



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

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EX/98

29/7/25

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 22: Other high-level policy issues to be considered by the Executive Committee

ENHANCING ICAO'S STATE LETTER PROCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(Presented by New Zealand and Australia and sponsored by Bangladesh, Cook Islands, The Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, and Vietnam)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey of Asia Pacific States found that without effective, and potentially resource intensive, processes in place, dealing with State letters can become burdensome on States – especially those in the lower to middle income classification.

We recommend improvements to ICAO's State letter process and ICAO's overall engagement and communication with Member States.

Action: The Assembly is invited to make the following recommendations, that:

- a) ICAO enhances its communication processes by clearly labelling State letters according to priority (e.g. adoption or amendment of Standards and Recommended Practices are a high priority), consistent with Assembly Resolution A39-21;
- b) ICAO reduces the number of matters communicated as a State letter (e.g. notifications to States of secondment opportunities, training opportunities, symposiums which could be distributed on a 'for information and appropriate action' basis rather than requiring a mandatory response); and,

Member States share their expertise and experiences to support other Member States in developing processes to manage engagement with ICAO's State letters and communications.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO's communication with Member States.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Nil.
<i>References:</i>	A39-21: Addressing the low response rate by Member States to ICAO State letters A41-23: Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Between December 2023 and February 2024, the Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force (RCM TF) conducted a survey of ICAO Member States in the Asia Pacific to better understand their views and concerns with ICAO's existing State letter communications.

1.2 The survey also asked questions to understand overall engagement by Asia Pacific ICAO Member States with ICAO headquarters and the Asia Pacific Regional Office and sought comments on how ICAO could improve its communication processes.

1.3 Overall, the survey received an 81 per cent response rate from ICAO Member States in the Asia Pacific, which is a high response rate to a survey and demonstrates the strong and meaningful engagement of the region on this issue. To analyse the results of the survey, States were grouped according to World Bank Income classifications – 'middle-to-high' and 'low-to-middle' income brackets. Appendix provides the detailed survey results.

1.4 The RCM TF was established by the 54th Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Conference, Asia and Pacific Regions, in August 2017 to focus on strengthening and evolving existing regional mechanisms for regional cooperation, towards capability- and capacity-building, and technical assistance. The RCM TF has 16 members, supported by the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office as secretariat, and reports on its work to the region's annual DGCA Conference.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The RCM TF's survey found two key issues relating to ICAO's communications: the capacity of States to action and respond to the volume of State letters and other communications from ICAO and the volume of material sent by ICAO requiring a response.

Capacity of States to respond to ICAO

2.2 While most survey respondents indicated that they generally have international teams with an appropriate number of staff to dedicate to processing State letters and engaging with ICAO, the key barrier for some respondents was a lack of available technical expertise to do so.

2.3 Some respondents indicated they were lacking the staffing capacity to have an effective process in place to allow for the efficient processing of State letters and engagement with ICAO. This issue was most prevalent among respondents within the low-to-middle income bracket, who indicated the lack of technical expertise was a significant barrier for them. Respondents classified within the middle-to-high income bracket indicated that they were better placed to engage with ICAO in the State letter process because they had the required technical expertise to help understand and process State letters.

2.4 While Member States may have the staffing resources within their international teams available, many State letters require specific technical knowledge in order to provide an appropriate response. As indicated in the survey, many Member States simply do not have this available, and this impacts their ability to effectively engage with ICAO. Various on-going initiatives by ICAO and Member States, including those initiated under the Asia Pacific's Regional Training Cooperation Framework, to enhance training would be key to addressing a gap in technical expertise among aviation personnel in the region.

2.5 Some respondents indicated that they deal with State letters on a case-by-case basis, which may be correlated to a lack of technical expertise. Data showed that for these respondents it is more difficult to process State letters and effectively engage with ICAO. There is a clear need to support Member States

in developing a process, including ensuring they have adequate levels of technical knowledge to respond to some State letters.

