



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

Eighth Meeting (DGCA-MID/8) **(Doha, Qatar, 26 – 28 October 2026)**

Agenda Item 6: Aviation Safety and Air Navigation

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT IN THE AERODROME

(Presented by Airport Council International)

SUMMARY

Geopolitical tensions have highlighted the need for greater resilience in aerodrome operations. While air traffic management contingency plans help maintain air route availability, aerodromes often rely on emergency response protocols focused on incident recovery rather than operational continuity. This paper proposes extending Business Continuity Management (BCM) to airside operations and infrastructures. Integrating BCM with Safety Management Systems (SMS) and emergency planning would strengthen airport resilience, ensure continuity of critical functions during disruptions, and enhance safety and regulatory compliance. The meeting is invited to support this resilience-based approach across aviation sectors.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The operational safety of an aerodrome is managed by the implementation of Safety Management System (SMS) which focuses on the hazards arising from the operational practices and it is extended to the emergency response plan as to minimise the consequences of aircraft related accident.

1.2 Operational disruptions may arise from both direct and indirect factors. Direct factors are generally more identifiable and foreseeable, allowing the associated risks to be anticipated, assessed, and managed through the Safety Management System (SMS) and established mitigation measures. Indirect factors, however, present a greater challenge as they may originate from unforeseen events, external dependencies, or circumstances beyond the organisation's immediate visibility and control. For example, tensions in the Gulf have caused sudden disruptions at some airports in the region, illustrating how external events may have immediate and unforeseen consequences for airport and flight operations. Such situations reinforce the reality that not all risks, their interdependencies, or their potential consequences can be fully anticipated in advance. Where disruption arises from an unforeseen indirect factor, the focus should therefore shift towards operational resilience and recovery, with priority given to containing the impact, maintaining critical functions where possible, and restoring safe and effective operations at the earliest practicable opportunity.

1.3 Air routes remain operational under the implemented air traffic management contingency plan. In contrast, aerodromes typically rely solely on emergency response plans that focus on rescue operations rather than operational continuity and long-term resilience. This paper proposes extending Business Continuity Management (BCM) to airside operations and infrastructures, integrating with Safety Management Systems (SMS).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Airport members noted that the disruptions resulting from geopolitical tensions in the region provided valuable lessons for strengthening organizational preparedness and resilience. The lessons learned may be grouped into two key aspects: (i) enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency response planning through continuous improvement initiatives; and (ii) implementing a comprehensive Business Continuity Management (BCM) framework to support timely recovery and the continuity of critical operations during and after disruptive events.

3.1 The extension of BCM to aerodrome operations would ensure that stakeholders are prepared to maintain or rapidly restore critical operational functions during disruptive events affecting runways, taxiways, aprons, navigational aids, airfield lighting systems, fuel supply infrastructure, and other operational contingencies. Such an approach applied by Dubai and Bahrain airports strengthened aerodrome resilience and minimize operational disruptions impact while maintaining regulatory compliance and ensuring the safety of its stakeholders.

2.2 BCM should be closely integrated with existing Emergency Planning and SMS processes. Emergency planning provides structured response mechanisms for major incidents and crises, while SMS offers a systematic framework for identifying hazards, assessing risks, and implementing mitigating measures. The integration of BCM with emergency planning and SMS would enable operators to move beyond emergency response and focus on sustaining essential aerodrome functions throughout the disruption and recovery phases.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

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