations is necessary. Rapidly advancing technologies and their associated policies also require ongoing adjustments to ensure that the intended objectives are met. These challenges are particularly relevant to environmental protection initiatives in civil aviation.

1.3 International Cooperation initiatives help partner states tackle these challenges by sharing knowledge and practical experience, as well as providing resources. This collaborative approach also strengthens institutional ties and working relationships with partner states, making it an essential part of achieving environmental goals, such as a 5% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Low Carbon Aviation Fuels, and other cleaner aviation energies by 2030, as well as net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050.

### **2. DISCUSSION**

2.1 The aviation sector has a long history of using International Cooperation through technical programmes to build the capabilities of states in areas like safety, security, and air traffic management. European entities have been reliable and experienced partners in these initiatives.

2.2 In recent years, the number of technical cooperation programmes focused on environmental protection has grown, in line with the increasing ambitions of states to reduce aviation's environmental impact. Over the last decade, European Union entities have collaborated with 112 partner states and committed over €30 million outside Europe to support civil aviation environmental protection projects. At the ICAO level, these commitments have been supported by capacity-building programmes, such as ACT-CORSIA and ACT-SAF, ensuring that no country is left behind. These work by identifying the specific needs of the partner states and aviation stakeholders to develop appropriate capacity-building and training activities, such as the CORSIA Buddy Partnerships between states and examples of good practices for CORSIA implementation, frequently asked questions, publications, videos and more.

2.3 These European projects, implemented by EASA, EU Member States, European industry, or directly by ICAO using European funds, have supported capacity-building in various regions – including North, South and South-East Asia – on numerous technical topics. There is a strong commitment to continue engaging in International Cooperation initiatives to promote sustainable aviation on a global scale.

#### **CORSIA Implementation**

2.4 European entities have played a key role in encouraging more states to participate in CORSIA during the Pilot Phase (2021-2023) and the First Phase (2024-2026) by helping them implement the Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) process and, in some cases, develop their national accreditation processes.

2.5 CORSIA has now entered its First Phase, where, following the recovery of air traffic after the COVID-19 pandemic, it may lead to offsetting obligations for aeroplane operators flying between two volunteering states. CORSIA allows for offsetting by either purchasing and cancelling CORSIA Emission Units (CEUs) or using CORSIA Eligible Fuels (CEFs). Both options have specific

criteria and rules that must be met for them to be considered eligible offsets. While CEUs and CEFs can be purchased globally, some states are looking to provide these on a domestic basis to benefit from the environmental and economic advantages of CORSIA locally, such as investment in green industries and job creation.

2.6 With increasing commitments under the Paris Agreement through National Determined Contributions (NDCs), there may be more competition for CEUs in international markets. Therefore, technical cooperation is also crucial in understanding how CORSIA complements other carbon markets, creating positive synergies to achieve their goals while avoiding double-counting of emissions and cancellations.

2.7 Cooperation between European entities and partner states from 2025 to 2027 is expected to focus on the effective implementation of CORSIA's offsetting mechanisms and increasing the availability of carbon projects providing CEUs.

### **State Action Plans for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Reduction**

2.8 A good example of the value of International Cooperation programmes is the support provided to develop the first or subsequent editions of State Action Plans for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international aviation. By 2024, 148 states had submitted at least the first edition of their State Action Plan to ICAO. The information provided in these plans on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions baselines, mitigation measures, and estimated reductions was invaluable during the discussions on the Long-Term Aspiration Goal (LTAG) at the 41<sup>st</sup> ICAO General Assembly and will be crucial in monitoring progress towards this goal.

2.9 Between 2022 and 2024, European cooperation initiatives supported or engaged with 22 states, resulting in 14 first editions and 4 updates of State Action Plans being submitted to ICAO.

2.10 Most of the support for State Action Plans has come through EU-funded projects implemented by EASA or ICAO. The approach has included training state authorities and aviation stakeholders on using ICAO statistical forms and methods for calculating baseline emissions, facilitating technical discussions on mitigation measures and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction estimates, and assisting with drafting the final State Action Plan document.

2.11 Using ICAO Document 9988 and other materials has been essential in providing consistent support and tools across all partner states. While the support has primarily been technical, the most valued aspect has been establishing the State Action Plan as a collaborative and ongoing process between state authorities and aviation stakeholders.

