



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

AN-Conf/13-WP/186¹

27/9/18

Revision No. 1

28/9/18

THIRTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, Canada, 9 to 19 October 2018

COMMITTEE B

- Agenda Item 6: Organizational safety issues**
6.1: Strategic plan
6.1.1: Vision and overview of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), 2020-2022 edition

THE ACI APEX IN SAFETY PROGRAMME - PROGRESS AND BENEFITS

(Presented by Airports Council International (ACI))

REVISION NO. 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the first pilot programme in Lomé, Togo in 2011, the Airports Council International (ACI) Airport Excellence (APEX) in Safety programme has been assisting airports to identify safety gaps and vulnerabilities and supporting them in implementing national and international standards and best practices. This paper presents the progress of this programme and how it assists states in improving operational safety across aerodromes in line with Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) objectives and priorities, especially on runway safety and aerodrome certification.

Action: The Conference is invited to:

- a) note ACI APEX in Safety initiatives and
- b) agree to the recommendation in paragraph 3.3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Airport Excellence (APEX) in Safety programme is ACI's response to the industry's call to action to improve aviation safety worldwide. It is designed to assist airports of all sizes with a goal to improve their level of safety and compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Since its formal inception in 2012, over ninety APEX in Safety reviews have been conducted by ACI in all regions of the globe.

1.2 Created as a voluntary programme to assist airports to identify safety gaps and vulnerabilities and set roadmaps for certification or safety enhancement, APEX in Safety rapidly became

¹ English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by ACI.

a unique methodology that improves an airport's operational safety, promoting airport excellence through sharing of industry best practices.

1.3 The key to the success of this programme has been the deployment of the community of airports to provide mutual assistance to drive safety improvements regardless of location, size, development or complexity. Through partnerships with members, key stakeholders such as ICAO and governmental organizations including civil aviation authorities (CAAs), ACI has been able to respond to the challenge to improve operational safety. Because this is a peer review, and not an audit, airports are forthcoming about those areas where they have concerns and will actively seek advice on how they might improve. The value of the programme is its scalability and that it can be tailored to any airport to meet the general needs of compliance with the ICAO Annexes as well as address specific concerns that individual airports may have.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 For each review ACI assembles a team of experts provided by other member airports and regulators on a friendly basis, who are able to systematically review the safety components at an airport over a period of, generally, one week. ACI then prepares a series of recommendations, which the airport can then use to correct or improve its safety infrastructure and procedures. The APEX team remains available to the host airport throughout the airport's implementation process of the action plan. In 2016, ACI started conducting follow-up reviews at airports that previously received an APEX in Safety review.

Supporting States in aerodrome certification and safety enhancement

2.2 The APEX in Safety programme may assist airports to obtain or maintain certification. With the agreement of the host airport, a review may also support the oversight functions of a CAA by allowing it to be an observer on an APEX mission and by other capacity building activities such as training and opportunities for discussion with CAA staff as required. During the last two years the APEX in Safety programme has been assisting ICAO in conducting certification assessments and workshops in the North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) and Latin America-Caribbean (LAC) Regions.

2.3 The APEX in Safety Programme has been an integral part of the ICAO African Certification Project in both Eastern and Southern African (ESAF), and Western and Central African (WACAF) Regions. It is envisaged that an APEX in Safety assessment will be required before the aerodrome certification process by the regulator, as it provides a road map to close any compliance gaps, thus paving the way for certification.

2.4 As observers on an APEX review, State authority/CAA inspectors have provided valuable input through their expertise in oversight and regulatory functions. In return they have benefited by receiving experience on daily operational safety aspects of airports along with networking with experts from around the world. In a rapidly growing and changing industry risk mitigation needs to be constantly assessed and regulatory oversight and integration with industry best practices are valuable. Other potential benefits for CAA inspectors who take part in reviews may include:

- a) understanding airport operator's practical conditions and challenges during the certification process;
- b) understanding of an airport operator's perspective on application of safety regulation with experts from around the world;

- c) understanding airport operator application of a risk-based approach, including mitigation measures; and
- d) participating in the challenges of implementing safety management systems (SMSs).

APEX Safety Assessor Training Programme

2.5 In 2016, ACI launched its APEX Safety Assessor Training Programme to develop operational safety expertise in airport staff; this was funded by ACI's Developing Nations Airport (DNA) Assistance Programme. In October 2018, over twenty candidates will graduate from the programme as either aerodromes and ground aids (AGA), rescue and firefighting (RFF) or SMS specialists. This will provide ACI with a wider pool of experts but most importantly, it will bring expertise to the African Region, which will benefit from their efforts.

Key milestones

2.6 Since its inception, the APEX in Safety programme has increased its activities in all regions of the world and has collaborated with many industry partners and international organizations. Some of the key APEX milestones are:

Year	Milestones
2011	Pilot peer review of Lomé International Airport in Togo.
2012	APEX in Safety programme formally launched by ACI. Lomé International Airport achieved certification.
2013	Nine APEX reviews conducted, doubling the number of reviews in a year. The programme is expanded to major airports: reviews conducted in Toronto and Beijing.
2014	Seventeen reviews conducted. The Federal Aviation Administration becomes a partner of the APEX Programme assisting in African and Latin American reviews.
2015	Seventeen reviews conducted. APEX starts welcoming regulators as observers. The World Bank partners with the APEX in Safety programme and funds the review of the international airport in Cairo.
2016	A partnership agreement is signed between ACI and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) where funding is provided to conduct up to fourteen APEX in Safety reviews in Africa ECCAS Region Airports. The Safety Assessor Training Programme is launched.

2017	After developing expertise in the African Region, for the first time, a fully French African team conducts a review in Bangui, Central African Republic. ACI and ICAO joins forces to help airports and CAA by conducting certification assessments and workshops in the regions of NACC and Latin America to provide assistance in certification, compatibility exercises and safety cases in order to obtain exemptions.
2018	Since inception, APEX has conducted ninety-one reviews in all parts of the world as of July. This includes thirty-seven reviews in Africa, involving 50 per cent of African countries. All three major airports in the New York metropolitan area received APEX in Safety reviews, with a focus on understanding the status of their SMSs.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Now in its seventh year, the APEX in Safety programme has provided effective support to airports around the world. The peer review process has brought together the community of airports to increase international cooperation in all regions and has enhanced aerodrome safety consistent with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) objectives.

3.2 Regional and international cooperation is the basis for an effective and comprehensive APEX in Safety review. The support of regulators is important in continuing the growth of the programme as airports which have received a review have found that safety performance has improved when all stakeholders share experiences.

3.3 The Conference is invited to:

- a) take note of the progress achieved in ensuring aerodrome safety through the ACI APEX in Safety programme.
- b) invite States to support the ACI APEX in Safety programme and encourage their national airport operators to participate; and
- c) encourage States to see the benefits of APEX in Safety, providing peer to peer assistance to airports on operational safety management and facilitating compliance with regulations.

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