



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26: ICAO Civil Aviation Training and Capacity Building

COMPETENCIES FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN ADVERSE AVIATION SITUATIONS

(Presented by the Dominican Republic)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper argues that training to develop competencies in change management is essential for both executive and managerial functions, strengthening the guarantees regarding the management of internal and external risks inherent in situations where human resources are involved, and making implementation processes more efficient, paying special attention to collaborative decision-making, in view of the large number of implementation projects in the aviation sector, and adverse situations in the environment (caused by human factors or natural phenomena).

Change management as a competency instilled in all aviation sector personnel will create the capacity to face future adverse aviation situations, being resilient and implementing strategies for the stability of air transport, a means par excellence for connectivity and global trade.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) support the content of this working paper, urging States to implement training on change management for all their personnel and establish such training as an integral part of project management, as well as of internal and external risk management;
- b) request the ICAO Secretariat to develop guidelines and guidance material to assist States in building capacity for change management;
- c) check ongoing projects and consider the provision of special budgets to include change management tools to ensure effective implementation.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objectives of: a) Safety b) Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency c) Environmental Protection
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	N/A

¹ Spanish version provided by the Dominican Republic.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 States' aviation systems are constantly evolving owing to their innovative nature which seeks to constantly improve air transport services; this is true also of the infrastructure for airport connectivity.

1.2 The success of any change in aviation systems will depend on the involvement and low resistance of the people who will apply the new procedures or use the new technologies acquired. Senior management must therefore evaluate and anticipate the reactions to each change and manage them in a timely manner, so that safety is not affected and economic and human resources are optimized.

1.3 Change management may be defined as the processes, tools and techniques to manage, from the perspective of the human factor, the changes necessary for the successive adaptations of the organization to a changing environment.

1.4 During the last decades, international civil aviation has suffered unplanned or unforeseen changes in its environment, some caused by human activity, others by natural circumstances, which have created instability in the organizations and above all have caused concern and a disinclination to fly among passengers, resulting in world economic crises; we would mention:

- The attacks of 11 September 2001: the terrorist attacks had a devastating effect on air operations. US airspace had to remain closed for a week, causing serious disruptions to international air traffic;
- The SARS epidemic of 2002–2003: the emergence of this respiratory disease created a complex scenario for all industry stakeholders. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome - SARS originated in the south of the People's Republic of China, and reached more than 30 countries. During this pandemic, travel to Asia fell by about 45 per cent, resulting in huge economic losses;
- The volcanic ash cloud in 2010: The eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyfjallajökull (*Translator's note*: original was "Irish" and has been corrected to "Icelandic") caused the biggest collapse of civil aviation since World War II. More than 100,000 flights were cancelled, at a cost to the global economy of more than \$4.7 billion. The disruptions affected nearly 1.2 million passengers;
- The recent coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) – "2020 the worst year in aviation history": this highly contagious disease hit the world even harder than SARS. States imposed air and border restrictions to curb the spread of the disease, paralysing the air transport industry and affecting 95 per cent of the world's air traffic. In May 2020, the International Civil Aviation Organization issued the first edition of Doc 10144, *ICAO Handbook for CAAs on the Management of Aviation Safety Risks related to COVID-19*, to provide guidance and support in this uncertain situation. The international organizations linked to air transport and health worked together to establish a road map for the resumption of commercial flights worldwide, agreed at a global level to ensure greater safety for passengers and aviation sector personnel. National civil aviation authorities, together with health authorities, offered solutions to mitigate this situation and developed protocols to reactivate air services, in the interest of a safe, rapid, reliable and sustainable recovery of international air operations in the face of the pandemic.

1.5 Faced with adverse environmental situations, organizations in the aviation sector were grappling with major challenges created by the implementation of necessary short-term changes, which

could affect the effectiveness of safety risk monitoring and control mechanisms, as not everyone had the appropriate competencies and tools for change management.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The purpose of this working paper is to emphasize the need for change management training at all levels of a civil aviation organization. Training in the management of changes resulting from predictable or non-predictable causes is indispensable for the successful implementation of any long or short-term strategy.

2.2 The development of change management competencies has been viewed as a necessity for the management of strategic projects planned for improvement or innovation in the different areas of the aviation sector – *training that is still undervalued* – with the objective of adding value to the implementation processes that are carried out as a result of the application of new technological trends, as well as amendments to the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), among others.

2.3 Resistance to change in organizations can be managed only by means of training, which should also contemplate training of personnel who manage and develop projects so that they are capable of weighing and quantifying the necessary investments so that each project has the necessary funds to cover the change management processes and stakeholder involvement, which will guarantee effective implementation of the objectives pursued.

2.4 Change Management should be considered as an indispensable competence for all aeronautical technical personnel; accordingly, it should be part of the job profiles required for recruitment of air traffic controllers, pilots, inspectors, aeronautical information technicians, technical supervisors, dispatchers, cabin crew, etc., who would be the executors or implementers not only of the planned projects, but also of the changes generated by unexpected situations in the environment requiring their intervention or collaboration.

2.5 Changes can be classified as internal and external:

- Internal changes are those activities or operations under the control of the organization that are distracting the team from its main objective;
- External or environmental changes are all those factors which do not depend on the organization and which force it to adapt its operations.

2.6 Both aviation organizations with a Safety Management System (SMS) and those without an SMS should ensure that their human resources have internal and external risk-based change management competencies:

- In organizations with an SMS, they should only trigger their assessment and change management processes to consider each situation, identifying any relevant hazards, assessing the level of risk and implementing appropriate mitigating actions. It is important that, in addition to internal changes, the organization should consider other external or environmental risks, such as those associated with public health and COVID-19 protocols, which should also be considered through the management of the change process;

- It is also relevant to consider that organizations, having adapted their operational processes to the pandemic constrained reality by undertaking a large number of changes at all levels, must now plan and manage the “de-escalation” of those changes, ensuring that the process is completed safely and taking into account all operational safety risks;
- It is recommended that organizations record lessons learned from managing change generated by external factors to improve future preparedness.

2.7 The leader must also demonstrate flexibility as a sign of these times; accordingly, agile leadership must be developed that can guide teams to adapt to the various difficulties facing the aviation environment. The leader will also have to develop precise and efficient communication processes to be able to communicate calm, manage change and make decisions.

2.8 Faced with the certainty that adverse events will occur, we can ask ourselves: Will our team have an instinctive/reactive response or an anticipatory/proactive response? If an organization understands the importance of managing internal and external change, it will be better able to handle it.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In view of the number of implementation projects included in ICAO global plans, National Development Strategies of each State and Strategic Plans of organizations in the aeronautical sector, as well as adverse situations in the environment (resulting from human-made causes or natural phenomena) such as the recent case of the COVID-19 pandemic or the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, it is essential to provide training for the management of internal and external changes in the aviation sector; it is essential to provide training for the development of competencies in the field of change management, for the executive and the managerial functions, thereby increasing the guarantees in terms of the management of internal and external risks that involve the intervention of human resources and making the implementation processes more efficient, giving special attention to collaborative decision-making.

3.2 Instilling change management as a competency in all aviation sector personnel will create the capacity to face future adverse situations in aviation, by providing resilient strategies for the stability of air transport, a means par excellence for connectivity and global trade.

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