2.6 Some Member States discussed the struggles they were facing when engaging with ICAO or processing State letters, including factors such as the perception that the authority to respond was placed at a higher level than required.

Volume of State letters and communications from ICAO

2.7 States noted the challenges associated with the large volume of State letters that are received. There were suggestions that categorising or prioritising the letters in a way that takes into consideration whether a response is required (such as the status of implementing SARPs or for meeting invitations as compared to ‘information only’ State letters) would better enable States to easily filter and process letters faster, as they would be able to determine how much resourcing to dedicate.

2.8 Some Member States detailed existing support from ICAO that worked well for them. These included the Asia Pacific Regional Office being responsive and supportive and the support Pacific Small Island Developing States had received from the ICAO Pacific Liaison Officer based in Fiji.

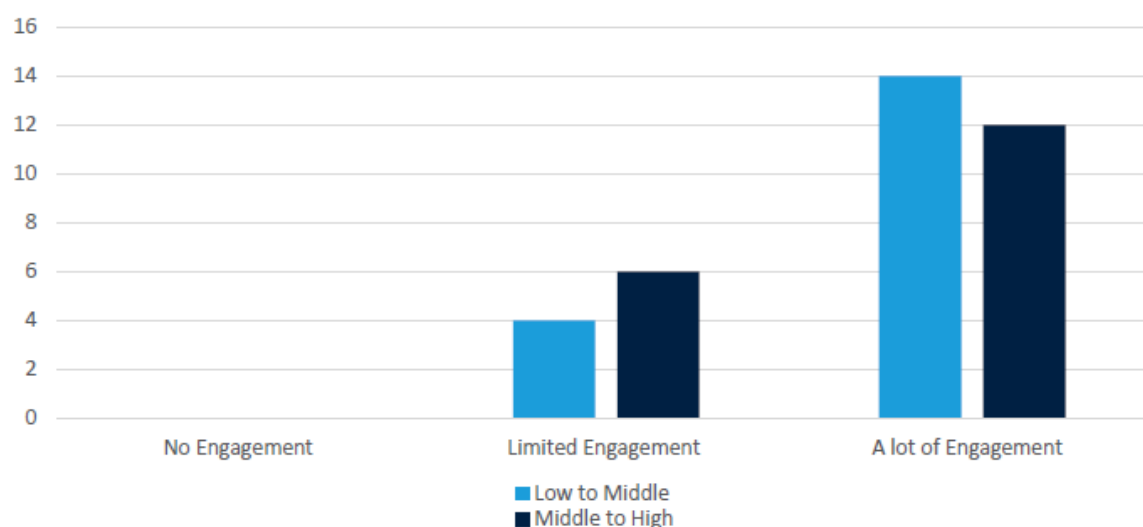
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APPENDIX

Q1

What level of engagement does your State/Administration have with ICAO?

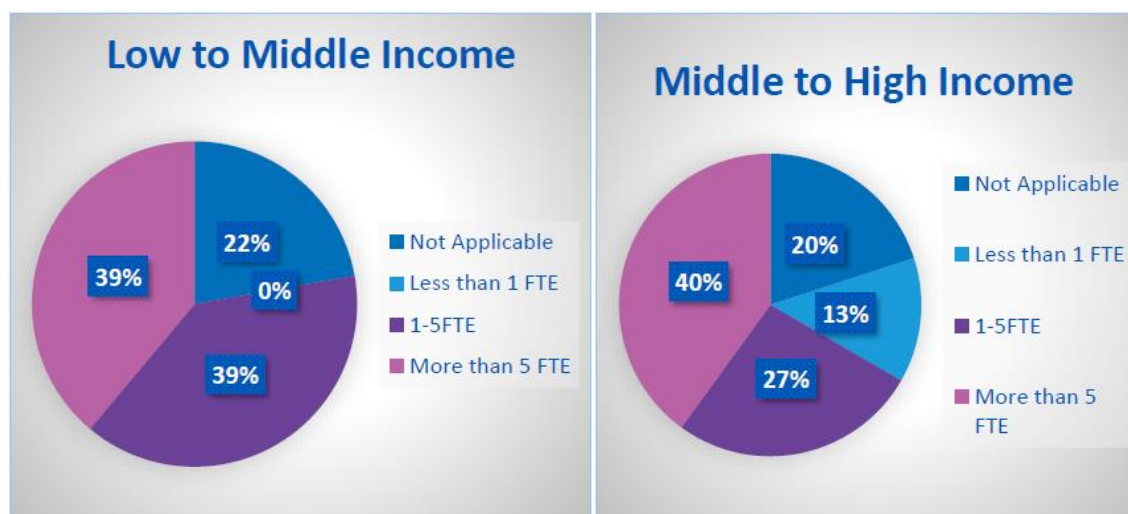
(This could include any type of communication with ICAO, meeting attendance, engaging in the State Letter process, engaging with the ICAO Regional Office, and influencing ICAO SARP development.)



