



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 20: Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATING ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION OF
ICAO STATE LETTERS**

(Presented by the Republic of Korea)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ICAO State letter is an important means to notify the Member States of the enactment, revision and adoption of SARPs and PANS, survey, meeting/workshop, etc., and it is used to collect opinions and responses of the Member States. As it is delivered by e-mails, important information may not be reached to the States when the State's contact information is outdated, or the person in charge is not verifying it in time. In addition, if the person in charge does not reply within the set time limit, the Member States' opinions on the amendments to SARPs and notices of differences, etc. may not be delivered to ICAO, which may hinder the aviation safety and standardization process. Some States operate State letter management systems but need manual data inputs. This paper proposes ICAO to recognize the State letter management system of States as a supporting tool for ICAO and to allow data exchanges between the systems of Member States and ICAO to improve the efficiency of State letter management.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) ICAO:
 - 1) in connection with the Organization's digital transformation initiative, recognize the State letter management systems used by States as a supporting system that will enhance ICAO's efficiencies; and
 - 2) consider allowing data exchanges between the State letter management systems of ICAO and each State.
- b) Member States:
 - 1) recommend updating point of contact information of the State letter on the ICAO Secure Portal;
 - 2) cooperate to link its independently developed and operated State letter management system with ICAO; and
 - 3) agree to share the independently developed and operated State letter management system with countries wishing to utilize them.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective: Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not examined.

<i>References:</i>	Assembly Resolution A39-21: Addressing the low response rate by Member States to ICAO State letters Assembly Resolution A 40-20: Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO has been using State letters to communicate with the Member States. The information delivered through State letters varies from revisions of SARPs and PANS to gathering opinions on important policies, invitations to meetings, workshops, and job postings. Member States receiving the State letter must take the required actions before the deadline specified in the letter.

1.2 When the State letter is delivered by mail, there have been some cases where it could not reach the recipient on time due to delay or loss. However, as the internet became popular, the delivery methods were replaced by e-mail which saved time and money and improved efficiency.

1.3 However, even in e-mails, sometimes important information is not delivered to the relevant parties, or important opinions from States do not reach ICAO if the recipient is not clear or the person in charge is not confirmed in time. In such cases, SARPs and PANS may not be implemented on time, or comments from States may not be reflected in the ICAO policies.

1.4 Considering the low response rate of the Member States to State letters, the 39th ICAO Assembly adopted “Resolution A39-21 – Addressing the low response rate of States to ICAO State letters” and asked all States to respond to State letters sent by ICAO on time and to share their best practices through the ICAO regional offices and civil aviation commissions. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretariat the following:

1.4.1 Investigate and, as necessary, introduce new communications tools, including web-based solutions, to improve communications and interactions with States and other recipients of State letters and the recording of replies in the ICAO Records Management System (A39-21 item 4); and

1.4.2 To implement an automated and interactive web-based system capable of reporting the response rates to State letters, thus improving the visibility of the status of State letter responses by the Member States, by region, and/or globally, and promoting awareness and capacity building among States (A39-21 item 5).

1.5 Also, recognizing the need for ICAO to respond efficiently and effectively in the face of rapidly changing technology, economy, and environment, the 40th ICAO Assembly adopted “Resolution A40-20 – Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO”. “The Appendix – List of considerations for achieving a more efficient and effective ICAO” contains a number of efficiency improvement measures, among which is worth noting:

1.5.1 Improve and speed up communications with States, particularly related to Standards and Recommended Practices, including the utilization of electronic transmission.

1.6 Recently, ICAO has been preparing the Digital Transformation Initiative to improve organizational efficiency and wanting for the approval of the upcoming Assembly. This initiative includes the digital management and distribution of ICAO documents, and it is thought that State letters could also be included in this category.

1.7 In response to ICAO's efforts to improve efficiency, the Republic of Korea has developed the SARPs Management and Implementation System (SMIS), a system dedicated to efficient management

of SARPs and PANS including State letters, and has been continuously improving its functions. In addition, the Republic of Korea is providing education and technical support free of charge to the States that wish to use it. It is known that similar systems like SMIS are being developed and used by many other States. For more information on SMIS, visit www.kocahelp.go.kr or contact helpdesk@kocahelp.go.kr.

1.8 This paper introduces SMIS's functions including the State letter management and examines the synergy effect that can be generated when those functions are linked with ICAO's State letter management system.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 SMIS was developed in 2006 to check whether the SARPs requirements by the USOAP are reflected in national regulations or not. The System enables the person in charge of each regulation to see the SARPs implementation status. As the USOAP CMA was transitioned into the continuous monitoring approach (CMA) and the Online Framework (OLF) was introduced, the SMIS also developed into a comprehensive tool that can manage the State Aviation Activity Questionnaire (SAAQ), Compliance Checklist (CC), Protocol Questions (PQ) Self-Assessment, Corrective Action Plans (CAPs), Mandatory Information and Requests (MIRs), and exchange data with the OLF.

