

OBJECTIVES OF PANEL SESSIONS

Since the First ICAO Aviation Language Symposium (IALS/1), the civil aviation community has pursued the implementation of ICAO language proficiency requirements. Amendments of national laws and regulations to include language proficiency requirements should be completed. As expected, the language training and testing community has developed a wide range of training and testing solutions. Partnerships have been established. It is timely to draw on lessons learned and plan towards 5 March 2008, the applicability date of the new language proficiency requirements in Annex 1.

Three panel sessions will be conducted. Each panel session will consist of a series of twenty-minute presentations. Each presentation will be followed by a short question and answer period. A panel discussion will be conducted at the end of each session. The moderator of the panel will summarize the major conclusions resulting from the presentations and panel discussions and present them in a plenary session to all participants on the last day of the symposium.

The panel sessions will cover the following topics:

Panel 1: Training, testing and maintaining operations

A major challenge for civil aviation authorities, air navigation service providers (ANSPs) and air operators is balancing training and testing of personnel to meet the ICAO Operational Level 4 and maintaining regular, safe and cost-effective operations. Human resource management strategies play a critical role in this regard. What kind of strategies have ANSPs and air operators used to face this challenge? How have they organized the training of their personnel, without unduly limiting the number of available staff to maintain their operations? How do they schedule language training and testing of their staff and limit the impact on the safety and cost-effectiveness of operations? What training and testing solutions have been identified? What resources were required to implement these strategies and were the necessary resources available?

Civil aviation authorities are responsible for the oversight of the implementation of language proficiency requirements, keeping in mind the challenges ANSPs and air operators have to face. This implies that they need to coordinate closely with all the language proficiency stakeholders within their States. What actions and strategies have civil aviation authorities used to establish and maintain close coordination within their States?

Panel 2: Language tests for licensing: ensuring testing and training quality

The quality of a test depends on its ability to assess all language skills of the ICAO rating scale and holistic descriptors as indicated in Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, in a satisfactory manner. Tests should respect language testing best practices, and should also be practical to implement. What strategies can be used to ensure that language tests are both effective and efficient?

The effectiveness of a test is also reflected in the way it positively impacts training. For example, if an organization selects a test that does not appropriately address the holistic descriptors as found in Annex 1, including the handling of “complication or unexpected turn of events”, it is highly probable that language training within this organization will not properly prepare personnel to use plain language in an unusual situation. This would be considered a “negative washback effect”. What should organizations look for to ensure that the testing they develop or acquire have a “positive washback” effect? What are the characteristics of quality language testing in the context of the ICAO language proficiency requirements?

Panel 3: Resource sharing initiatives: sharing resources

For several States, the implementation of language proficiency requirements requires the involvement of already limited resources. Depending on the number of personnel to be tested and trained, the investment of resources may be prohibitive at a national level. This challenge may also be faced by other States within a region. A solution may be the pooling of resources through the establishment and arrangements of cooperative initiatives between States. What cooperative arrangements have been established to support the implementation of language proficiency requirements? What lessons have been learned? What other types of cooperative arrangements could be initiated?

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