



WORKING PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026

Agenda Item 6: Other Facilitation matters

**ENSURING TRANSPARENT AND PREDICTABLE PROCEDURES THROUGH
COMPLETION OF THE FACILITATION HANDBOOK**

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

The effectiveness and credibility of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) depend on transparent, predictable procedures and meaningful consultation with Member States. A proposed Facilitation Handbook was disseminated by the Secretariat on 7 March 2025 for Member State feedback and was placed on the agenda of the intersessional meeting held in Doha, Qatar, from 12–13 April 2025; however, it was not discussed.

Clear and authoritative procedures are essential to guide the work of the Facilitation Panel and its working groups and to ensure consistency and transparency in decision-making. The completion and publication of the Facilitation Handbook must therefore be prioritized to provide a stable procedural foundation for ongoing and future Facilitation work.

Action by the FAL Panel: The Panel is invited to prioritize the completion and publication of the Facilitation Handbook, remind Member States of the proposed Handbook circulated on 7 March 2025, and establish a revised timeline for consolidating feedback and formally publishing the Handbook.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following instances within the Facilitation Panel (FALP) and certain working groups where the basis for decisions was unclear, procedures were applied inconsistently or selectively, and the absence of an authoritative procedural reference allowed discretionary interpretation, Member States requested that the Secretariat develop a handbook clearly and concisely outlining the rules and procedures governing the Facilitation Panel and its subsidiary bodies. While the work of FALP is covered under ICAO Doc 9482, *Directives for Panels of the Air Transport Committee and the Aviation Security Committee*, that document provides high-level guidance and does not establish detailed procedural rules, particularly with respect to the conduct of working groups. The present handbook is therefore intended to complement

Doc 9482 by providing practical procedural clarity where needed, without creating an exhaustive or duplicative framework.

1.2 On 7 March 2025, the Secretariat disseminated a proposed Facilitation Handbook and requested feedback from Member States to inform the forthcoming FALP intersessional meeting scheduled for April 2025. For its part, the United States submitted substantive comments on 26 March 2025.

1.3 At the Intersessional Facilitation Conference held in Doha, Qatar, from 12–13 April 2025, the proposed Handbook was included on the agenda. However, the Secretariat chose not to take up the agenda item for discussion. When queried, the Secretariat cited the absence of certain Member States and low volume of comments submitted.

1.4 This reasoning raises process concerns and emphasizes the importance of establishing clear procedural rules to ensure transparent, rules-based governance. Member States resource expert panels in accordance with the agendas disseminated by the Secretariat and with the expectation that ICAO will pursue scheduled agenda items as planned.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The absence of a finalized Facilitation Handbook continues to create uncertainty. This lack of clarity increases the risk of inconsistent practices, weakens accountability, and may erode Member State confidence in the Facilitation Panel’s work. A comprehensive and authoritative Handbook is therefore essential to ensure consistency, institutional memory, and continuity across Panel cycles and leadership transitions, while promoting transparency and effective participation by Member States.

2.2 Prioritizing completion of the Facilitation Handbook would strengthen governance, enhance efficiency, and reduce procedural ambiguity, allowing the Panel to focus on substantive Facilitation objectives rather than process-related uncertainties. Establishing a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and procedures would also help prevent future procedural disputes and support more effective and inclusive collaboration among Member States. The delays in finalizing this handbook underscore the need for its existence and the need for transparency and efficiencies in approving administrative processes.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Facilitation Panel should reaffirm the importance of the Facilitation Handbook as a foundational governance document and prioritize its completion as a standing work item.

3.2 The Secretariat should re-circulate the proposed Facilitation Handbook, explicitly acknowledge all comments already received, and provide a clear, transparent timeline for the consolidation of feedback.

3.3 The Panel should request that the Secretariat present a revised draft of the Handbook for discussion and approval once all comments have been aggregated and no later than the end of 2026.

3.4 Upon approval, the Facilitation Handbook should be formally published and referenced as the authoritative procedural guide for the Facilitation Panel and its working groups.