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Evaluation of the Regional Portfolio  
of the  
Middle East (MID) Office

EV/2024/02

Office of Internal Oversight



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## ACRONYMS

AACO	Arab Air Carriers Organization
ACAO	Arab Civil Aviation Organization
AFCAC	African Civil Aviation Commission
ATB	Air Transport Bureau
ATM	Air Traffic Management
AVSEC/FAL	Aviation Security/Facilitation Programs
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CANSO	Civil Air Navigation Services Organization
CART	Council Aviation Recovery Task Force
CASP-MID	Cooperative Aviation Security Programme–Middle East
CDI	Capacity Development and Implementation
CMA	Continuous Monitoring Approach
CMRT	Corporate Management and Reporting Tool
CCR	Central CORSIA Registry
CNS	Communications Navigation Surveillance
CORSIA	Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
CRRIC	COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre Development Assistance Committee
EI	Effective Implementation
GASeP	Global Aviation Security Plan
GAT	Global Aviation Training
HQ	Headquarters
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MID	Middle East
MRTDs	Machine Readable Travel Documents
NASP	National Aviation Safety Plan
NANP	National Air Navigation Plan
NCLB	No Country Left Behind
OIO	Office of Internal Oversight
OP	Operating Plan
OSG	Office of the Secretary General
PBN	Performance-Based Navigation
PIRG	Planning and Implementation Regional Groups
RAFIT	Regional AVSEC/FAL Implementation Team
RASG	Regional Aviation Safety Group
RBM	Results Based Management

RO	Regional Office
SAP	State Action Plan
SARPS	Standards and Recommended Practices
SSCs	Significant Safety Concerns
SSeCs	Significant Security Concerns
TOGD	Take-Off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRIP	Traveler Identification Programme
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USOAP CMA	Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. The evaluation of the Regional Portfolio of the Middle East (MID) Office examined five evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability), as well as gender equality and disability inclusion, as cross cutting themes, using a mixed-methods approach. All evaluation activities complied with the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards (UNEG), and ICAO evaluation policy.
2. There were two purposes for this evaluation: accountability and learning. The evaluation was also used to identify good practices and lessons learned, and to generate recommendations for improved performance and results delivery by the MID Regional Office (RO). As its scope, the evaluation covered major activities and outputs delivered by MID RO during 2017-2023, and examined the management and coordination mechanism followed by the RO. The major stakeholders of the evaluation are MID RO; Headquarters (HQ) Bureaus; the Office of the Secretary General (OSG); the ICAO Council and Member States.

### Main Findings and Conclusions

3. The evaluation revealed that the MID RO's operating plans and support activities are highly relevant in addressing Member States and regional priorities and needs. Relevance is ensured through a comprehensive consultative approach of Member States, regional partners, and other stakeholder representatives.
4. MID RO's efforts to facilitate collaborative working relations with other regional offices and through the regional groups and sub-committees have been effective in fostering regional cooperation and in preventing duplication of efforts. While the Regional Groups and sub-committees are effective mechanisms for planning, monitoring, implementation, and coordination, the high number of sub-committees and associated meetings can potentially hinder the RO's work and the effectiveness of the planning process. Moreover, use of English language in some meetings of sub-committees was limiting the contribution of participants of Arabic-speaking Member States.
5. MID RO's regional operating plan was aligned with the Global and Regional Plans. While the Regional Operating Plan serves as a useful framework for results management, its effectiveness has been reduced due to inadequate use of the framework for proper results planning, monitoring, and reporting.
6. MID RO provided relevant and timely support to conflict affected Member States and effectively communicated and coordinated during crises. The support was facilitated by the active engagement of other MID Member States. However, the crisis affecting Member States in the region is complex that is beyond the Regional Office.
7. Despite facing numerous challenges associated with multifaceted conflict in the region, MID RO has made tangible contribution to improve aviation safety, and capacity and efficiency in the region. The RO has demonstrated substantial contribution in enhancing safety oversight, establishing Runway Safety Teams, optimizing aerodrome operations, advancing navigational aids infrastructure, and implementing Air Traffic Management (ATM) data

security plans. Effective Implementation (EI) rate for Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) for the MID region is above the global average and the GASP targets. However, the number of Member States that developed the National Aviation Safety Plans (NASPs) and the National Air Navigation Plans (NANPs) are limited.

8. MID RO has made notable progress in implementing aviation security and facilitation activities, meeting most targets, providing hands on support to conflict affected Member States and support in the development of security projects and crisis management plans. The region has had no Significant Security Concern (SSeCs) and the average level of EI for the MID region was above the global average and the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) targets.
9. In collaboration with the Air Transport Bureau (ATB), MID RO provided robust support in the area of Economic Development of Air Transport and environmental protection. Nine out of 12 Member States have developed their State Action Plans for CO<sub>2</sub> emission. However, support to Member States for these two strategic objectives was limited largely due to lack of a dedicated regional officers.
10. Despite being considerably understaffed, MID RO has been delivering effective and timely support to Member States. There was also a sharp increase in the budget allocated from voluntary funding, however, MID RO's use of the budget allocated from voluntary funding was inadequate and requires financial oversight.
11. MID RO and Capacity Development and Implementation (CDI) Bureau have organized many trainings, workshops, hands on capacity-building supports, networking, and knowledge exchange to increase States' capacities for effective civil aviation management. Although the focus of ICAO was on building the capacity of Member States to sustain achieved results, high turnover staff and/or insufficient availability of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) experts and inadequate knowledge management processes in some States pose challenges to sustaining these achievements.
12. Despite policy frameworks aimed at enhancing gender equality, female participation in key aviation roles remain notably low in the MID region. However, there are signs of positive changes, with some States taking active steps to increase women's participation. With respect to disability inclusion, while there have been no barriers noted to the inclusiveness of disabled persons, there is limited evidence of an active strategic implementation of disability inclusion projects in the region.

## Recommendations

13. Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation outlined five recommendations that include:
  - reviewing the number and Terms of Reference (TOR) of sub-committees to have a reasonable number of sub-committees and meetings to further improve their effectiveness;

- developing and implementing an action plan to systematically support and follow up with MID Member States on the finalization and implementation of their NASPs and NANPs;
- organizing training for the RO staff in Result Based Management (RBM) in general and in result-based operating plan preparation, monitoring, and reporting, in particular, in advance of further actions by ICAO HQ;
- making sure that appropriate handover reports have been prepared and submitted by departing staff before leaving ICAO or their positions; and
- developing an action plan to improve the RO's human resources capacity of the Regional Office.

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

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### Introduction

14. In accordance with the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) Charter (C-WP/15115) and ICAO evaluation policy (C-WP/15269), the Evaluation of the Regional Portfolio of the Middle East (MID) Office was conducted from January to June 2024. The evaluation was included in the 2024 Work Programme of OIO, and identifies the MID Regional Office, Headquarters (HQ) Bureau, the Office of the Secretary General (OSG) and the ICAO Council as its primary clients. As appropriate, the results of the evaluation will also be used by Member States, Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and well as other stakeholders, Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs), and Aviation Security/Facilitation Programmes (AVSEC/FAL).
15. The evaluation examined five criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) and two cross-cutting themes (gender and disability). All evaluation activities complied with UNEG's Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System, and ICAO's evaluation policy. The evaluation is forward looking and provides findings, lessons learned and recommendations for improved decision-making at the regional and global levels.
16. Under the direction of the Chief, OIO, the evaluation was conducted by the OIO Evaluation Specialist, the Evaluation Officer, with the support of an external Evaluation Consultant.

### Context

17. The MID region has a long history in aviation going back to 1932 with the launch of Egypt Air in 1932<sup>1</sup>. The region has been one of the fastest growing in the world for passenger and cargo traffic since 2011. Air transport supported 3.4 million jobs and \$213 billion in Middle East economic activity. That is 4.5% of all employment and 7.6% of all GDP in Middle Eastern countries in 2018. The aviation sector also facilitates a substantial amount of tourism in the Middle East. This stimulates more economic activity, as tourists spend their money with restaurants, hotels, retailers, tour operators, and other providers of consumer goods and services. Air travel in the Middle East is expected to continue to grow at about 4.1% per year over the next two decades. This increase will, in turn, drive growth in the economic output and jobs that are supported by the air transport industry over the next 20 years<sup>2</sup>.
18. The ICAO MID Regional Office was established in Cairo in 1953 and is accredited to, and responsible for working with a diverse mix of 15 Contracting States. The Regional Office is providing support to Contracting States in implementing ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and for the safe and efficient growth of aviation in the region. In addition, the ICAO MID RO ensures interregional coordination and promotes the timely and harmonized implementation of ICAO Strategic Objectives, policies, and decisions as well as the Regional Plans (Regional Air navigation Plan, Regional Aviation Safety Plan, and Regional AVSECFAL Plan).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://middleeast-business.com/aviation-in-the-middle-east/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://aviationbenefits.org/media/167517/aw-oct-final-atag\\_abbb-2020-publication-digital.pdf](https://aviationbenefits.org/media/167517/aw-oct-final-atag_abbb-2020-publication-digital.pdf)

19. Although the MID Region is relatively small, Member States of the region are considered very diverse in the level of their civil aviation system development and traffic density; the degree of harmonization and cooperation; and their institutional and regulatory arrangement. In 2023, about 47% of Member States of MID region achieved an EI target of above 75 %. The average overall EI of the Region is 74 % in 2023, which is higher than the global average. On the other hand, MID region covers many conflicts affected States, with very low EI for safety that needs special support to make sure air transport is safe and secure.
20. The Regional Office has formulated the MID No Country Left Behind (NCLB) Strategy to implement the NCLB initiative of ICAO. The primary objectives of the MID NCLB initiative include:
  - Providing enhanced support for States in the effective implementation of ICAO's SARPs, plans and policies in a more coordinated, comprehensive and globally harmonized manner; and
  - Promoting the resolution of Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) and Significant Security Concerns (SSeCs), if any.
21. The strategy recognizes the importance of having the commitment of Member States and of prioritizing assistance needs and risks. It focuses on generating partnerships, mobilizing resources, and developing implementation support tools and services. It also considers all the issues affecting the region, from the growth of air traffic to loss of trained personnel, shortage of human and financial capital, political instability and governance issues, disruption of natural and man-made disasters, and multiple competing essential needs. Implementation is through a multi-disciplinary Technical Assistance Team composed of experts from ICAO and other qualified stakeholders. The process is to prioritize steps, verify/ validate the evidence of deficiencies, assist, identify the challenges, and devise the course of corrective action.
22. The Middle East Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (MIDANPIRG), established in 1993, the MID-RASG (organized in 2011) and the Middle East Regional Aviation Security and Facilitation Group (MID-RASFG), established in 2017 are all supporting the region in improving aviation safety, efficiency, and security.
23. Within the context of the Programmes specified in the Business Plan, the Regional Office undertakes activities to achieve the following:
  - Provide technical guidance and assist States in the region to achieve the anticipated Business Plan results under all strategic objectives.
  - Ensure inter-regional coordination and promote the timely and harmonized implementation of ICAO policies, decisions, resolutions, Standards and Recommended Practices, and air navigation and aviation safety plans; and
  - Maintain continuous liaison with the States to which they are accredited and with appropriate organizations, regional civil aviation bodies, UN Agencies and programmes.
24. The RO also maintains a working relationship with the Headquarters Bureau.

## EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND CLIENT

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### Evaluation Purpose

25. This evaluation will serve the dual objectives of evaluation in ICAO: accountability and learning:
- Accountability – independently assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Regional Office in improving the implementation of ICAO SARPs/policies and regional targets,
  - Learning – identify good practices and lessons learned and provide recommendations to improve performance and delivery of results, as appropriate.

### Scope

26. The evaluation covered all activities and outputs delivered by the Regional Office with a focus on key results that have been produced from January 2017 until December 2023 and examined the management and coordination mechanism followed by the Regional Office.

### Clients

27. The primary clients of the evaluation are MID Regional Office, HQ Bureaus, the Office of the Secretary General (OSG), the ICAO Council and Member States. Furthermore, RASGs, AVSEC/FAL/RGs and PIRGs and other stakeholders would use, as appropriate, the evaluation findings and lessons learnt.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY<sup>3</sup>

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28. The evaluation was participatory and supported by an evaluation matrix. A mixed methods approach of data collection and analysis was implemented in three phases: i) inception, ii) data collection and analysis, and iii) report writing.
29. A purposeful sampling method was used to engage all categories of stakeholders who were affiliated with the MID RO portfolio and had in depth knowledge of the implementation, management and coordination of ICAO SARPs, policies, and targets. A mixed-methods approach, comprising qualitative and quantitative techniques, was used to support data accuracy and validity.
30. During the Inception Phase, key stakeholders with responsibility for the management, planning, implementation, and/or coordination of the MID Regional Portfolio were identified and consulted. The main product of Phase 1 was the Inception Report, comprising the technical approach and methods, evaluation framework, and data collection tools. Data was collected during Phase 2 of the evaluation through stakeholder consultation, an in-depth desk review of relevant documents, and the completion of a secondary data collection sheet.
31. Data analysis was conducted at different stage using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques: i) a descriptive analysis was used to understand the contexts in which the RO programs and projects had been developed, ii) simple quantitative analysis was used to analyze data collected from secondary sources, iii) content analysis was used to identify key themes, trends and areas of divergence, and iv) a strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis was of MID RO's projects and activities to examine and summarize the results of Stages 1 to 3 of the analysis.
32. The evaluation aligned with ICAO evaluation policy and complied with the international standards and norms of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) and the UNEG. Participation in the evaluation was voluntary and there was no risk of harm to participating stakeholders. Stakeholders were assured of the confidentiality of their responses prior to consultations, and the evaluation data was stored securely.
33. There was one main limitation to the evaluation, the non-response of few sampled Member States for consultation. As a mitigation measure, in depth consultations were conducted with stakeholders who confirmed their availability. This approach was strongly supported by the in-depth review of relevant documents. The evaluation team was able to conduct interviews with representatives of Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA) in conflict affected States or security challenged States in an alternative location (Egypt) and via online platforms.

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex 1 for the complete evaluation methodology.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

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34. This section presents the findings of the evaluation, with emphasis on the following criteria: relevance; coherence; effectiveness; efficiency; application of the State Action Plans (SAP); sustainability and cross-cutting themes (gender and disability).

### Relevance

35. To assess the criterion of relevance, the evaluation measured the extent to which MID RO support to Member States was need based and aligned with State requirements.

**Finding 1:** The MID Regional Office operating plans and implementation support activities are relevant to address Member States and regional priorities and needs. Relevance is ensured through effective coordination and a comprehensive consultative approach involving Member State representatives, key regional partners, and other stakeholders.

36. MID RO is responsible for planning and managing implementation support activities according to the needs of its 15 Member States. This requires consultation of individual Member States as well as collaborating and coordinating at regional level, with all the Member States and relevant stakeholders.
37. The planning process in MID RO is based on an extensive consultative process. In this process, RASG, PIRG, AVSECFAL and DGCA meetings make important and high-level decisions. In their annual meeting, the regional groups convene and decide on the work plan activities of the region. This strategic coordination facilitates informed and comprehensive planning for regional and Member States aviation activities. The approach significantly enhances the operational effectiveness and strategic alignment of the MID RO with its mandates.
38. In addition to the inputs from the Groups, MID RO bases its planning on Council priorities and Assembly Decisions, the priorities of ICAO Business Plan, the Global Plans such as GASP, GANP and GAsEP. The RO also uses data collected from its Member States. For instance, the Regional Office has been doing an annual survey of Member States to assess capacities, deficiencies on implementation and capacity to oversee the service providers, thereby identifying States weaknesses and priorities. In addition, new dashboards that have been developed to monitor Aerodromes and Ground Aids are used for planning purposes. However, some States have not adequately participated to the surveys and informed MID RO their priorities and needs.

**Finding 2:** While the Regional Groups and sub-committees are essential for planning and operational support, the high number of the sub-committees and the high number of meetings can potentially hinder the regional office's work and the effectiveness of the planning process. Moreover, use of English language in some meeting of sub-committees was limiting the contribution of participants of some Arabic-speaking Member States.

39. To assist the regional groups in their work and support the development, implementation, and prioritization of activities, various sub-committees, including Working Group, Sub-Groups, and

Task Forces, have been formed by the Regional Groups. These sub-committees are charged with preparatory work on specific subjects requiring expert advice and prepare draft decisions and recommendations for decision by the Regional Groups (MID RASG, MID PIRG, and MID AVSECFAL Groups). There are more than 15 sub-committees, including 1 Working Group<sup>4</sup>, 2 Steering Groups<sup>5</sup>, 6 Sub-Groups<sup>6</sup>, and 3 Task Forces<sup>7</sup>, created to support the work of the main Regional Groups.

40. Notably, some structures were temporary (such as FIFA World Cup Task Force or the SECFAL Plan Development Group) and some have been dissolved<sup>8</sup> "due to nonattendance to those meetings". However, a significant number of these structures still exist. Some Member States observed that "often these structures serve the same purpose leading to inefficient support and duplication of efforts"<sup>9</sup>. The evaluation noted the need to review the TOR of these groups/sub-committees to avoid duplication of efforts.
41. In addition to the high number of sub-committees, the evaluation team noted that the region's work programme includes a significant number of sub-committee/group meetings. For instance, in 2023, the region planned 22 meetings for such groups, with 2 meetings postponed for various reasons. This high frequency of meetings can lead to logistical and scheduling challenges for Member States. Frequent meetings were also limiting the time of Regional Officers to provide hands on field support to Member States.
42. States appreciated the Regional Office's (RO) "open-door policy and support" and the efficient flow of information facilitated by Arabic-speaking experts in the MID RO. However, a recurring issue in sub-committee and task force meetings has been the limited participation of Member States' representatives. This is partly due to some meetings being conducted in English in a region where Arabic language is predominantly spoken. For example, Oman presented a working paper requesting the use of Arabic language, particularly for security meetings where military representatives find it more difficult to express themselves in English. Although the decision to use Arabic was made, it was not enforced in subsequent meetings. The Regional Office indicated that English language was an issue only for meetings organized for military personnel in Aviation Security workshops.
43. Similarly, the dissemination of materials, especially guidance materials and documents for audit preparation, in English language has been reported as a challenge by MID States. The translation of these materials can be problematic, making it difficult for Member States to fully engage and comply with the requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> Cyber Security Working Group

<sup>5</sup> MID ATS Messaging Management Centre Steering Group, MIDANPIRG Steering Group

<sup>6</sup> MIDANPIRG AIM Sub-Group, MIDANPIRG MET Sub-Group, MIDANPIRG Air Traffic Management Sub-Group, MIDANPIRG Communication, Navigation and Surveillance Sub-Group, MIDANPIRG Performance Based Navigation Sub-Group, Aeronautical Information Management Sub-Group,

<sup>7</sup> RANP/NANP Task Force, MIDANPIRG Air Traffic Flow Management Task Force, ICAO APAC/ EUR/MID Advanced Inter-Regional ATS Route Development Task Force,

<sup>8</sup> Runway and Ground Safety Working Group, MID OPMET Bulletin Management Group.

<sup>9</sup> The evaluation documented over 100 meetings in the evaluated period.

**Finding 3:** The MID RO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was proactive and multifaceted, addressing immediate needs while navigating significant challenges.

44. The MID RO has accomplished significant milestones in its support for States under accreditation, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the key achievements includes actively supporting States through high-level and technical information-sharing activities, meetings, and events to facilitate the implementation of ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations and guidance. This proactive approach ensured that States received timely and relevant information to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.
45. Another notable achievement is the deployment of ICAO Implementation Packages (iPacks) in the region. These iPacks provided States with essential tools and guidance to manage and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aviation, thereby enhancing their capacity to maintain safe and efficient operations during this critical period.
46. In addition to deploying iPacks, the MID RO organized numerous COVID-19 related webinars and workshops. Despite travel restrictions, these events ensured continuous education and capacity building, facilitating the dissemination of information and best practices among aviation professionals and stakeholders. This commitment to continuous training and support played a crucial role in maintaining operational readiness and resilience.
47. Furthermore, the MID RO maintained regular communication and coordination with States and stakeholders through virtual meetings, including Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) meetings and regional coordination groups. This continuous engagement ensured that States remained informed and could effectively address operational challenges as they arose.
48. The MID RO also actively monitored the implementation status of CART recommendations through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC) and provided necessary assistance to States for posting relevant information. This oversight and support were vital in ensuring compliance with international guidelines and standards.
49. Lastly, the MID RO played a crucial role in supporting urgent needs for the global supply chain, humanitarian flights, and repatriation flights. By facilitating these critical operations, the MID RO ensured that essential services continued uninterrupted, contributing to global efforts to manage the pandemic's impact on aviation and beyond.
50. On the other hand, the MID RO encountered several significant challenges in its efforts to support States during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the primary challenges was coordination between aviation and public health sectors at the State level for implementing CART recommendations. The pandemic severely affected States' economies and the resources of some CAAs and the aviation industry, making the recovery difficult.
51. Another major challenge was the negative impact on Member States' oversight capacities. The pandemic required substantial investments in aviation operations, but financial constraints and travel restrictions made it difficult for States to maintain effective oversight. Implementing CART and High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) recommendations also proved challenging for

some States. Insufficient expertise and the extensive need for capacity building created obstacles to fully implementing these recommendations.

