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International Civil Aviation Organization
African Flight Procedure Programme

12th Meeting of the African Flight Procedure Programme Steering Committee

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 15 - 17 July 2026

Agenda Item 4: Presentation of working papers and information papers by stakeholders Working Paper 4.2: African Flight Procedure Designers' Association

(Presented by the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper proposes the formal establishment of the African Flight Procedure Designers' Association (AFPDA). The purpose of this association is to create a unified, professional body for Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) designers across the AFI region. It will foster standardization, continuous professional development, knowledge-sharing, and harmonized safety risk assessments to support the long-term sustainability of Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) and conventional procedure design capabilities in Africa.

Action by the meeting is indicated in section 3.

REFERENCES

- ICAO DOC 9906 – Quality Assurance For Airspace & Procedure Design
- ICAO Doc 8168 VOL I, II & III – Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aircraft Operations
- ICAO DOC 9750 - The Global Air Navigation Plan
- ICAO Doc 9613 - Performance-based Navigation (PBN) Manual
- ICAO Doc 9993 - Continuous Climb Operations (CCO) Manual
- ICAO Doc 9931 - Continuous Descend Operations (CDO) Manual

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Standard instrument flight procedures are foundational to aviation safety, airspace capacity and environmental efficiency. ICAO doc 9906 (quality assurance manual for flight procedure design) outlines the stringent criteria States must fulfil to ensure robust competency-based training, quality management systems, and safety oversight of their IFP processes.
- 1.2 In 2014, ICAO successfully launched the African Flight Procedure Programme (AFPP) to assist African states in building sustainable domestic capabilities, specifically accelerating PBN implementation.



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- 1.3 While the AFPP has significantly increased the number of trained personnel across the continent, individual designers often operate in professional isolation within their respective Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) or Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSP). There is currently no unified pan-African professional body to promote professional standards, share best practices, experiences and advocate for the specialized interests of flight procedure designers.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The need for a Professional Association

- 2.1.1 As Africa transitions deeper into advanced airspace frameworks including the widespread adoption of aviation system block upgrades (ASBU), Continuous Descent Operations (CDO), Continuous Climb Operations (CCO), and future Satellite-Based Augmentation Systems (SBAS)—the complexity of the IFP environment is increasing exponentially.

- 2.1.2 A dedicated association is required to solve several persistent regional challenges:

- a) **Erosion of competency:** flight procedure design is a highly perishable skill. Designers who do not perform a minimum number of designs annually risk losing technical proficiency. A regional association will facilitate peer-review circles and technical masterclasses.
- b) **Inconsistent safety risk assessments:** as noted in recent AFPP steering committee cycles, safety oversight teams and designers often clash during the validation phase due to differing interpretations of design criteria. The association will serve as a forum to harmonize these interpretations.
- c) **Retention of talent:** many African states invest heavily in training initial designers, only to lose them to other sectors or international markets due to a lack of defined career progression and professional recognition within their local ANSPs.

2.2 Core Objectives of the AFPDA

- 2.2.1 The African Flight Procedure Designers' Association will operate as a non-profit, professional body aligned with the strategic objectives of ICAO WACAF/ESAF, AFCAC, and the AFPP. Its strategic pillars will include:

- d) **Standardization and Quality Assurance:** Establishing a voluntary regional peer-review framework to assist members in verifying complex designs before they face formal regulatory flight validation.
- e) **Continuous Capacity Building:** Coordinating with the AFPP to offer specialized refresher courses, software-specific workshops, and mentorship pipelines linking senior African designers with newly trained personnel.
- f) **Expert Database Maintenance:** Creating an authorized roster of practicing, certified African procedure designers to facilitate state-to-state technical assistance and secondment programs.



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2.3 Proposed Institutional Framework

- 2.3.1 To guarantee its success and institutional relevance, it is proposed that the AFPDA be established under the technical patronage of the AFPP and work in close coordination with AFCAC (African Civil Aviation Commission).
- 2.3.2 Initial membership will be open to all certified PANS-OPS designers, regulators, and flight validation pilots operating within the African continent. Further, trained designers who have moved on to senior levels can be co-opted as associate members.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
- a) note the information presented on the proposed establishment of the African Flight Procedure Designers' Association (AFPDA) and recognize its potential contribution to strengthening professional collaboration, harmonization and the sustainability of flight procedure design capabilities across the AFI Region;
 - b) endorse, in principle, the establishment of the African Flight Procedure Designers' Association (AFPDA) under the technical patronage of the African Flight Procedure Programme (AFPP);
 - c) request the AFPP Secretariat, in coordination with interested States and organizations, to facilitate the establishment of an interim working group to prepare the draft Constitution, Terms of Reference (ToRs), governance arrangements and an initial work programme for consideration by the inaugural General Meeting of the Association;
 - d) invite Member States and Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) to express their interest in hosting the inaugural General Meeting of the Association and to communicate their offers to the AFPP Secretariat;
 - e) encourage Member States, Civil Aviation Authorities and ANSPs to support the participation of qualified flight procedure designers and other relevant experts in the inaugural General Meeting, with a view to ensuring broad regional representation and ownership of the Association;
 - f) request the interim working group to submit the outcomes of the inaugural General Meeting, including the proposed governance framework and first work programme of the Association, to the next meeting of the AFPP Steering Committee for information and further guidance.

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