

AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP (APIRG)



AFI VOLCANIC ASH EXERCISE STEERING GROUP (AFI VOLCEX/SG)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Version 1.2, June 2026

Revision Index

Version	Revision	Dates	Justification	Affected Pages
1	0	1-8 November 2021	Establishment /Creation	All pages
1	1	5 July 2022	Update	All pages
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ABBREVIATIONS

AFI	: Africa – Indian Ocean
AFI VOLCEX/SG	: AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise Steering Group
AFI VOLCEX 21/01	: AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise n°1 of the year 2021
AIM	: Aeronautical Information Management
AIS	: Aeronautical Information Service
ANSP	: Air Navigation Service Provider
APIRG	: AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group
AASPG	: Africa-Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning and Implementation Group
ATM	: Air Traffic Management
ATS	: Air Traffic Service
IIM	: Infrastructure and In Information Management Subgroup
RODB	: Regional OPMET Data Bank
VAAC	: Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre
VOLCEX	: Volcanic Ash Exercise
VO	: Volcanic Observatory
MWO	: Meteorological Watch Office
BCC	: Bulletin Compiling Centre

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1. Background

- 1.1. In accordance with the provisions provided in ICAO Doc 9766, Volcanic ash exercises should be conducted by ICAO on a regional basis to practice and develop inter-agency response to volcanic activity, in order to maintain safety, regularity and efficiency of aviation in the event of a volcanic eruption.
- 1.2. ICAO Doc 9766, states that a volcanic ash exercises steering group may be established by a PIRG to coordinate all aspects of the organization and conduct of the exercises. The steering group should have representatives from, as a minimum, the volcanic ash advisory centres (VAACs) concerned, air navigation service providers (ANSPs), airspace users and regulators.
- 1.3. The Twenty-fourth Meeting of APIRG held virtually from 1-8 November 2021, established through Decision 24/02, the AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise Steering Group (AFI VOLCEX/SG) to play the role of coordinating the volcanic ash exercise activities in the Region.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of the AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise Steering Group is to serve as a regional technical and operational body dedicated to monitoring, coordinating, and enhancing the quality and reliability of volcanic ash information provided to end-users. Additionally, it supports the continuous updating and improvement of volcanic ash-related procedures to ensure effective response and safety.

3. Mandate

- 3.1. The AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise Steering Group was established by APIRG in 2021 to maintain safety, regularity, and efficiency in support of aviation industry in the event of a volcanic eruptions.

4. Membership of the AFI VOLCEX/SG

- 4.1. The AFI VOLCEX SG shall be comprised of the following:
 - Elected Chairpersons of the Steering Group;
 - Appointed AFI VOLCEX Leader States;
 - The Project Team Coordinators of the AASPG IIM Project;
 - AFI Volcano Observatory States;
 - Representatives of the Air Navigation Services Providers (ANSPs)
 - Representatives of Airport Operators
 - Representatives of IATA and IFALPA;

- Meteorological Watch Offices (MWOs) States
- Regional OPMET Data Banks (RODBs) States
- Regulators
- Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAACs)
- ICAO

5. Charing the AFI VOLCEX/SG

5.1. The VOLCEX/SG is led by a chairperson elected at the beginning of the regular annual meeting of the Steering Group (SG). The Chairperson shall be elected from the representatives designated by member States of the SG.

5.2. A Vice-Chairperson may be elected from the said representatives if necessary. The term of the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson shall be for a maximum period of three years.

6. Tasks:

The AFI VLOCEX Steering Group shall:

- 6.1. Coordinate with all relevant stakeholders to organize and conduct volcanic ash exercises within the AFI Region.
- 6.2. Continuously review regional procedures for managing volcanic events and recommend enhancements based on lessons learned.
- 6.3. Collaborate with stakeholders to organize awareness activities, including seminars and webinars, aimed at increasing understanding of the hazardous effects of volcanic ash and the established contingency measures.
- 6.4. Recommend improvements to regional contingency plans as well as national and regional operational procedures.
- 6.5. Coordinate the implementation of lessons learned and recommendations of the previous volcanic ash exercises.
- 6.6. Propose to the AASPG IIM Subgroup the Candidate State to lead the next volcanic ash exercise.
- 6.7. Provide regular reports on activities to the AASPG IIM Subgroup.

7. Working methods

7.1. The AFI VLOCEX Steering Group shall carry out its duties through technical meetings and outside meetings activities, in accordance with its approved work programme and operational needs.

- 7.2. The Steering Group shall make use of available electronic means, including teleconferencing and other virtual collaboration tools, to prepare and progress its work between meetings and to keep members updated on matters of concern. This approach shall support timely coordination, technical discussions and decision-making.
- 7.3. The Steering Group shall maintain close coordination with the Regional Offices for technical support and guidance as needed.

8. Reporting on implementation

- 8.1. The AFI VLOCEX Steering Group shall coordinate the reports of all activities related to the volcanic ash exercises and ensure the timely delivery of these reports to the Regional Offices.

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