52. The pandemic led to a significant re-prioritization of activities within the MID RO, affecting the implementation of the regional offices' operating plans. The necessary shift to virtual events was hindered by poor internet quality, frequent electricity cuts, and insufficient participation from some States, which had shifted their priorities due to the pandemic's impact.
53. The inability to conduct onsite missions affected the implementation of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) and Universal Security Audit Programme's Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP CMA) validation activities. The absence of these critical missions hindered the ability to conduct thorough assessments and provide targeted support, thus impacting the overall progress towards achieving compliance and enhancing safety and security standards.

### Coherence

54. Coherence was measured as the extent to which the support provided by MID RO to Member States was compatible with other interventions by ICAO and relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and global level.

**Finding 4:** The MID Regional Office has effectively ensured coherence and avoided duplication by working with other ICAO Regional Offices and Regional Groups (RASG-MID, MIDANPIRG and RASFG-MID) and other stakeholders.

55. MID RO has significantly contributed to the coherence and harmonization of civil aviation efforts across regions, ensuring more efficient and unified operations. MID RO has collaborated with other ICAO Regional Offices to establish critical frameworks and initiatives, exemplified by the ESAF Office's assistance in establishing the MID-RASFG, demonstrating effective cross-regional cooperation. To enhance civil-military coordination for the MID and APAC Regions, the MID RO has conducted inter-regional workshop, and another workshop aimed at fostering the implementation of Annexes 9 and 17, aligning procedures and approaches across regions. Joint efforts have also led to the development of regional roadmaps within the Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI), EUR/NAT, and MID Region, providing a strategic framework for achieving common goals and addressing shared challenges. Additionally, the MID RO has organized symposiums on critical issues such as GPS jamming, bringing together experts from various regions to discuss and mitigate this significant threat.
56. MID RO also played crucial role in connecting MID Member States with other Member States in other regional offices. For example, the Office has facilitated communication between Egypt and South Africa, ensuring **seamless information flow and cooperation**. This liaison function is essential for addressing regional issues that require coordinated responses and sharing resources and expertise across borders. The MID RO's coordination efforts have also contributed to crisis management through working with ESAF Office during the Somalia and Sudan crisis.

57. The establishment of MENA-RSOO as a coordinated initiative by the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO), ICAO MID and by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) aiming to improve regional safety by means of cooperation of MENA States and enhance resource utilization across regional offices. The recent efforts to expedite the launch of operation of the MENA RSOO by MID RO and Saudi Arabia is expected to further improve aviation safety in the region.

**Finding 5:** The regional mechanisms such as RASG-MID, MIDANPIRG and RASFG-MID have helped to bring together Member States and important regional stakeholders such as ACAO, FAA, IATA, EASA etc. to the planning meetings and these helped to improve alignment and coordination. In addition to these, the RO has bilateral arrangements and agreements with stakeholder such as ACAO.

58. MID RO has provided various platforms for strategic planning and industry participation, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of civil aviation operations in the region.
59. The Regional Groups, RASG-MID, MIDANPIRG, and RASFG-MID, have significantly enhanced alignment and coordination in civil aviation efforts in the region. These mechanisms have effectively brought together key stakeholders, including Member States, ACAO, FAA, International Air Transport Association (IATA), EASA, CANSO, ACI and others, to planning meetings, thereby improving regional programme alignment and coordination. The use of these regional coordination mechanisms has proven effective in preventing duplication of efforts and enhancing overall efficiency.
60. In particular, since 2018, the MID Regional Office has strengthened its collaborations with organizations such as ACAO<sup>10</sup>, FAA, EUROCONTROL, Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO), IATA, and Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO), resulting in numerous joint activities including workshops, seminars, and webinars that support regional civil aviation initiatives<sup>11</sup>. A joint program between the ACAO and MID RO has been developed and implemented, enhancing regional cooperation and knowledge sharing. Collaborations with the FAA and EUROCONTROL have been instrumental in supporting various activities<sup>12</sup> and coordination meetings with service providers like the AACO, IATA, and CANSO<sup>13</sup>.
61. Industry actors play a significant role in supporting the MID RO activities, notably demonstrated by the joint appointment of RO MID and Airport Council International (ACI) as rapporteurs of a working group to draft the MID Region Air Transport Strategic Plan 2025-2040.

### Effectiveness

62. The effectiveness of MID RO support to Member States was measured as evidence of the achievement of target objectives. This section has had a particular focus on the progress that

<sup>10</sup> Revised each triennium based ICAO Business Plan.

<sup>11</sup> For example, The Joint ACAO/ICAO FRMS Workshop (November 2019), ACAO/ICAO Frequency Management Workshop (June 2022), etc.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, The ACAO/ICAO Dangerous Good Workshop (December 2022) was supported by FAA.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, in 2021, the Air Transport Data and Analysis Webinar implemented jointly with AACO, ACAO and IATA.

was made by MID RO to fulfil its planned activities and achieve its expected results during 2017-2019 and 2020-2022.

**Finding 6:** While the Regional Operating Plan is a framework for effective results management, its usefulness has been reduced by the inadequate use of the framework for proper results planning and monitoring.

63. The MID RO Regional Operating Plan is in the form of a performance planning and monitoring framework that is updated annually and is used to track and report on the progress of the RO in achieving its expected results. It is incorporated into the ICAO Corporate Management and Reporting Tool (CMRT) before and currently in the CPMR. A combination of deliverables and key performance indicators as well as targets are used to measure the extent to which the RO has contributed to its Member States. Work programmes with required budgets and timelines are further prepared for detailed planning of meetings/ workshops/ seminars.
64. The evaluation encountered major challenges when tracking achieved results Vs planned targets, as there were multiple instances of incomplete information. Activities and outputs/deliverables entered by the RO in the system are not clear and provide insufficient information about where the activities are to be implemented. Activities often have multiple targets, and the operating plan solely indicates 'completed' without further explanation of which of the targets were completed. Work programmes were a mere schedule of meetings/workshops/seminars, and do not reflect numerical and non-numerical data for measuring the progress of planned results (such as increases of percentages, number of States, development of material; etc.), which makes tracking achievements more difficult.
65. The other problem observed is that targets that include changes in level of achievement (increase the Annex 17 compliance in the region to 80%; increase EI as per SECFAL target list; increase the membership of the Cooperative Aviation Security Programme–Middle East (CASP-MID) Programme and ensure its sustainability etc.), were presented for activities/deliverables and often lack baseline data to be able to monitor the progress of activities.
66. Some targets also involved two separate components which was difficult to measure. For example, the Operating Plan of 2022 indicates the target to 'increase the membership of the CASP-MID Programme and ensure its sustainability'. The 2020 Plan also has as target 'Development and implementation of 6 State's NCLB Plans of Action'.
67. These challenges have resulted in difficulties tracking actual results. For instance, in 2021, reports on the development and implementation of 3 State's NCLB Plans of Action indicate that Jordan and Kuwait as having developed their plans, while the two States were reported to have developed the plans in 2017. Based on the cited example, it would have been more appropriate for the report of results achievement to identify the States that have developed and those that have implemented.
68. These observations echo the conclusions of the OIO Internal Audit Report on MID RO, "there is a limited and fragmented effort to monitor the achievements against targets set in the operating plans of the period 2019-2021.... Many indicators are not robust enough to enable monitoring

and they lack proper baselines and targets”<sup>14</sup>. Such gaps were also reflected in the OIO Report on the Evaluation of Results-Based Management at ICAO, which highlighted the “weak organizational guidance and limited staff engagement in the process”<sup>15</sup>.

69. These shortcomings could be attributed to inadequate training of staff in results-based management, and not having received adequate guidance and support in Operating Plan preparation. The only reported trainings were in 2018 that the RD’s attendance of Management Development Programme Course and CAA Senior and Middle Managers Training Course (SMMTC) for RO/FLS & RO/ASF1. With staff turnover and an inadequate knowledge management system (to be discussed in the next section), these limitations could eventually impact the implementation of programme objectives and operations.
70. The following section has been organized under each of ICAO’s five strategic objectives and has assessed results and achievement during 2017- 2023. The discussion of results is not exhaustive but provides some key examples of the planned and achieved results by the RO and Member States.
71. In general, results reporting by MID RO under all the strategic objectives has not provided adequate details of results achieved. As the evaluation has triangulated CMRT data with Work Programmes and different Annual Reports, stakeholder consultations and document review, the achievements reported under the sub-sections that follow are informed by different sources.

#### Strategic Objective 1: Safety

**Finding 7:** The MID Regional Office (RO) has made significant contribution to achieve global and regional targets in aviation safety through the implementation of Member States and regional aviation safety priorities across all areas of safety. However, the Effective Implementation (EI) rate for conflict affected countries is very low.

72. Within the MID RO Regional Operating Plan, the key activity areas for Strategic Objective 1: Safety were:
  - Assist States in the implementation of policies and provisions to address critical safety issues concerning Safety Management, Search and Rescue, and other areas.
  - Develop, and measure progress against regional Safety priorities through Regional Plans and RASGs.
  - Assist States in the implementation of policies and provisions to improve in-flight safety performance (ANIWP: ROI-10) and improve safety performance at and in the vicinity of aerodromes (ANIWP: ROI-04).
  - Support the rapid and coordinated response to crises, contingencies and other situations requiring urgent assistance to States and support the effort to achieve the NCLB goals within the Safety objective.

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<sup>14</sup> Op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> ICAO. OIO. Report on the Evaluation of Results-Based Management at ICAO.p02.

73. These activities span training, policy development, strategic planning, crisis management, and proactive monitoring, reflecting a thorough approach to strengthening safety practices in civil aviation.
74. Through the 2017-2019 period, MID RO contributed towards the achievement of its planned target for assistance to States in developing the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and follow ups. In 2017, the MID RO successfully met its target by assisting to five states—Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Oman. Building on this momentum, the MID RO not only met but exceeded its 2018 target by assisting five states—Bahrain, Sudan, Iraq, Kuwait, and KSA—despite the initial plan for four. In 2019, the RO further expanded its efforts, conducting six assistance missions, surpassing the target of four states. The missions included assistance to Lebanon, Oman, and Kuwait, and expanded to regional hubs such as Casablanca for MENA States, Cairo, and direct support to Iraq and KSA.
75. MID RO support in the area of Safety was highly appreciated by interviewed Civil Aviation Authorities. Egypt CAA appreciated the guidance provided throughout the preparation of the USOAP CMA Audit planned for 2024 and the support to improve in-flight safety performance and safety at aerodromes.
76. In 2023, the MID RO supported States in developing comprehensive Safety Management Systems (SMS) and Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. For instance, Bahrain implemented a new SAR framework with MID RO assistance, enhancing their readiness and response capabilities. The evaluation indicates that the MID RO has made substantial progress towards ensuring the appropriate infrastructure to support safe operations. This involves meticulous adherence to international safety standards and enhancing operational facilities across the region.
77. Support was provided to States on implementing ICAO Annex 14 requirements, primarily through workshops and training sessions aimed at improving aerodrome design and operations<sup>16</sup>. Despite these efforts, the certification rate for international aerodromes in the MID region remains below the target, achieving only 58.62% compliance<sup>17</sup>.
78. During the evaluation period, MID RO has significantly exceeded its target for establishing Runway Safety Teams (RSTs) at MID International Aerodromes. The target was set at 50% by 2020, yet 68.97% of the international aerodromes had established RSTs, showcasing a strong commitment to enhancing runway safety<sup>18</sup>.
79. The MID RO developed tailored materials and conducted specialized workshops, such as the SSP Implementation Workshop held in Kuwait in March 2023, which was met with high demand from other States. These initiatives were part of a broader strategy to enhance state capabilities in implementing Safety Management Systems (SMS) and other safety-related standards.