### **SAF Development**

2.12 The 3<sup>rd</sup> ICAO Conference on Alternative Aviation Fuels (CAAF#3) in 2023 led to Member States adopting the "Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF), and other Aviation Cleaner Energies." As part of this framework, it was acknowledged that supporting states and industry in developing and financing SAF initiatives is vital to ensure that no country is left behind in decarbonisation efforts. The ICAO ACT-SAF Programme was established to help states develop their full potential in SAF through specific training activities, feasibility studies, and other support initiatives.

2.13 SAF presents a valuable opportunity for countries to grow their green economies and create jobs. Scaling up SAF production requires significant investments and informed decision-making. European entities are actively supporting SAF development in 42 partner states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through various International Cooperation initiatives.

2.14 The first stage of this support involves raising awareness, exchanging best practices, and developing technical capabilities on SAF. The second stage supports the development of local

capabilities for SAF production.

2.15 EU-funded projects have been conducting SAF workshops and webinars worldwide, and have also funded the so-far only ICAO-conducted SAF Feasibility Studies under the ACT-SAF programme, for Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya and Burkina Faso. Work is ongoing for an additional 10 SAF Feasibility Studies in India and Africa, with 3 of them expected for completion by the end of 2024, and further opportunities can be considered in the Asia-Pacific region. Beyond feasibility studies, European entities' technical cooperation initiatives have brought stakeholders together to develop a shared understanding of SAF, its potential within their state, and their role in its development. This includes the entire SAF value chain, from production pathways to techno-economic analyses, readiness studies, and policy dialogues.

2.16 The support has been tailored to each state's specific potential for SAF production, whether that involves activating particular feedstocks, leveraging existing refining capabilities, or using renewable energy sources. The most valuable contribution has been facilitating a shared understanding of SAF among potential actors, including different government departments and non-aviation stakeholders like the gas and oil industry and feedstock producers.

2.17 European entities are now entering the second stage with several partner states and have committed funds over the 2025-2027 period to help them achieve local SAF production. These funds are being allocated under the ICAO ACT-SAF programme and through other technical cooperation projects that follow a similar approach. The support initiatives are agreed upon with partner states to map out key collaboration areas.

2.18 These initiatives align with and contribute to developing the ICAO ACT-SAF programme's framework, templates, and tools. This collaborative effort provides a standardised toolkit that helps partner states and stakeholders match needs and resources more effectively, allowing for more efficient cooperation, even with multiple and concurrent partners. This coordination is vital to maximise the impact of resources dedicated to scaling up SAF production worldwide.

### **Environmental Management Systems for Airports**

2.19 According to ICAO, an Environmental Management System (EMS) provides a methodology and framework for systematically identifying and cost-effectively managing significant environmental aspects in aviation operations. It has proven effective across various organisations, including airports, airlines, manufacturers, and government agencies. EMS is one of several tools available for managing environmental issues at an airport, alongside sustainability plans, certifications, and other processes.

2.20 EU-funded projects have supported ASEAN Member States such as Thailand, Laos, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam in developing technical capacity to implement EMS at selected airports. This support, provided through training sessions and the exchange of experiences among airport officials, has facilitated local EMS implementation and the gradual transformation of airport infrastructure to reduce its environmental impact.

2.21 The expertise gained from various EMS implementations is being shared among ASEAN Member States through thematic workshops facilitated by EU-funded projects and a dedicated workstream led by the ASEAN Air Transport Working Group (ATWG).

### **Conclusion**

2.22 Global environmental challenges require global cooperation to achieve shared future goals. International Cooperation is a vital part of achieving a 5% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Low Carbon Aviation Fuels, and other cleaner aviation energies by 2030, as well as net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050.

2.23 Collaboration with partner states has led to successful implementation of CORSIA-Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification in over 100 states and encouraged new states to join its voluntary pilot and first phases. Technical support has helped develop or update State Action Plans for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction.

2.24 Looking ahead to 2025-2027, future efforts with partner states will likely focus on implementing CORSIA's offsetting mechanisms and building capacity to increase SAF production. To maximise the impact of the resources provided to partner states, it is essential to raise awareness, coordinate efforts, and collaborate effectively in international cooperation initiatives such as ACT-SAF.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this Paper;
- b) welcome the European Union's support to aviation decarbonisation and ensuring that no country is left behind;
- c) encourage States and stakeholders, including other donors, to collaborate through the ICAO Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF) and other Aviation Cleaner Energies in efforts to achieve a collective global aspirational Vision to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in international aviation by 5 per cent by 2030, compared to zero cleaner energy use.

— END —