Q2

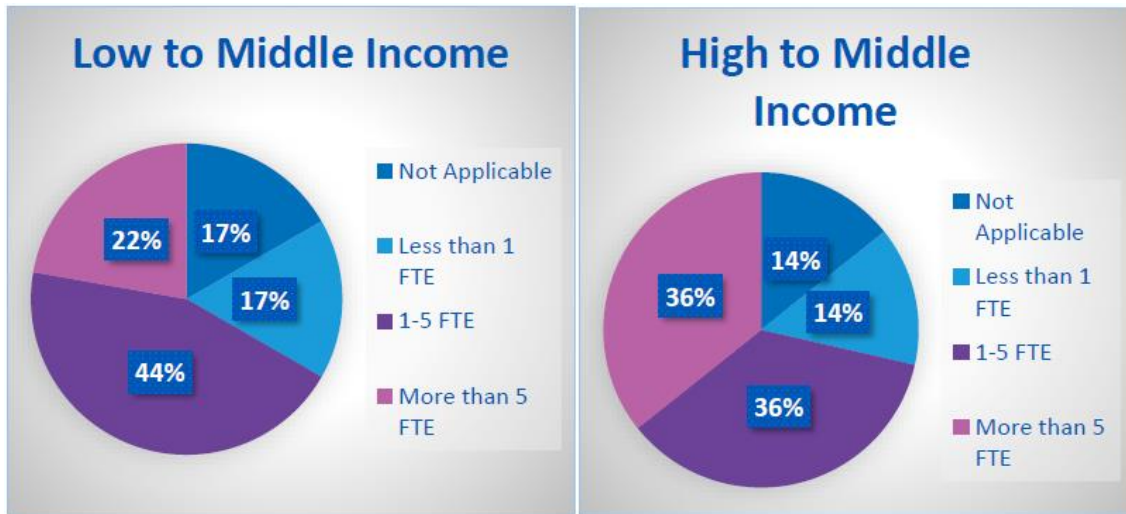
How Big is your State/Administration's international engagement team?

(FTE = Full-time equivalent staff member)