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, a training course was conducted on implementing Annex 14, during period of 8-12 Nov2020. A training on aerodrome certification was conducted from 15-19 Nov 2021. Also, an online Workshop on airport certification was conducted by ACAO during the period 25-28 Oct 2021

<sup>17</sup> ASPIG/5

<sup>18</sup> ASPIG/3

**Finding 8:** While some progress has been made regarding strategic development and implementation of safety plans, as only 6 out of the 15 MID States have successfully developed and published their National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP), there is still a significant need for continued support and follow-up to ensure that more States complete and implement their NASPs effectively.

80. Another pivotal accomplishment for the MID RO was the formulation and approval of the Middle East Regional Aviation Safety Plan (MID-RASP) for the 2020-2022 period<sup>19</sup>, developed through extensive consultation with States, regional organizations, and aligned with the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP)<sup>20</sup>. The success of this initiative led to the review and further development of the MID-RASP for the 2023-2025 period by the Safety Enhancement Implementation Group (SEIG), which included updates and revisions to incorporate new Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs) and review existing ones. MID-RASP was successfully endorsed at the RASG-MID/8 meeting in February 2021, reinforcing the MID RO's dedication to upholding stringent safety standards and fostering a culture of safety across the region.
81. This plan laid the groundwork for the development of National Aviation Safety Plans (NASPs) by Member States. While MID RO provided support and guided States in the development of NASPs through workshops and sharing of best practices, only 6 (Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE)<sup>21</sup> of the 15 MID States have completed and published their NASP. Recently, it is reported that Iraq has also finalized its NASP. Based on the progress in NASP development, however, it is worth considering whether follow up by MID RO has been adequate, to determine if States require further support to develop and implement their aviation safety plans.
82. In its strategic regional aviation portfolio, the MID RO has initiated multiple interventions to ensure effective aviation safety management by States. These interventions are carefully aligned with the ICAO strategic objectives and the RASP, contributing towards global aviation safety goals.
83. The establishment of the MENA Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) is another strategic move supported by the MID RO to foster regional safety collaboration. The MENA-RSOO is an important regional body aimed at enhancing aviation safety oversight through collaboration among Member States. Notably, Saudi Arabia has played a pivotal role in the establishment and support of the Middle East Regional Safety Oversight Organization (MENA-RSOO). KSA provided significant financial and technical support for the initial operations of the MENA-RSOO. This support included funding for the organization's first year of operations as well as hosting the MENA RSOO offices in Riyadh.

<sup>19</sup> During the Eighth meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Middle East (RASG-MID/8) held in Cairo, Egypt, Virtual Meetings, 15-22 February 2021;

<sup>20</sup> MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY PLAN (MID-RASP) FIRST EDITION 2020–2022 DRAFT. P21.

<sup>21</sup>

[https://soa.icao.int/gasp?\\_gl=1\\*19xpzu1\\*\\_ga\\*MTk1NzM0NDA3OS4xNjA0NTI0ODE3\\*\\_ga\\_992N3YDLBQ\\*MTY5MTc2NzA4Ni4xMzUuMS4xNjY3MDg4LjAuMC4w](https://soa.icao.int/gasp?_gl=1*19xpzu1*_ga*MTk1NzM0NDA3OS4xNjA0NTI0ODE3*_ga_992N3YDLBQ*MTY5MTc2NzA4Ni4xMzUuMS4xNjY3MDg4LjAuMC4w)

84. Despite initial disagreements among States concerning the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the MID RO played a crucial role in facilitating consensus, demonstrating its effectiveness in managing regional diplomacy.
85. There has been no SSCs in the Region since 2016<sup>22</sup>. According to the MID Annual Safety Reports, the 5-year average accident rate is 2.02, which is below the global average rate of 2.6. Two (2) accidents with aircraft above 5 700 kg have occurred in the MID Region in 2019; one of them was fatal with 176 fatalities (Categorized as a Security Occurrence) and in 2020 one non-fatal accident has occurred.
86. According to the ICAO USOAP dashboard (Figure as of July 16, 2024), the regional average overall EI for safety oversight capabilities stands at 76.8%, surpassing the world average of 68.68%. Despite this achievement, three States are currently below the EI threshold of 60%, indicating areas requiring focused improvement, particularly in Accident Investigation and Navigation Services (AIG and ANS). Additionally, the recent conflict in Sudan may affect the average EI rate, potentially exacerbating the challenges faced in maintaining and improving safety oversight capabilities in the region.
87. Among the Critical Elements (CEs), CE4 (Qualified Technical Personnel) showed notable improvement and is now above the 60% EI threshold. However, CE8 (Resolution of Safety Issues) remains below the required 60% threshold, highlighting a critical area needing enhanced attention. In addition, stakeholders observed that some PQs need clarification and further assistance to help States develop credential for inspectors.

### Strategic Objective 2: Air navigation Capacity and efficiency

**Finding 9:** The MID RO has demonstrated substantial success in executing its Air Navigation activities, meeting, or exceeding most targets, particularly in optimizing aerodrome operations, advancing navigational aids infrastructure, and implementing ATM data security plans.

88. MID RO established eight areas/categories of planned activities under Strategic Objective 2: Air Navigation Capacity and efficiency of the Regional Operating Plan. The key areas for these activities involved:
  - Assist States in the implementation of policies and provisions related to Communications, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS).
  - Assist States in the implementation of policies and provisions related to Aeronautical Information Management (AIM).
  - Assist States in the implementation of policies and provisions related to Meteorology (MET).
  - Develop and measure progress against regional Air Navigation priorities through Regional Air Navigation Plans and PIRGs.
89. The planned activities for Air Navigation were: 1) support the implementation of CNS systems to enhance air navigation capabilities, 2) improve the management and dissemination of AIM

<sup>22</sup> RASG-MID Annual Safety Report 2017-2021.

to ensure accurate and timely aeronautical data, 3) enhance Meteorological services to provide accurate weather information crucial for flight safety and operations, and 4) continuously develop and measure progress against regional Air Navigation priorities through structured planning and implementation groups.

90. Each of these activities targets a specific aspect of Air Navigation, ensuring comprehensive support and improvement in communications, information management, and meteorological services, underpinned by ongoing regional collaboration and evaluation. This list encapsulates the strategic efforts made from 2017 to 2023 in the domain of Air Navigation.
91. Analysis of available data indicated that most targets were met or exceeded. For example, the MID RO successfully conducted workshops and meetings such as the AIDC/OLDI Workshop (in 2023), which resulted in the revised MID Region Strategy for AIDC/OLDI implementation. Additionally, the MID RO facilitated the WRC23 Preparatory Workshop and ensured alignment of States' positions with the ICAO WRC23 position. In the area of Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), the MID RO assisted States like Yemen, Iraq, and Libya to migrate to the European AIS Database (EAD). This support was instrumental in enhancing the digitalization and modernization of aeronautical information services in these States.
92. MID RO has also made very good progress towards the achievement of its planned activities in Navigational Aids, ATM Data Security, IP Network, GNSS Vulnerabilities, Surveillance Plan as well as Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) activities (Departure/arrival rates) and ATM (Improved ATS routes induced by flexible use of airspace). For instance, in 2017, the MID region exceeded the 50% target of the performance related to PBN included in the MID-Air Navigation Strategy (achieving 73% of PBN RWYs).
93. The other major achievement was the revised MID Region Air Navigation Strategy (Edition March 2023), which is aligned with the GANP 7th Edition and ASBU Framework. The Strategy is the key document for MIDANPIRG and its Subsidiary Bodies to monitor and analyze the implementation within the MID Region, it has introduced major changes compared to the previous version, including the endorsement of 4 KPIs, as a first phase for the monitoring of the performance of the air navigation system. The MID Region ATFM Concept of Operation was also finalized and presented to MIDANPIRG/18, for endorsement.
94. MID RO has been supporting Member States in developing NANPs. Despite these successes, there are concerns about the adequacy of support provided to Member States in developing their National Air Navigation Plans (NANPs), highlighted by delays in planned workshops<sup>23</sup>. Only Kuwait has finalized its NANPs so far. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE have developed their draft NANPs.
95. Various capacity-building activities including workshops and webinars have been implemented supporting implementation of policies and provisions on CNS and Information Management (IM). For instance, in 2017, 3 missions addressing CNS were conducted to Sudan, Jordan and

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<sup>23</sup> NANP workshop (originally scheduled in 2021 was postponed to Q1- 2023).

Iran. In 2019, 1 Workshop on Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS) Aeronautical information management (AIM) was conducted.

### Strategic Objective 3: Security and facilitation

**Finding 10:** Overall, MID RO has provided tailored technical assistance and guidance to NACC Member States and met or exceeded planned annual targets. The region has achieved above the global USAP EI average and the GASep target.