2.2 Additionally, with the development of information and communication technology, the previous computer-based system has evolved into a web-based one, which enabled users to manage registered data more conveniently. In particular, data exchange function between OLF and SMIS is a key part of this paper. With this function, it is not necessary for users to enter the changed data into SMIS but to download it from the OLF, use it, and upload the reviewed items on the OLF after they complete the review, enhancing the efficiency of USOAP CMA information management and reducing workloads.

2.3 However, in the case of State letters, there are no data exchange functions. So, after the system manager received State letters through e-mail or downloaded them from the State letter menu of the ICAO Headquarters and Regional Offices on the ICAO Secure Portal, they need to enter them into SMIS manually and distribute them to each person in charge according to the established procedures.

2.4 Once the State letter is registered in the SMIS, the person in charge can establish an implementation plan for the actions required in the State letters and manage the progress by entering the status into the system. SMIS helps to ensure that the outcome of required action in the State letters is responded to ICAO on time as it shows an alert to the person in charge when the deadline specified in State letters approaches or the action is overdue.

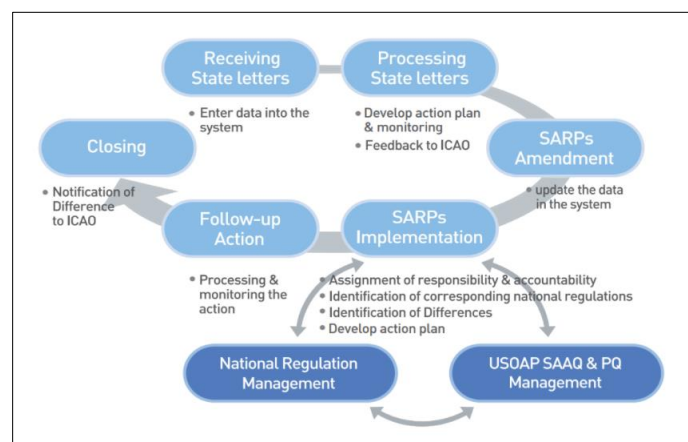


Figure 1. State letter management process in SMIS

2.5 A system with State letter and SARPs management functions, such as SMIS is considered to be a system that could satisfy the requirements of ICAO Assembly Resolutions A39-21 and A40-20 (refer to paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5) at a State level. If ICAO transits the Organization's operating system to a digital one, the system with such functions will serve as a web-based supporting tool that can enable the exchange of State letters between ICAO and the Member States electronically.

2.6 In addition, if the system operated by each State is linked with the ICAO State letter management system, the response rate to State letters is expected to rise as the Member States will identify the issuance of the new State letters promptly and take necessary measures. In addition, when the ICAO and States' systems are linked, it can reduce the workload, as the person in charge is not required to put the information of States letters into the system and reply to the State letters manually. Hence, this is also in line with ICAO's efforts to improve efficiency through digital transformation.

2.7 However, not all Member States have a system for managing State letters, and developing such systems may be time-consuming and expensive. In this case, the Member States first need to update the State letter contact information in the DGCA Directory of the ICAO Secure Portal and maintain the existing procedure of immediately confirming and disseminating the State letters to the person in charge.

2.8 If some States decide to share their State letter management system with other States, the States that do not have a State letter management system will be able to use it without additional cost with the consent from the owner country. It is expected that this will enable States to improve the efficiency of their State letter management.

2.9 Also, ICAO needs to recognize the systems currently in operation as a supporting system to enhance efficiency in ICAO and allow them to exchange data with ICAO's State letter system to improve the efficiency of the State letter management for the Member States. This will greatly enhance Member State's response rate to State letters by facilitating the distribution of the current State letter management system.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The State letter has been playing a great role as a means for ICAO to communicate SARPs and policies to individual States. Every State should actively reply to State letters, inform of the implementation status of the SARPs and notify their differences to ICAO. However, the response rate is generally low due to inconsistency in contact information in the State letter, delay in delivery/confirmation, and lack of awareness of the importance of the State letter, although it is the Member States' duties to actively respond to the SARPs development process specified in Articles 37, 38, 54, 57, and 90 of the Chicago Convention. Hence, the response rate needs to be improved.

3.2 ICAO is planning to implement the digital transformation initiative for the next three years to improve the Organization's efficiency. This can be an opportunity for ICAO to transition the distribution and response methods of State letters from e-mail exchanges to web-based ones, following ICAO Assembly Resolutions A39-21 and A40-20. To this end, ICAO needs to recognize the SARP and State letter management system used by the Member States as a supporting tool that meets the ICAO policies and to consider allowing data exchanges between the systems used by States and ICAO.

3.3 In addition, the States that operate SARPs and State letter management systems are encouraged to provide the system to the States who want to use them free of charge or at a minimal cost to enhance efficiency of SARPs and State letter management.