



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

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ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Agenda Item: 52: Other issues to be considered by the Administrative Commission

REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PROVISION OF FREE WEB ACCESS TO ICAO DOCUMENTS

(Presented by the Council)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Further to the proposal for the provision of free public web access to ICAO publications put forward in A39-WP/369, this working paper reports on the analysis of free public web access for ICAO publications. A review was conducted of policies in similar intergovernmental organizations and options for free access to ICAO publications for the 2020 - 2022 triennium.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) endorse the phased in *freemium* model for providing free public access to ICAO publications and
- b) note the recommended approach detailed in Section 5 and its implication for the next triennium budget and programme activities.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Objectives
<i>Financial implications:</i>	As presented in Section 4 of this working paper
<i>References:</i>	A39-WP/369, Access to ICAO Publications A39-WP/501, Report of the Executive Committee on Agenda Item 28 Doc 7231, ICAO Publications Regulations

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Assembly Working Paper A39-WP/369 introduced a proposal for the provision of free public web access to ICAO publications to support the No Country Left Behind initiative and to assist States in implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS). The Executive Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Council to analyse the proposal for the provision of free public web access to ICAO documents and to report back to the 40th Session of the Assembly on options for implementation.

2. ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATION POLICIES IN OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

2.1 In order to develop a proposal to provide free public web access to ICAO publications the Secretariat conducted an online *Digital Publications* survey of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Twenty-two organizations were surveyed and eleven responded, including six United Nations agencies, four of which are standard setting organizations. The survey was followed up with telephone interviews and an analysis of their policies regarding free access to publications.

2.2 IGOs around the world are aware of the trend towards providing public access to publications; this is commonly referred to as “Open Access”. Open access provides much broader public access to information and intellectual property. The analysis of other UN agencies revealed that agencies responsible for setting standards combine open access to certain documents with a list of “protected documents” which are open only to Member States and not the public at large. Many of these agencies also rely on the revenue generated from publications to support programme activities.

2.3 To address revenue shortfalls brought about by declining print publication sales and the move to Open Access, a number of organizations are investing in the development of digital platforms that include value-added services and products through a *freemium* business model. This model provides a basic service with read-only versions of publications that include discovery, citation, sharing and tools which allow for the embedding of publications in other websites. Additional premium services such as downloading and printing are available for subscribers only.

3. ICAO PUBLICATION SALES AND ROYALTIES REVENUES

3.1 In the current triennium, the Ancillary Revenue Generation Fund (ARGF) has an obligation to contribute a minimum of CAD 6.4 million net to the Regular Programme Budget per annum. An additional amount of approximately CAD 2.7 million net per annum is also required to be generated to fund posts and expenses to support programme activities within the Organization.

3.2 The sale of ICAO Publications makes a significant and sustainable contribution to the ARGF. In 2018, ICAO Publications sales and reseller royalties generated CAD 6.7 million gross in revenue.

3.3 A licensing agreement with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) generates a further USD 2.0 million gross annually from the ICAO Dangerous Goods publications. This revenue is in addition to the CAD 6.7 million in sales and reseller royalties.

4. OPTIONS FOR FREE ACCESS TO ICAO PUBLICATIONS

4.1 **Option 1 – Maintain the existing policy (Status quo).** Maintain the existing distribution and pricing policy under the *ICAO Publications Regulations* (Doc 7231) and continue to give Member States unrestricted access to ICAO publications available on the ICAO-NET, allowing access for up to 25 users per Member State for the five top-selling publications (Appendix A refers). The public would continue to purchase ICAO publications.

4.2 **Impact:** The proposed CAD 28.95 million in ARGF contributions to the Regular Programme in the 2020-2022 budget could be accommodated.

4.3 **Option 2 – Phased approach to public access to ICAO publications (Freemium model).** Implement a “protected” list of publications through a phased approach within a *freemium* business model. The first phase would make regulatory publications available followed by a second phase where the *Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air* (Doc 9284) would be made available. Under the *freemium* model, royalty and licensing agreements would remain viable revenue opportunities for the organization. More details are provided in section 5 below.