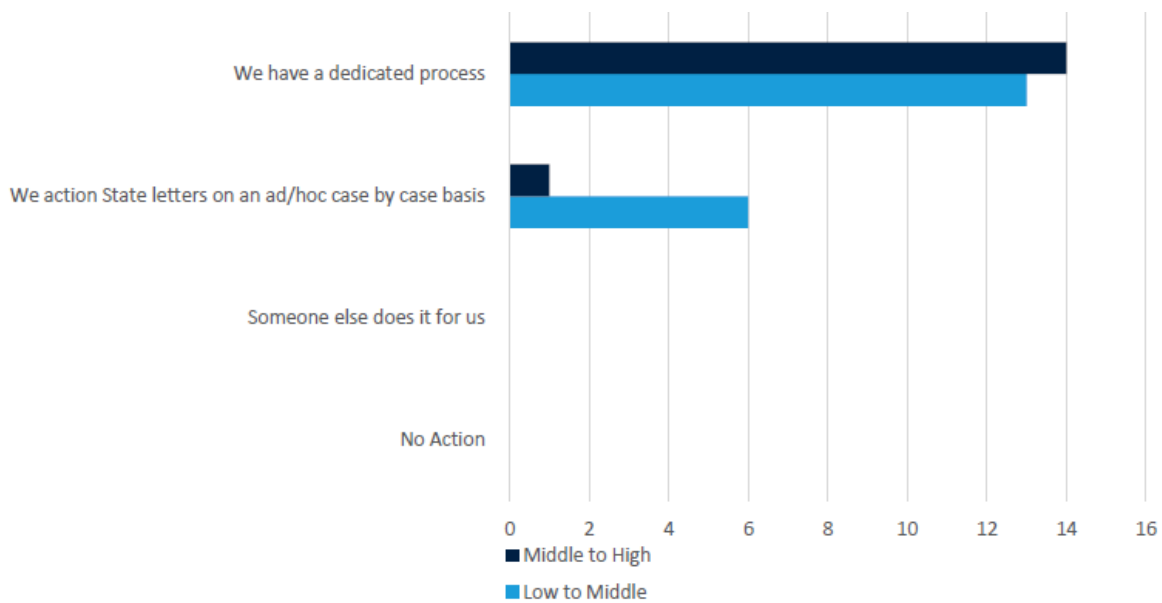
Q3

How Big is your State/Administration's team responsible for processing State Letters?
(Not including other engagement with ICAO)



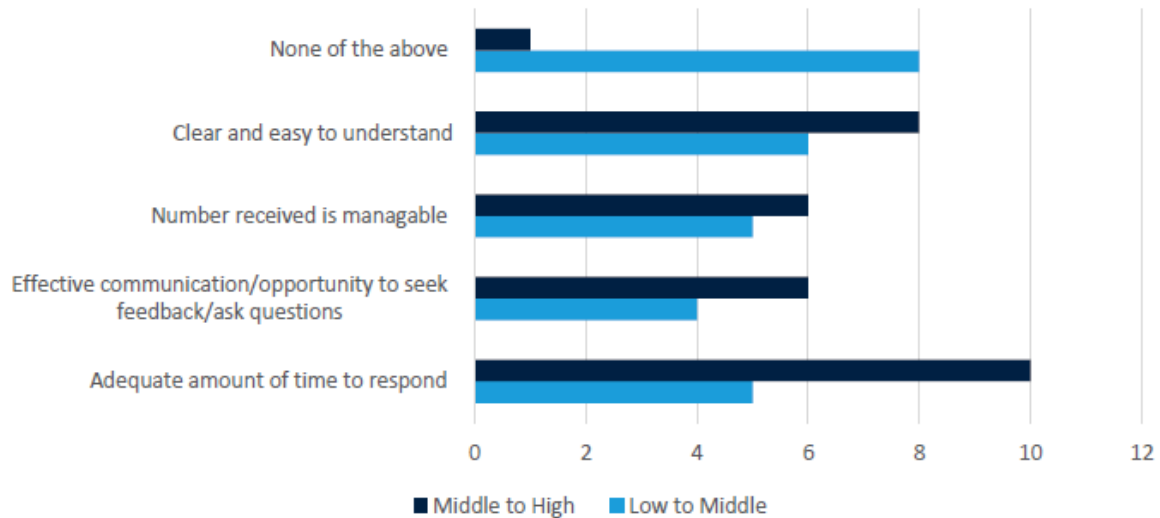
Q4

How does your State/ Administration action State Letters from ICAO?

