

ASECNA's initiatives to meet ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements

Mr. Sadamba Tchagbele
EAMAC Director
Togo

Summary

This note deals with ASECNA initiatives to meet ICAO language proficiency requirements for ATC controllers from ab initio to in-service training.

Introduction

Pursuant to Annexes 1 and 10 SARPs on language proficiency requirements, ASECNA has engaged in a programme to demonstrate that its technical personnel namely Air Traffic Controllers are English proficient. The programme includes different phases, beginning from recruitment, ab initio training, ratings to reach ATC work positions, to continuing training to improve and maintain proficiency levels. ASECNA is aware that the task is not easy for a multinational, multicultural corporation with French , Portuguese and Spanish speaking workforce to bring to at least level 4 on the ICAO language proficiency rating scale.

ASECNA Programme

Recruitment

During the selection process for recruitment, an English oral test is required in order to eliminate candidates with a low knowledge of English. A minimum of level 3 (ICAO rating scale) is expected from trainees before entering ASECNA Aviation School located in Niger (EAMAC).

English teaching during Ab initio training

Ab initio training objectives is to focus English language training on the specific needs of Air Traffic Control and to have trainees reach level 4 on graduation.

During the training , there are actions and activities in school and at the ATC centres which include:

- trainees introduction to aeronautical English so that they can handle all pilot-controller radio communications and other communications related to both routine and non routine situations;
- Development and consolidation of English proficiency acquired during the above mentioned activities (tutorial work putting emphasis on live traffic listening , oral comprehension, vocabulary);
- Standard phraseology, radiotelephony and professional conversation related to area control ;
- 8 weeks English Indoctrination programme in Nigeria to improve the understanding of different accents of spoken English , the fluency and the clarity in oral communication ;trainees stay in host family;
- Listening to pilot-controller traffic conversations through simulated and live traffic exercises , oral presentation(work project) before an audience of instructors and trainees on both general , technical and professional themes.

The school is equipped with Language laboratories and permanent English Instructors with a background in Air Traffic Control and part time Instructors for teaching of General English.

The English course is one of the core courses in the School. The diploma of ATCO depends on a good proficiency in English

Continuing Training

To have Controllers maintain their proficiency level, a continuing training programme has been designed for active air traffic controllers through:

- English classes in English language institutes (American Language centers/British Councils or other local language schools);
- On the job training (within the ATC center);
- An English indoctrination programme for active ATCOs (in Great-Britain) .

Level 4 requirements

English language schools

The programme is not cost beneficial because a huge amount of money is invested every year on that programme nevertheless many ATCOs have been unable to demonstrate proficiency up to level 4. ASECNA is assessing the programme in term of cost, performance and results in order to come to a new training strategy.

- To enter the school, the students must be fluent in English and their level must be 3
- At the end of their training, the level must be at least level 4

Assessments and Placement tests

Trainers training in level assessment

On behalf of ASECNA cooperation with French Civil Aviation, placement tests are planned in order :

- to provide each controller with an English training plan adapted to his individual needs
- to give clear training objectives to English language schools

After the placements test, appropriate programs to meet individual needs are set up.

State approval

For quality assurance purposes, CAA should approve English language centers to deliver the English teaching to ATCOs.

On the job training

Trainees work standard phraseology in English under the supervision of local ATC instructors

English Indoctrination programme in Great Britain

235 ATCOs controllers and 25 Instructors are concerned .The programme is funded by EDF (European Development Fund) up to 1.5 million euros. It started at the end of 2006 and will terminate in 2009.

The indoctrination programme includes :

- 7 weeks in Canterbury and Coresham (2006),Bristol and Shoreham
- reinforcement of proficiency in general English and standard aviation phraseology
- Improving oral expression and listening

- 6 class hours and guided self study in the afternoon
- Cultural visits of Canterbury/Bristol
- Stay in host families for continuous practice of English
- Group training

This programme has been proven to be beneficial to those with a level close to 4 .

Perspectives

- To design an individual training plan for each controller, implemented and evaluated to continuously assess ATCOs proficiency level;
- To promote the exchange of ATC personnel from Anglophone adjacent centers;
- To find incentives for those who contribute through their own efforts to maintain or improve their English level.

Conclusion

Training of personnel in a cost beneficial way requires :

- Placement tests to evaluate strength and weaknesses;
- Individual training programme ;
- Evaluation of programme and level ;
- Facilitation of language centers (teaching programme, teachers, training devices, evaluation methodology);
- General English teaching on site to monitor the individual training plan;
- Indoctrination courses in Anglophone countries ;
- Exchange of personnel with Anglophone countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and so on;
- An organisation to monitor the whole programme.

Action Follow-Up

The meeting is invited to acknowledge ASECNA initiative to meet ICAO requirements on Language Proficiency.

— — — — —