



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 18: Capacity Development and Implementation Support – Policy and Activities

STRUCTURAL REFORM OF THE SEYCHELLES CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

(Presented by Seychelles)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a historic show of support, in mid July 2024, the Seychelles Parliament (National Assembly) in its majority gave its approval to a Bill splitting the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) into two distinct entities with the SCAA remaining as the regulator of the aviation industry and the newly created Seychelles Airports Authority (SAA) carrying the function of managing airport operations and air navigation services. The separation represents a significant milestone for the Seychelles aviation sector as it means compliance with ICAO SARPs and ensures better oversight over the aviation activities and their development.

This information paper serves to give an overview of the journey of Seychelles towards the separation of the CAA. It focuses on the robust steps taken by the government of Seychelles through pragmatic and strategic decision-making. In addition, it touches on cooperation undertaken by SCAA under the ICAO “No Country Left Behind” initiative, which gave Seychelles the necessary support and guidance required during the separation process.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This information paper relates to all ICAO Strategic Goals
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not Applicable
<i>References:</i>	ICAO DOC 9562 - Airport Economics Manual SCAA ACT (2005) SCAA ACT (2024) SAA ACT (2024)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 2022, the government of Seychelles began the process to give the national aviation sector a structural overhaul, separating the regulatory functions of the Civil Aviation Authority from airport operations. This aligns with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), which stipulate that states operate their Airports and Air Navigation Services autonomously from their Civil Aviation Authority.

1.2 The legislative process to undergo the structural reform of the CAA was concluded in 2024 with the enactment of the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) Act 2024 and the Seychelles Airports Authority (SAA) Act 2024 which took effect as of 1 January 2025 through the publication of statutory instruments by the Minister responsible for Transport which established their commencement and provided for the transfer of assets and responsibilities from the former unified structure to distinct mandates of the newly established Authorities.

1.3 This bold move reinforces the commitment of Seychelles to a safe, secure and efficient aviation environment.

2. THE SPLITTING OF THE SEYCHELLES CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

2.1 To understand the context of the separation, it is worth revisiting the setup of the aviation sector in Seychelles over the past 20 years. In 2005, the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority Act came into force. This effectively brought into existence the Authority that would oversee safety, security and economic development of the aviation sector in Seychelles. In addition, the Authority had the mandate to operate the Seychelles Airports as well as Air Navigation services. Under this arrangement the SCAA and its affairs were administered by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reporting to a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister responsible for Civil Aviation.

2.2 This rather historical model was in retrospect appropriate for Seychelles at the time, given the level of aviation activities being low. It made sense then for the regulator and operator of airports and Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) to be one single entity.

2.3 As an autonomous body corporate, the Seychelles CAA developed tremendously in 20 years with many accomplishments. Particularly, it created a strong internal structure to ensure decision making relating to enforcement protocols did not give way to a conflict of interest and separation of budget to mitigate any risks for regulatory oversight.

2.4 The plans to separate the entities existed for a long time but it was only in 2022 that such a commitment came through. To that effect many internal committees were set up prior to the separation including, Legal, Change Management, Corporate Branding, Financial Arrangement and Human Resources, to ensure that due consideration was given and attention was paid to all aspects of this critical process.

2.5 Intense consultations followed to draft a new Bill to establish the SCAA as the regulatory body and a second one for the SAA as the main operator of Airports and ANSPs in Seychelles. These consultations culminated with the approval of both Bills in July 2024 by the Seychelles parliament, with a majority vote.

2.6 With the passing of the Bill, SCAA began a process of separation of functions and dismantling of roles intertwined in a complex operational environment, this was further made possible by

a directive establishing a transition period as of 1st of January 2025 to May 1st 2025 by the Minister responsible for Transport. This allowed the Authorities to properly define their respective functions, through a smooth collaborative approach. To that effect, a separation committee was created to monitor progress on different aspects of the separation, for example, financial, assets, administration, Human Resource allocation, ICT, data preservation and records, communication and so on.

2.7 In May 2025, The Minister of Transport appointed the Board of Directors of the two entities, who in turn appointed their respective CEO's. The appointments allowed for an administrative set up for both Authorities to proceed to take independent decisions in line with their mandates.

2.8 The separation is now complete, and the Authorities finalized a Separation Agreement to establish a clear and effective framework that enables both Parties to operate independently and efficiently within the aviation sector. The Agreement provides for the continued provision of essential support through shared services and joint operational initiatives, while ensuring that such arrangements do not give rise to any conflict of interest in their respective operations.

3. COLLABORATION UNDER THE “NO COUNTRY LEFT BEHIND” INITIATIVE

3.1 As is the case for other countries who have undergone such a significant structural overhaul of its aviation sector, for Seychelles, this was a learning curve. It was essential for the CAA to secure strategic partnerships and collaboration with international partners to benefit from guidance and capacity building to ensure that steps being taken were in the right direction.

3.2 To that end, Seychelles signed two major cooperation agreements with the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA). For the former, the focus was primarily on capacity building, and the latter was focused on the actual separation and for capacity building, technical support and assistance, with a special focus on safety and security oversight.

3.3 Through the two arrangements, which exemplifies and embodies the notion of south-south cooperation, Seychelles benefitted greatly from various training opportunities and exchange of best practices, particularly to boost safety regulatory requirements to improve effective implementation (EI) with a clear road map.

3.4 In a significant way, these collaborations were key during the transformational process and remain important as the different roles and functions within the CAA are being refined to meet established regulatory requirements.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The structural reform of the aviation sector undertaken in early 2025 marks a historical milestone for the country. Aviation remains the lifeblood that drives the economy of Seychelles, as a country that is dependent on tourism and imports.

4.2 Whilst the separation is relatively new and the local industry players accustom themselves to the new model, it is clear that it was an essential and timely move. It is a clear show of how the country has built itself back better following the COVID-19 pandemic that nearly crippled the aviation sector in Seychelles.

4.3 It is a clear show of the country's commitment to ICAO SARPs and compliance with international best practices. It gives confidence to all the key players around the world and ensures that the country can continue to grow and develop its aviation sector within the framework of ICAO's Global Plans for the benefit of the people and for posterity.

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