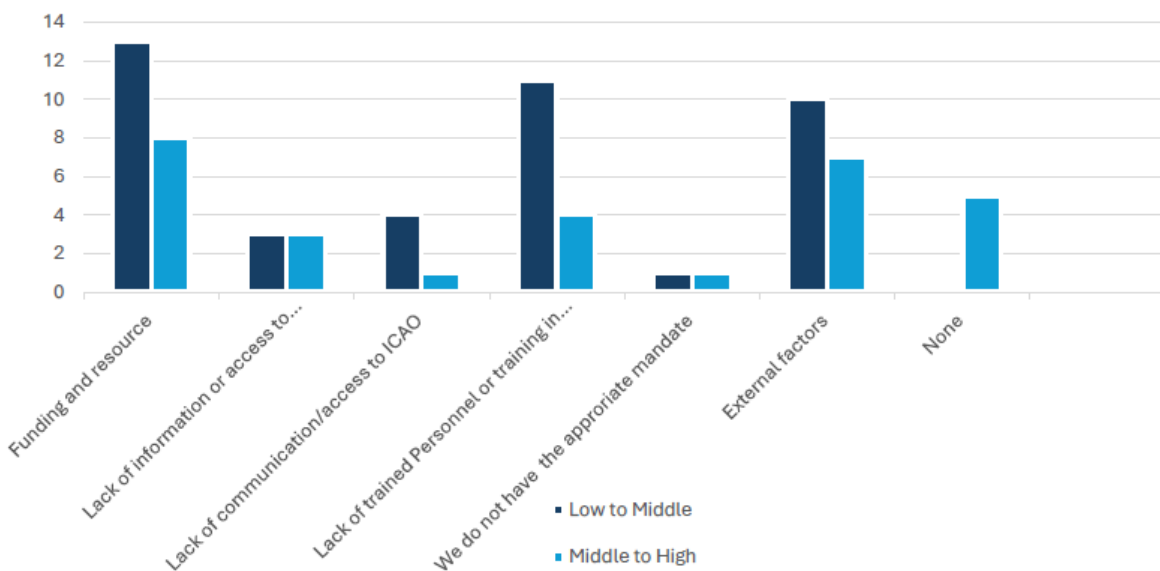


Q5

Which of the following would you say is done well by ICAO in relation to State Letter?

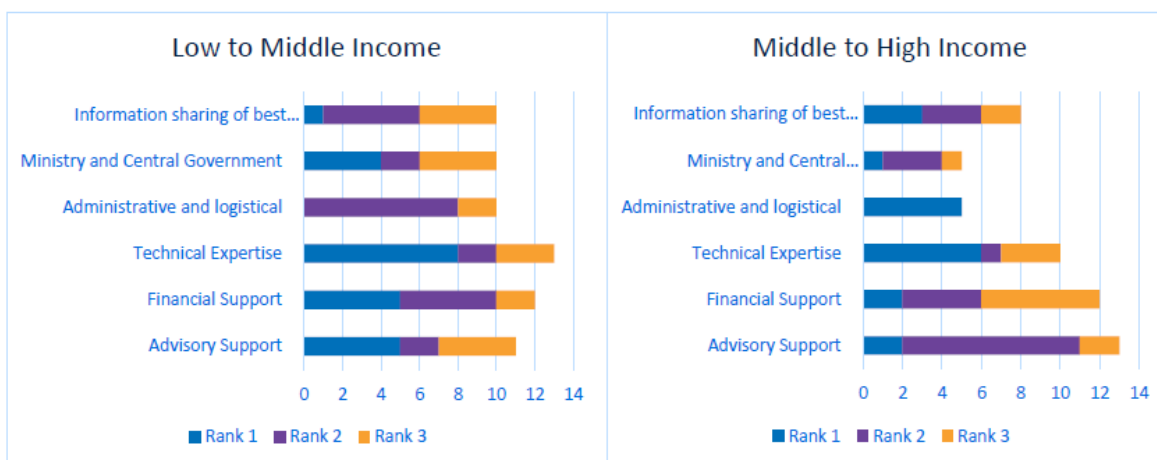
**Q6**

What issues does your State/Administration face with wider ICAO engagement?
(Select all that are relevant)



Q7**What support does your State/Administration need to address these issues?**

(Please rank top 3)



— END —