96. Security and Facilitation was established to facilitate activities under five results areas:
- Developing Aviation Security and Facilitation Projects;
  - Representation in Aviation Security Meetings;
  - Assistance and Reporting on Security Policy Initiatives;
  - Identification of Lags in SECFAL Priorities;
  - Crisis Management and Contingency Planning.
97. The planned activities for security and facilitation involved: 1) assisting States in the region with the development of security and facilitation projects, including initiatives related to the Traveler Identification Programme (TRIP) and Machine-Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), 2) Representation in Aviation Security Meetings, 3) assistance and reporting on Security Policy Initiatives, 4) identification of Lags in SECFAL Priorities, and 5) assisting States to establish or refine crisis management and contingency plans to enhance resilience in aviation security.
98. The analysis of data on planned vs achieved activities shows a pattern of generally meeting<sup>24</sup> or exceeding<sup>25</sup> planned targets, with some notable exceptions where activities were postponed to subsequent years largely due to staff turnover<sup>26</sup>. Notable accomplishments included support provided to States scheduled for USAP-CMA audit (Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon Iran, Iraq and Sudan) to ensure their readiness and enhance the effective implementation of USAP-CMA as well as for the development and implementation of CAPs.
99. The RO has also supported States in strengthening civil military coordination mechanism in collaboration with partners such as FAA, ACAC, Euro Control, IATA, etc. through workshops and missions. MID RO has also played a key role in coordinating projects that affect more than one country (example the MID FIFA World Cup 2022 Task Force; for a smooth preparation for the event and safe and efficient management of the excessive traffic flow).
100. In the MID region, the level of EI for Aviation Security Oversight System covering Annex 17 Standards and the security-related provisions of Annex 9 as of 2019 was 74.75% and the compliance with Annex 17 Standards was 72.4%. These figures remained unchanged in 2021 as no USAP-CMA activities took place during 2020 and 2021. There is no SSeC in the Region.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, in 2019, 1 Seminar/workshop addressing Cyber security. 1 Cyber Security and resilience symposium conducted, achieving the target.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, in 2017, 2 missions were planned. However, 3 missions were conducted (Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon), exceeding the planned number of missions.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, in 2019, 1 FAL Implementation Workshop was planned. The Workshop was postponed to 2020, indicating a delay and not achieving the planned activity within the year.

101. The MID Region endorsed the Regional AVSEC/FAL Implementation Team (RAFIT) State Risk Management Framework and updated the MID AVSECFAL Roadmap and targets<sup>27</sup>. During the evaluation period, MID RO has also provided support to Security and Facilitation initiatives within the Region. The RO convened conferences, workshops and seminars to support the implementation of the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP). Capacity building activities were also conducted, including 1 FAL Webinar (in 2022), AVSEC Regional Workshop on National Certification.
102. The CASP-MID enabled States to improve their aviation security provisions and arrangements, and to develop a standing structure for cooperation and coordination in aviation security matters in the Middle East Region. CASP-MID provides a regional approach to aviation security assistance and training designed to meet the specific needs of participating States.
103. In 2017, an interregional forum was also established to align the Africa/Middle East and European initiatives to implement the GASeP<sup>28</sup>. The same year, a MID REGION SECFAL ROADMAP has also been developed<sup>29</sup>.
104. The evaluation also noted that the MID RO conducted an assistance mission to UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) restricted States such as Libya and Iraq that resulted in the development of a security improvement plan for the States in question. The Libyan CAA consider that support as critical and a breakthrough to improve aviation security works in the State.

#### Strategic Objective 4: Economic development of air transport

**Finding 11:** While the data from 2017 to 2019 shows a robust implementation of planned activities with a clear focus on activities such as seminars, workshops, and support missions, the evaluation found no information on the implementation of planned activities in 2020 and inconsistencies in reporting achievements between 2020-2023.

105. Strategic Objective 4: Economic Development of Air Transport was established to facilitate activities under three results areas:
  - Policy Assistance and Monitoring
  - Support for the Implementation of CART and Take-Off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public (TOGD) and
  - Dissemination and Promotion of Air Transport Policies
106. Activities under this Strategic Objective include: 1) assisting States in the region to follow ICAO's policies and guidance, as well as Regional Action Plans involving monitoring and reporting

<sup>27</sup> MID-RASFG/3 Meeting

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.icao.int/annual-report-2018/Pages/FR/implementation-support-regional-office-achievements.aspx>

<sup>29</sup>

<https://www.icao.int/MID/Documents/2018/Interregional%20AVSEC%20and%20FAL%20Seminar/PPT%201%20MID%20Region%20Roadmap%20-%20Luay.pdf>

significant developments related to air transport matters, 2) providing continuous support and assistance to States for the implementation of the CART recommendations and the Take-Off: TOGD, and 3) engaging in the dissemination and promotion of policies and guidance, coupled with assistance.

107. The data from 2017 to 2019 shows MID RO has implemented most of the planned activities under this strategic objective. Most of the activities were seminars, workshops, and support missions that foster knowledge exchange and address developments in air transport. In 2018, MID RO planned: 2 seminars/workshops; support provided as required. The RO conducted EUR/MID Aviation data exchange meeting demonstrating commitment to fostering knowledge and collaborating in air transport.
108. However, in 2020, MID RO planned a Seminar/Workshop and a survey to identify the number of states with a high level of observance of ICAO's air transport policies. There was no information on the implementation of these activities. The absence of reported achievements against the planned activities for 2020 suggests either lack of execution due to the COVID-19 pandemic or misreporting.
109. The MID regional office, coordinated with ATB/HQ, for the promotion of the ICAO policies and guidance in the field of Economic Development of Air Transport, as well as for the provision of assistance, through the organization of webinars on CART Recommendation 10 – Economic and Financial Measures, and on the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Aviation, with the support of stakeholders from different International and Regional Organizations. To provide support to States in the region concerning civil aviation forecasting, economic planning, and statistics and sharing of data/information, the MID RO and ATB have conducted 1 Air Transport Statistics and Forecasting Workshop in 2022.
110. The RO cooperated also with the regional civil aviation bodies/organizations such as the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Aviation Safety Oversight Committee, the IATA, and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) to maximize synergies that ensure efficient and cost-effective assistance to States.
111. As such, assistance was provided through exchange of emails and telephone calls, in particular for the completion of the required statistics forms, Aviation Data and Analysis in relevant Seminars on air transport statistics and data management (such as the one convened in Tehran 20-23 Feb. 2017/ in Paris, 4-6 Apr. 2018).
112. MID RO also participated in coordination meetings with International and Regional Organizations. For instance, the Fifth MID Regional Coordination Meeting (MID RCM/5) was held at the ICAO MID Office, Cairo, Egypt on 4 July 2018. The main outcome of this meeting was the adoption of a Regional Cooperation Joint Programme/Action Plan 2019-2022. The DGCA-MID/6 meeting, through Conclusion 6/6, agreed to the development of a MID Region Air Transport Strategic Plan 2025-2040, in order to support the sustainable development of air transport in the MID Region, in line with the Strategic Objectives of ICAO and at the same time supporting the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

113. The fifteenth ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN2023) Event was hosted by the General Authority of Civil Aviation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 3 to 7 December 2023. The event was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in a hybrid setting (in-person and virtually) and provided a structured environment for bilateral and multilateral air services negotiations among the participating States. Member States have indicated that “ICAN workshops offered a unique platform where Member States can efficiently negotiate air service agreements in one location, significantly saving time and resources”. Stakeholders identified the workshop as a success for ICAO, MID RO and Saudi Arabia.
114. However, Member States observed the primary Focus of MID RO and ICAO support is geared towards safety and security. This is because ensuring the safety and security of aviation operations is fundamental to the functioning of international civil aviation. Some stakeholders noted the ‘inadequacy’ of support provided to MS on economic development of Air Transport. The lack of support and emphasis on economic regulations from the MID RO/ ICAO means that Member States may struggle with challenges related to market liberalization, financial stability of airlines, and economic growth of the aviation sector. Addressing economic regulatory needs alongside safety and security will contribute to a more robust, competitive, and resilient aviation industry in the region. It is recommended that the MID RO intensifies its focus on airport regulation by organizing dedicated workshops and training sessions, developing a regional airport regulation framework, providing increased technical assistance and advisory services, promoting collaborative initiatives among Member States, and implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system.

#### Strategic Objective 5: Environmental protection

**Finding 12:** While the MID RO has organized meetings and capacity-building activities related to Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), SAF and facilitated access to the Central CORSIA Registry (CCR) in collaboration with ATB, its ability to fully support the development and implementation of States' CO<sub>2</sub> reduction plans and other activities under the Strategic Objective was limited largely due to absence of Regional Officer for environment.

115. Under this Strategic objective, ICAO was working to minimize the adverse environmental effects of civil aviation activities. This Strategic Objective fosters ICAO's leadership in all aviation-related environmental activities with a focus on aircraft noise, local air quality and climate change and aviation emissions. The 41st Assembly of ICAO has also adopted a long-term global aspirational goal (LTAG) for international aviation of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
116. Strategic Objective 5: Environmental Protection was designed to facilitate planned activities in three results areas:
- Assist development and implementation of States' action plans on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction activities in the region;

- Assist States in the region to implement Annex 16 and guidance, as well as on the assessment of environmental benefits which are associated with the implementation of operational improvement; and
  - Cooperate with regional organizations and represent ICAO in meetings relating to environmental protection.
117. The planned activities in environmental protection included: 1) Regional training/seminars on action plan development and measure implementation etc.; 2) Dissemination and promotion of policies and guidance, as well as assistance activities through interaction with States; and Assistance/training on use of the ICAO Fuel Savings Estimation Tool (IFSET); 3) Priorities of States and ICAO reflected in external policies; and Identification of needs in the region.
118. MID RO contributed towards the achievement of its planned activities/ deliverables in several areas. The RO coordinated workshops to enhance state capacities in 2017 to support States in the implementation of environmental policies, such as the ICAO Annex 16. As a result of ICAO's support, in 2018<sup>30</sup>, 7 States have developed their action plans on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction activities in the region. As of 2023, 9 states have submitted their SAPs on CO<sub>2</sub> emission.
- Best Practices: Qatar**

Qatar has been actively promoting the use of SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuels) and LCAF (Low Carbon Aviation Fuels) such as the Algal Technologies Program towards sustainable aviation fuel and the Sustainable Solar-driven Biofuel Generation from industrial wastewaters without external bias.
119. In 2020, the focus was on cooperation with international and regional organizations, participating in key meetings and conferences to drive environmental initiatives. By 2023, notable accomplishments included organizing CORSIA workshops for Libya, Syria, Sudan, and Iran, and holding teleconferences with MID States to identify common environmental challenges and solutions. In 2023, progress was made towards implementing Free Route Airspace (FRA) initiatives within the MID Region that allows aircraft to fly more direct routes, reducing flight distances and fuel consumption, which in turn lowers carbon emissions. Additionally, PBN enhances flight efficiency and precision, further optimizing fuel use and minimizing the environmental footprint of aviation operations. These initiatives contribute to more sustainable air traffic management, aligning with global efforts to reduce the aviation industry's environmental impact.
120. The MID RO, in collaboration with ATB, supported the ICAO ACT CORSIA initiative and provided support to States, in coordination with HQ, to facilitate the access to the CCR and to ensure the proper submission of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions data in a timely manner. Several capacity-building and assistance activities were conducted, including teleconferences with States at each CORSIA actions/timelines and the monitoring of CCR to identify States not complying with the timely submission of Data, series of webinars on Decarbonization and establishment and facilitation of

<sup>30</sup> Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, KSA, Sudan and UAE.