4.4 **Impact:** Current analysis of this option is a revenue shortfall of between CAD 427,000 and CAD 631,000 annually in the first phase and between CAD 581,000 and CAD 1.0 million annually in phase 2. Additionally, costs to implement and maintain the *freemium* model are estimated to be CAD 250,000 annually. Currently identified value-added projects have the potential to generate revenue to offset this shortfall beginning in phase 2.

4.5 **Option 3 – Full web access to all ICAO Publications.** Electronic versions of all ICAO publications would be made available in downloadable PDF to the public at large, free of charge.

4.6 **Impact:** ICAO would lose revenue from the sale of electronic publications, sales of hard copy publications would decline significantly and commercial partnerships with resellers and customers would be impacted. The annual revenue loss is estimated to be CAD 9.2 million, representing all revenue from publications sales as well as all royalties and licencing agreements.

5. RECOMMENDED APPROACH – OPTION 2 – PHASED APPROACH TO PUBLIC ACCESS (FREEMIUM MODEL)

5.1 In its role as the organization responsible for adopting standards and recommended practices for the aviation industry, ICAO has an obligation to ensure that the regulations and technical information it produces are easily accessible to Member States, agencies, businesses and individuals. At the same time, the revenue generated from the sale of ICAO publications is an important contributor to the Organization’s budget for programme activities in support of the strategic objectives. Without this revenue, important work of the Organization would not be possible.

5.2 It is proposed to implement a *freemium* model that provides public read-only access to ICAO regulatory publications and to apply this model in two phases. At the same time, value-added services around ICAO intellectual property will be developed to offset revenue shortfalls into the future. This model will allow the Organization to provide free public access to ICAO regulatory publications and at the same time allow ICAO to develop a business model that can continue to contribute revenue to the Organization to carry out programme activities, including revenues generated through licensing agreements.

5.3 ICAO would implement free public access in two phases, beginning January 2021. Each phase defines the scope of publications that would be made available for free to the public. The impact of this policy on the Ancillary Revenue Generation Fund (ARGF) would be closely monitored and the timing of each phase would depend on continuing to meet revenue generating obligations as defined in the triennium budget.

5.4 **Phase 1 - Regulatory publications only.** All publications falling within Article II, paragraph 1.a of the *ICAO Publications Regulations* (Doc 7231), which categorizes them as Standards and Recommended Practices (SARP) documents (including the Convention, its Annexes and Legal Documents), would be made available on a *freemium* basis. Phase 1 would begin January 2021, with an expected completion date of December 2022.

5.5 **Phase 2 - Technical Instructions (Doc 9284).** In addition to the publications included in Phase 1, the *Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air* (Doc 9284) would be made available. It is assumed that all other saleable publications, including the top-selling publications, will continue to be sold on a commercial basis. This phase would begin in January 2023.

5.6 New efforts to increase revenue generation through value-added projects would be undertaken at the beginning of the triennium. Given the required time for capacity building to implement digital publications, new commercial publications and the establishment of subscription-based services, revenue shortfalls from the provision of the *freemium* model are expected during the first two to four years.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Options presented for providing free public web access to ICAO publications include maintaining the existing policy, implementing a phased *freemium* model, or providing full web access.

6.2 Option 1, maintaining the existing publications policy would provide the greatest stability for the ARGF to supplement the Regular Programme and support programme activities. Alternatively, providing full public free web access to all publications (Option 3) would adversely affect the Organization's revenue streams to support programme activities. This may subsequently require an increase to the Member States' assessments if the Organization is to meet the programme needs of the strategic objectives.

6.3 Following the above analysis, it is therefore recommended that ICAO establish a phased *freemium* model of providing read-only access to ICAO publications. In addition, access to ICAO publications would be phased in over time, beginning with regulatory publications.

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APPENDIX

FIVE TOP-SELLING PUBLICATIONS ACCESSIBLE TO 25 USERS PER MEMBER STATE

- 1) *Location Indicators* (Doc 7910)
- 2) *Designators for Aircraft Operating Agencies, Aeronautical Authorities and Services* (Doc 8585)
- 3) *Emergency Response Guidance for Aircraft Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods* (Doc 9481)
- 4) *Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air* (Doc 9284)
- 5) *Aircraft Type Designators* (Doc 8643)

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