CORSIA Buddy Partnerships between Qatar and Kuwait/Libya. Assistance to States continued for the development/update of the SAP, including remote assistance.

121. However, the support provided by the MID RO in environmental protection has been limited primarily in organizing meetings and capacity-building activities related to the CORSIA. Member States indicated that remote support can also be limited by several factors, including time differences that create learning challenges. Language barriers was another factor that is affecting the effectiveness of capacity building workshops and trainings, especially when nuanced or technical issues are involved. The assessment of environmental benefits has been conducted and published in the MID AN Report. As a result, 78% of MID States rate Environmental Protection as less achievable compared to other strategic objectives.<sup>31</sup>

#### Support for Conflict affected countries

**Finding 13:** Despite facing numerous challenges, MID RO provided relevant and timely support to conflict affected Member States, and effectively communicated and coordinated during crises. The support was facilitated by the active engagement of MID Member States. However, the crisis affecting Member States in the region is complex and beyond the capacity of the Regional Office requiring global level coordination and political leadership.

122. Instabilities and conflicts are serious impediments affecting aviation in many ways. Conflicts restricts aviation in the affected countries. It also affects many airlines and operators by rising prices and significant airspace restrictions. Airspace closures due to wars force flights to longer routes, resulting in longer travel times, higher fuel costs and added carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. The aviation industry is also affected by armed conflicts, as demonstrated by the downing of the Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 and Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752. To address the issues ICAO has prepared Doc 10084 — Risk Assessment Manual for Civil Aircraft Operations Over or Near Conflict Zones. Countries like Canada has also started a 'Safer Skies Initiative' in 2020 to mitigate the risks posed by conflict zones to global civil aviation operations.
123. The MID region suffers from multilayered crises, political and security requiring a tailored approach from the RO. Stakeholders at the regional and State levels have provided positive feedback on MID RO timely communication and proactive role in managing different crises, to reduce the effect of the crisis on civil aviation.
124. To discuss the roles during an emergency and responses to a particular emergency, the MID RO has planned and delivered tabletop exercises on crisis management<sup>32</sup> and Cybersecurity in February 2019 and September 2020 respectively.
125. Some MID Member States are conflict affected States with a dire need of assistance. Yet, access to the concerned States is often difficult due to crises resulting to UNDSS travel restrictions. Similarly, due to the high political sensitivity in the region, obtaining entry visa to many of the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.p17

<sup>32</sup> NM/EACCC "Pandemics 19", EUROCONTROL

Member States has been noted as problematic, and further coordination with relevant authorities on the visa issuance for some nationalities was necessary.

126. Through direct and open communication with the high-level leadership in conflict affected States, MID RO has been able to deliver assistance activities, including:
- Holding meetings/workshops in other States
  - Online support activities
  - Coordinating with international organizations, including UN Humanitarian Organizations, for the provision of required assistance
  - Arrangements for desktop audit by HQ Montreal (e.g., Iraq and Libya)
127. Remarkably, onsite support activities have also been made possible by a dedicated team of officers for several conflicts affected States, including Libya. Examples of activities implemented include deployment of the Implementation Package entitled "Aerodromes Restart" to Libya<sup>33</sup>, to ensure that aerodrome operations in Libya can resume safely and efficiently, adhering to international standards and best practices. This includes addressing operational safety, infrastructure readiness, and regulatory compliance. The deployment of the "Aerodromes Restart" iPack to Libya began in 2022 as part of ICAO's ongoing efforts to assist States in post-crisis recovery.
128. MID RO's field missions, such as those to previously UNDSS restricted States like Lebanon, have been crucial in assessing and enhancing local capacities, particularly in aerodrome safety inspections. These missions were part of MID RO's hands-on approach to improving state readiness for international safety evaluations.
129. Stakeholders and Member States interviewed considered the April 2023 Assistance Mission by the RO to Libya to be a milestone in aviation security improvement in Libya and in ICAO/Libya CAA relations. Interviewed representatives of Libya CAA indicated that the visit was a major step forward "as it has influenced local decision making in the country". Furthermore, following this visit, ICAO has formalized a new Implementation Support Agreement with Libya to heighten the application of the ICAO SARPs in the State<sup>34</sup>.
130. Such support has been made possible through strong regional cooperation and joint activities with MID States. In the MID Region, there are States with very strong aviation safety and security oversight systems with EI scores over and above global average and others lagging well below global average and needing assistance to enhance their oversight capabilities. Hence, MID RO approach was to offer capacity building activities, such as the conduct of seminars, workshops,

The visit and hands on support by ICAO staff was a major step forward in aviation security improvement as it has also influenced local decision making in the country.

Member State Representative

<sup>33</sup> Fifth Meeting of Aerodrome Safety & Planning Implementation Group (Doha, Qatar, 13-15 June 2023) (ASPIG/5). Overview of the: Aerodrome Restart iPack implemented for Libya and its Deployment Report

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.icao.int/Newsroom/Pages/ICAO-formalizes-new-Implementation-Support-Agreement-with-Libya.aspx>

training courses (e.g., GSI courses, ECCAIRS, Safety Management, Risk Management, RPAS/UAS, Cyber Security, etc.), as well as assistance missions/go-team for selected States (e.g. Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Yemen), to benefit from the experience of developed States and international organizations and enhance the effective implementation scores.

131. Bilateral agreements have also played a significant role in supporting challenged States. For instance, KSA has been contributing to the aviation sector of Yemen under “The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen”. Additionally, Oman has been working with Yemen to reevaluate the reopening of its air space. Oman also sent experts to Iraq and Syria to assist in enhancing their security frameworks. Egypt has been actively assisting Libya (over 100 workshops were organized in Libya). Egypt has also assisted Syria through the NCLB initiative. For instance, in September 2018, during the training on Obstacle Limitations, Egypt provided support to 5 Delegates from Syria.
132. Furthermore, MID RO has developed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The MID Audit report has highlighted the learning opportunities from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, including “working from home arrangements, exploring ways to conduct business virtually, and ensuring the availability of efficient IT systems, etc.”<sup>35</sup>, to feed into an updated BCP.
133. However, some interviewed regional officers have observed that despite these proactive measures, the MID RO often ends up acting in a firefighting mode rather than maintaining a consistently proactive crisis management approach. They also highlighted a fragmented approach to contingency planning rather than a single unified document (MID Region ATM Contingency Plan, MID Region Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan).
134. The MID office maintains a Regional Risk Register which does not include all the key risks facing the RO. It also maintains a separate IT risk register which is not included in the Regional Office Risk Register. Lastly, the RO risk register is not synchronized with the risks identified in the latest BCP document<sup>36</sup>.
135. This situation is partly due to the strained human and financial resources of the Office. Yet, this area was noted as of a high priority during consultation with stakeholders, as it entails a reputational risk for the Organization. These issues underline the need for a more integrated approach to enhance resilience and operational effectiveness amidst ongoing political and security challenges.
136. MID’s volatile political context and frequent crisis have impacted MID RO operations and service delivery, as there are few countries left to deliver workshops and trainings.

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<sup>35</sup> ICAO. OIO. MID Audit Report. Op.cit.p09.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

### MID NCLB Strategy

137. Within the NCLB framework, MID RO has developed the MID NCLB Strategy involving stakeholders and partner, in accordance with which NCLB Plan of Actions were developed and implemented.
138. It is worth noting at this stage that while the NCLB initiative addresses all strategic objectives, safety and security are often the most emphasized areas within the initiative. This emphasis is due to their critical impact on the overall safety and reliability of global aviation operations. Ensuring high safety and security standards is essential for maintaining trust and reliability in international air travel. Economic development is also prioritized as it directly correlates with the sustainability and growth of aviation sectors in developing countries. Environmental initiatives, while increasingly prominent, are still developing within the scope of NCLB.

### Efficiency

#### Human Resources

**Finding 14:** Despite being considerably understaffed, MID RO has been delivering timely support to Member States. However, new staff taking a post in the region are negatively affected by inadequate induction process and lack of formal handover reports/documentation by departing staff.

139. The MID RO is staffed by a team of competent and experienced officers who provide the necessary technical and administrative assistance to support Member States. Assistance was delivered through various methods, including site visits, virtual consultations and collaborations, informational resources, and access to opportunities. Currently there are 19 staff in the MID RO and 4 vacant posts (Regional Officer, CNS/ System Administrator - Network and Security/ Technical Assistant (FLS, AGA, AVSEC/ Marketing Assistant)<sup>37</sup>, making it one of the most understaffed ROs. The Office also lacks a dedicated regional officer for Environmental Protection, and Economic Development of Air Transport Strategic Objectives. To address the problem of staff shortage, MID RO has coordinated with EUR/NAT office to get technical support on environment and a secondment of a technical expert and managed to get from KSA for aviation security. While secondment is an appropriate short-term solution, it does not ensure sustainability as it disrupts performance.
140. Some other identified staffing challenges were:
- Lack of staff training on new developments in their technical area (e.g. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Cyber Security, etc.) and new SARPs to have the necessary up to date knowledge and skill to support States;
  - Staff turnover: Since January 2018 MID RO suffered a high turnover. Staff who left either joined ICAO HQ or other regional office and the rest took up other employments<sup>38</sup>;

<sup>37</sup> APAC - 43 staff members; WACAF - 19 staff members; MID - 19 staff members; SAM - 19 staff members; NACC - 21 staff members; ESAF - 22 staff members; APAC - 25 staff members; EUR-NAT - 26 staff members

<sup>38</sup> ICAO. OIO. Internal Audit Report on The Middle East (MID) Regional Office. 2022. Op.cit

- Lack of formal handover process complicating requiring newcomers more time to get to know the immediate need as well as the business started/completed before them;
- Unpredictability of fundings creating contractual unpredictability (MID RO does not have regular funding for three positions); and
- Different time zones with HQ making online meetings/support difficult<sup>39</sup>.

## Financial Resources

**Finding 15:** Between 2017 and 2023, MID RO utilized about 85% of the annual regular budget of close to CAD 3 million. There was an increase in MID RO resources mobilized through the Voluntary Fund since 2019. The Regional Office was using only about 30 per cent of the budget mobilized from voluntary funds and cost recovery indicating a need for improved financial oversight to enhance overall budgetary efficiency.

141. Despite varying needs and contexts, ICAO allocation of budget has been nearly equal among ROs. This has been observed to be limiting the capacity of ROs, including MID RO to respond to the needs and priorities in the region. Consulted Member States highlighted the necessity to adjust this allocation in the light of regional needs. Stakeholders suggested that ICAO should base its priorities on how the number of Member States who are left behind in the region, and accordingly assign budgets and experts.
142. The total regular budget of the MID RO for the evaluated period is CAD \$ 20 910 262<sup>40</sup>. For simplification, a line of budget is allocated per Strategic Objective:
- Safety: High budget utilization with about 92 per cent of the budget utilized
  - Capacity and Efficiency: about 87 percent budget utilized
  - Security and Facilitation: about 89 per cent utilized
  - Economic Development: about 88 per cent budget used
  - Environmental Protection: with about 80.30 per cent budget used
143. The Regular Budget and Expenditure by MID Regional Office from 2017 – 2023 includes a budget line for Strategic Objective 4: Economic Development of Air Transport, for a minimal CAD \$ 374 203; and for the Strategic Objective 5: Environmental protection, of a total CAD \$ 1 046 184 (5% of the total budget). The budget for planned activities under these two Strategic Objectives was managed centrally by ATB.
144. Between 2017 and 2023, Member States such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar contributed with a total of CAD \$ 3,815,456.95 to the RO through voluntary funding mechanism - Resource Mobilization Fund. These funds are often subjected to conditionality from the donors. The data shows a total expenditure of CAD \$ 285,487.46 and an unutilized budget of CAD \$ 3,529,969.49.
145. From 2017 to 2023, the Resource Mobilization Funds for the MID Regional Office displayed notable fluctuations in both budget and expenditure. The cumulative budget began at CAD

<sup>39</sup> The CORSIA workshop ended at 2 am Omani time. ACT-SAF at 11 pm Omani time.

<sup>40</sup> See Annex 1 for the complete budget vs actual matrix

499,968.00 in 2017 and experienced variations over the years, with a significant peak at CAD 953,996.19 in 2023. Overall use of voluntary funding by MID RO across the evaluation period was very low, with 6.47% in 2017, 10.54% in 2018, 11.68% in 2019, 20.22% in 2020, 0.00% in 2021, and 8.74% in 2022. This irregular spending pattern underscores the need for a more consistent and predictable financial planning approach to ensure effective utilization of allocated resources.

146. The AVESECFAL Fund is managed by ATB centrally and there is no specific allocation for Regional Offices.

### Sustainability

147. As a measure of sustainability, the evaluation assessed whether there has been evidence of the long-term continuation of benefits following MID RO support to Member States.

**Finding 16:** MID RO has facilitated Member State access to opportunities for trainings, capacity-building, networking, and knowledge exchange to increase States' capacities for effective civil aviation management. However, turnover of staff at Member States level could affect the sustainability of achievements.

148. One of the MID RO key activities are opportunities for CAAs to gain access to trainings, capacity building activities, networking, knowledge exchange, etc., to allow them to acquire new capacities that are relevant for enhancing civil aviation sustainable management.

149. From 2017 to 2023, the MID RO and ICAO HQ have delivered a significant number of capacity building activities to Member States, emphasizing development and engagement across various aviation sectors.

150. Activities conducted during this period include:

- Total Courses Developed: 110 courses
- Total Courses Delivered: 1,206 courses
- Total Participants: 7,862 participants

151. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of courses developed, delivered through Global Aviation Training (GAT), and participants by area, highlighting areas of high activity and sectors with less focus:

Table 2: Number of courses developed, delivered, and participants from 2017 to 2023

Area	Courses Developed	Courses Delivered	Participants
Aerodromes	18	184	1,482
Air Navigation Services	46	444	2,166
Air Transport	0	0	0
Aviation Law	0	22	230
Aviation Management	6	76	466

Area	Courses Developed	Courses Delivered	Participants
Environment	0	2	14
Facilitation	4	68	368
Flight Safety and Safety Management	24	106	786
Security	6	58	700
Training Competency Development	6	246	1,650

152. As shown in Table 2, Air Navigation Services has the highest number of courses delivered and participants. However, there were no trainings under Air Transport. At the individual level, MID RO contributed to strengthening technical capacity of CAAs staff in the region. Due to high staff turnover, CAAs face a continuous need to train their staff, particularly in crisis contexts. This challenge is exacerbated by the inability of some CAAs to recruit and retain qualified personnel, as well as poor knowledge management processes.

**Best Practices: Oman**

Oman CAA has launched a radio and televised awareness campaign to educate and campaign on passengers' rights, because "civil aviation is also a citizen's affair".

153. Member States have also been actively participating in building the capacities of other ICAO Member States.

**Finding 17:** Member States have recognized the importance of the USOAP and the USAP in identifying safety and security gaps. However, challenges such as long intervals between audits, lack of follow-up on State performance, and insufficient internal capacity in some MID States hinder sustainable improvements.

154. Member States have noted that USAP and USOAP CMA are relevant in identifying oversight gaps in safety and security. However, it has been noted that the lengthy periods of time between audit (some MID States have never been audited due to security concerns), the lack of follow-up on State performance after audits, and the lack of some MID States' internal capacity (financial and human) to address the gaps were major challenges hindering a real and sustainable improvements. The Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) is still adequately functional.

**Best Practices: Saudi Arabia GACA Result Based Management**

Monitoring USOAP protocol questions: PQs are part of the department job description and used to evaluate staff performance. A dashboard is used to monitor the maintaining and updating PQs. Data generated feeds into the organizational training plan and the work of the Quality and Performance Department.

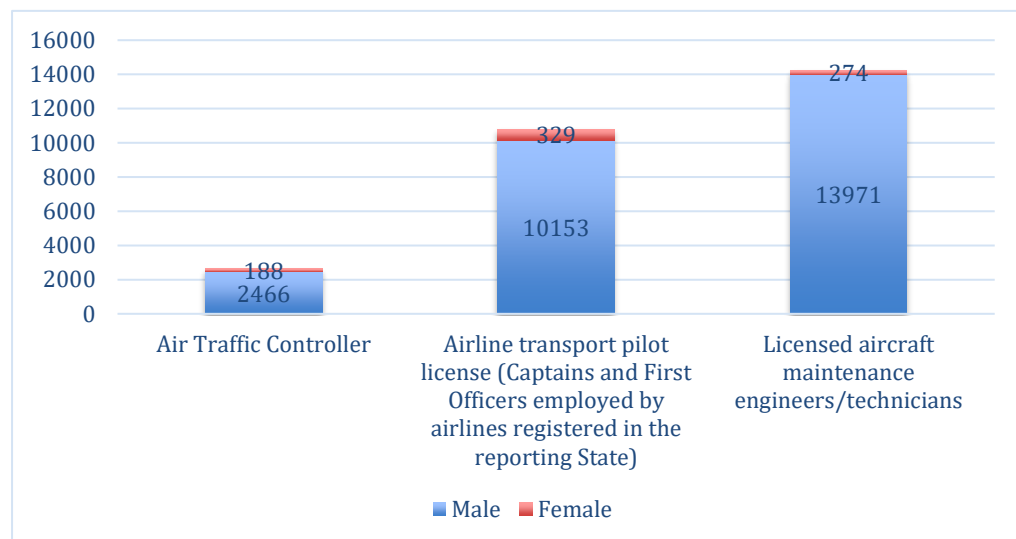
**Cross Cutting Theme: Gender**

155. Gender was assessed as the extent to which there has been evidence of the incorporation of gender equality considerations into MID RO support to Member States.

**Finding 18:** Despite the policy frameworks (ICAO's Resolution A39-30) aimed at enhancing gender equality in aviation, significant challenges remain, in the MID region where female participation in key aviation roles is notably low. However, there are signs of positive change with some MID States taking active steps to increase women's participation in the sector, as evidenced by notable appointments and higher employment figures in some States.

156. Recognizing the importance of advancing gender equality in aviation - in 2016, the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A39-30, ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector. Following the decision of the Council in its 222nd Session in 2021, further revisions to Resolution 39-30 were presented to the 41st Session of the Assembly in 2022. In this connection, the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly reviewed the proposal for several revisions to the Assembly Resolution A39-30, which received overwhelming support.
157. Despite the existence of strong frameworks on gender inclusion, the participation of women holding positions as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians remains very low, and it is estimated at only 4.9% in 2021.
158. Regionally, MID has one of the lowest female participations in aviation workforce with the lowest being for licensed aircraft maintenance engineers/technicians with 1.92%, followed by only 3.05% females as Captains and First Officers employed by airlines registered in the MID States and 7.07% as air traffic controllers.

Graph 1. Category of personnel by gender at the regional level



Source. ICAO Aviation Data Analytics

159. Some interviews indicated that unequal treatment in aviation has existed in the MID region,. Although this type of unequal treatment has been relaxed over the past years, it was suggested by some stakeholders that it still exists in one way or another.

160. Despite all these obstacles, there is a noticeable increase in women in aviation in MID region. MID States are encouraging women participation in aviation, in 2019, Egypt appointed a female Representative on the ICAO Council, Oman seconded one female security officer to RO, in UAE, women represent 42% of the workforce in the aviation sector.

Best Practices: Qatar CAA  
The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) funded course tuitions for over 160 female aviation professionals from 56 Member States in various ICAO virtual and online courses in September 2022.

**Finding 19:** The MID Regional Office demonstrates a noticeable gender imbalance, with women constituting only 37.5% of the staff and even fewer in technical roles. However, initial steps are being taken to address the gender gap, including the designation of a regional officer as a gender equality focal point.

161. In the MID RO, female represent only 37.5% of staff. The imbalance increases at the technical level, as there is only one female Regional Officer out of the 6 deployed in MID RO. While there is no evidence of specific gender inclusion strategy in the MID RO, there is a nascent trend towards conveying the message during meetings, also few measures have been planned to overcome this gap.

162. One of the regional officers was appointed as a gender equality focal point, but the officer in question will need proper training on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive planning and budgeting to enable her to effectively perform her tasks.

#### Cross-cutting Theme: Disability

163. Disability inclusion was measured as the extent to which there has been evidence of the incorporation of disability inclusion considerations into the MID RO portfolio.

**Finding 20:** While there have been no barriers noted to inclusiveness of disabled persons at the level of MID RO and its Member States, there is limited evidence of an active approach towards its strategic implementation.

164. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>41</sup> recognized that accessibility, liberty of movement and personal mobility are major rights of persons with disabilities and that respecting these rights involve a broad range of different stakeholders. The Convention has been ratified by 184 States, including all 15 MID States.

165. Within the UN system, an ambitious Disability Inclusion Strategy<sup>42</sup> was launched in 2019 to provide “the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations”. Through the Strategy, the UN system

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

commits to embedding the rights of persons with disabilities into its work, both externally and internally. In 2022, the Consolidated statement of continuing policies related to facilitation requested the Council “to develop a work programme on accessibility for passengers with disability in order to reach for a disability-inclusive air transport system”<sup>43</sup>.

166. Assembly Resolution (A40-16) requested the Council “to develop a work programme on accessibility for passengers with disability in order to reach for a disability-inclusive air transport system. The ICAO Council, during its 225th Session, adopted Amendment 29 to Annex 9 Facilitation. Amendment 29 includes, inter alia, the elevating of five Recommended Practices on the Facilitation of the transport of persons with disabilities to international Standards. The new provisions relate to the accessibility of flight service-related information for persons with hearing and vision impairments, the basic right to assistance for passengers with disabilities, and the establishment of designated parking and drop off areas for persons with disabilities at terminal buildings. The Amendment to Annex 9 became effective in July 2022.
167. The 12th meeting of the Facilitation Panel additionally endorsed that the Annex 9 provisions related to accessibility be subject to a holistic review to be presented to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Facilitation Panel.
168. While the MID RO complies with the UN and ICAO strategy and guidance, there has been no evidence of the active implementation of them at the level of MID RO. For instance, while recruitment in MID RO adhere to UN consideration of “non- discrimination on account of any disability of a candidate who meets the qualifications required to perform the tasks”, the evaluation noted the inaccessibility of the premises to people with disabilities.
169. ICAO’s approach to disability inclusion is through facilitation (availability of cubicles/ Screening of passengers suspected to commit acts of unlawful interference...). A few MID RO activities had a direct connection to disability inclusion, one of which is ICAO regional FAL implementation webinar held virtually in April 2022, that had, among other objectives, to update States on developments in ICAO’s FAL Programme, with a particular focus on its work programme for the current triennium and issues of common interest to States, such as compliance/implementation issues related to Annex 9 — Facilitation to the Chicago Convention, access to air transport by persons with disabilities<sup>44</sup>.
170. MID States, at varying degrees, have adopted measures to ensure access (guidance material for the aviation sector, signs on the ground at airports).

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<sup>43</sup> ICAO. Assembly 41st session. [https://www.icao.int/Meetings/a41/Documents/WP/wp\\_079\\_rev\\_en.pdf](https://www.icao.int/Meetings/a41/Documents/WP/wp_079_rev_en.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.icao.int/MID/Documents/2022/FAL%20Webinar/SoD%20-%20FAL%20Webinar-Mar2022.pdf>

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

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### Conclusions

171. The evaluation conclusions have emerged from the main findings of the assessment. The major challenge to the evaluation has been the inadequate conclusive evidence on the achievement of actual results for comparison with planned results targets. This challenge derived from the inadequate use of the Operating Plan and the inconsistent approach to results planning and reporting, which created significant gaps in the data that was available for review in the CMRT and CPMR.
172. Conclusion 1: Member States, key regional partners and other stakeholders are satisfied by the relevance of MID RO's operating plan and projects in addressing States and regional needs and priorities. Relevance is ensured through a comprehensive consultative approach of Member States, regional partners, and other stakeholder representatives. Linked to Findings 1 and 2.
173. Conclusion 2: MID RO's effort to facilitate collaborative working relations with other regional offices and through the regional groups and sub-committees have been effective in fostering regional cooperation and in avoiding duplication of efforts. While the Regional Groups and sub-committees are effective mechanisms for planning, monitoring, implementation, and coordination as well as experience sharing, the high number of the sub-committees and associated meetings can potentially hinder the regional office work and the effectiveness of the planning process. Moreover, use of English language in some of the meeting of sub-committees is limiting the contribution of participants of Arabic-speaking Member States. Linked to Findings 2, 4 and 5.
174. Conclusion 3: MID RO's timely and harmonized responses to State needs during the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to resilience and post-pandemic recovery. Joint efforts with ICAO HQ maximized institutional resources, ensuring Member States remained informed and capable of addressing operational challenges. Linked to Finding 3.
175. Conclusion 4: MID RO's regional operating plan was aligned with the Global and Regional Plans (GASP, GANP and GASeP). Although the operating plan is in the form of a performance monitoring framework, it has not been used effectively, for monitoring and reporting RO activities and results largely due to problems in results/activities formulation. Linked to Finding 6.
176. Conclusion 5: MID RO has delivered most of the deliverables under safety strategic objectives. However, some Member States haven't achieved the EI targets that were established by the GASP largely due to conflict and political problems. Given the need for State level facilitation of aviation safety to align with the global and regional aviation goals, the RO has to expand its support to States in developing and implementing NASPs. Linked to Findings 7 and 8.

177. Conclusion 6: Despite facing numerous political and challenges associated with repeated conflict in the region, MID RO has made good contribution to improve air navigation capacity and efficiency in the region. The RO has demonstrated substantial contribution in executing optimizing aerodrome operations, advancing navigational aids infrastructure, and implementing ATM data security plans. However, there is no adequate information on the preparation and implementation of NANPs. Linked to Findings 9.
178. Conclusion 7: MID RO has made notable progress in implementing aviation security and facilitation activities, meeting most targets, and supporting conflict affected Member States. The region has had no SSeCs and the average level of EI for the MID NACC region is above the global average and the GAsEP targets. Linked to Finding 10.
179. Conclusion 8: MID RO in collaboration with ATB has implemented various activities under the Economic Development of Air Transport Strategic Objectives. The ICAN event was identified as an effective platform for Member States to efficiently negotiate air service agreements in one location, significantly saving time and resources. However, support to economic development component remained less vibrant, and Member States requested for more support in the area of economic regulation. Linked to Finding 11.
180. Conclusion 9: MID RO in collaboration with ATB/ENV and EUR/NAT RO has implemented various activities under the Environmental Protection Strategic Objective. Nine out of 12 Member States have developed their State Action Plans on CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions. However, MID RO's support was limited largely due to the absence of a Regional Officer on Environment. Linked to Finding 12.
181. Conclusion 10: Despite being considerably understaffed, MID RO has been delivering effective and timely support to Member States. There was also a sharp increase in the budget allocated from voluntary funding. However, MID RO's use of budget allocated from voluntary funding mechanisms was inadequate and requires financial oversight. Linked to Findings 14 and 15.
182. Conclusion 11: MID RO and CDI have organized many trainings, workshops, hands on capacity-building support, networking, and knowledge exchange to increase States' capacities for effective civil aviation management. Although the focus of MID RO/ ICAO is on building the capacity of Member States to sustain project results, high turnover and/or insufficient availability of CAA experts in some Member States and and inadequate knowledge management processes pose challenges to sustaining these achievements. Linked to Finding 16.
183. Conclusion 12: The incorporation of cross-cutting themes such as gender equality and disability, into MID RO's support framework has shown mixed results. While policy frameworks are in place, actual female participation in key aviation roles remains low, though positive changes are emerging in certain Member States. While there are no significant barriers to inclusiveness for disabled persons, the strategic implementation of disability inclusion needs to be more active and comprehensive. Linked to Findings 18, 19 and 20.

### Recommendations

184. In light of the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are forwarded to improve the performance of the MID region:

1. The Regional Office, in collaboration with RASG-MID, MIDANPIRG and RASFG-MID, should review the number and TOR of sub-committees (Working Group, Steering Groups, Sub-Groups, and Task Forces) to have reasonable number of sub-committees and meetings. The RO should also find a mechanism to have interpretation services for important sub-committee meetings to facilitate full participation of Member States participants. (Linked to Conclusion 2 and Findings 2, 4 and 5).

Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
High	December 2025	Medium
Closing criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RASG-MID, MIDANPIRG and RASFG-MID decisions on the number and TOR of sub-committees</li> <li>• Mechanism to get interpreters during sub-committee meetings involving Member States</li> </ul>		

2. The MID RO should develop and implement an action plan to systematically support and follow up Member States in the finalization and implementation of their NASPs and NANPs. (Linked Conclusions 5 and 6 and Findings 7, 8 and 9).

Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Medium	June 2026	Medium
Closing criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan to support Member States to develop and implement the plans</li> </ul>		

3. The Regional Office should organize a training for the RO staff in RBM in general and in result-based operating plan preparation, monitoring, and reporting, in particular, in advance of further actions by ICAO HQ for effective results planning, monitoring and reporting. (Linked to Conclusion 4 and Finding 6).

Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Medium	December 2025	Medium
Closing criteria:		

- Training of RO staff in RBM in general and results based Operating Plan preparation, monitoring and reporting in particular

4. MID Office should make sure that an appropriate handover reports (Knowledge Transfer forms) have been prepared and submitted by departing staff before leaving ICAO or their positions, in line with HR SOPs. (Linked to Finding 14).

Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Medium	June 2025	Low

Closing criteria:

- Internal Staff Notice to all MID Staff on the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure
- Monitoring mechanism to make sure that appropriate hand over note is prepared and submitted by departing staff before leaving ICAO or their positions.

5. The Regional Office, in collaboration with relevant HQ Bureaus, should develop an action plan to improve its human resources capacity (e.g., filling important posts such as Regional Officer/ Environmental Protection, filling of other vacant posts, etc.). The action plan could include, but not be limited to, acquiring secondees from Member States. (Linked to Conclusions 8, 9 and 10 and Findings 11, 12, 14 and 15.)

Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Medium	December 2025	Medium

Closing criteria:

- Action plan to improve human resource capacity of MID RO for the filling of human resource gaps (e.g., Regional Officer/Environmental Protection, filling of other vacant posts, etc.).

### Lessons Learned

185. A comprehensive consultative approach is essential in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of implementation of support activities. Continuous engagement with Member States to identify and address their specific needs is crucial.
186. Sustaining the benefits of capacity-building initiatives requires robust mechanisms for knowledge retention and management. Addressing high staff turnover and enhancing institutional memory are crucial for long-term impact.

187. Integrating cross-cutting themes such as gender equality and disability into all aspects of support activities can enhance inclusiveness and ensure that all stakeholders benefit equitably from the initiatives.
188. Capacity-building should be facilitated at both the organizational and individual levels, using adequate resources to support institutionalized knowledge transfer and sustainable capacities.
189. Systematic results monitoring is mandatory for effective results reporting, to generate the level and quality of evidence required to determine whether planned results have been achieved.
190. SWOT analysis: The assessment team leveraged the information collected through the evaluation to map MID RO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and help inform future strategy and planning.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated team of Officers</li> <li>• Extensive consultative processes</li> <li>• Good donor mobilization (among States, industry...)</li> <li>• Strong engagement of aviation stakeholders</li> <li>• Flexible work arrangements (budget/trainings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Human resources</li> <li>• Turnover at MID RO level</li> <li>• Absence of formal handover processes</li> <li>• Lengthy periods of time between safety audits</li> <li>• Unavailability of some of ICAO material and resources in Arabic</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Regional Collaboration</li> <li>• Available stakeholders to collaborate with the regional office</li> <li>• Member States trust</li> <li>• Demand and willingness by Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volatile political and security context</li> <li>• Limited States' capacities</li> <li>• Limited technical expertise in the MID region in some areas</li> <li>• Different priorities and economic capabilities of States</li> <li>• Turnover of staff at States' level</li> </ul>

— END —