



**Agenda Item 3:           Review the status of implementation of the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) in the CAR/SAM Regions**

**METEOROLOGICAL WATCH OFFICE (MWO) BACK-UP FOR SIGMET INFORMATION**

(Presented by United States)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents proposed guidelines for the establishment of back-up MWO service for the provision of SIGMET information.

**1.                   Introduction**

1.1                AERMETSG/9 considered *that if an MWO is temporarily out of service, another should assume its functions in the shortest possible time, therefore, agreed that in order to ensure the provision of the back-up service without further delays, the designation of the back-up MWO(s) should be shown in the Regional SIGMET Guide.* The subgroup formulated the following draft conclusion:

**DRAFT  
CONCLUSION 9/11                   BACK-UP MWOs IN CAR/SAM STATES**

That, in order to improve the implementation of a MWO, in case of absence of service or service failure, the Regional Office compiles a list of back-up MWOs to be included in the CAR/SAM Regional SIGMET Guide.

1.2                The back-up MWO list was prepared by ICAO NACC and SAM Regional Offices and presented at AERMETSG/10 for review and included in the meeting's final report.

1.3                Following AERMETSG/10 it was recognized that implementation of back-up MWO service was not a simple task and that further guidance was needed to be developed. This paper outlines the proposed guidelines and procedures for the provision of back-up MWO service for SIGMET information.

**2.                   Discussion**

2.1                The ICAO *Guide for the Preparation, Dissemination and Use of SIGMET Messages in the CAR/SAM Regions*, section 2.2.4 states:

*“If, for some reason, a State is not able to meet its obligations for establishing MWO(s) and for provision of SIGMET for the FIR(s) or control area(s) the State is providing air traffic services, arrangements should be made between the meteorological authorities of the States concerned, so that another MWO takes over these responsibilities for certain period of time. Such delegation of responsibilities should be notified by a NOTAM and a letter to the ICAO Regional Office.”*

2.2 The SIGMET Guide tasks the States to make arrangements for back-up MWO service, but does not provide enough detail regarding these arrangements. The following are proposals for such arrangements which should be included in the SIGMET Guide:

- Formal agreement between States (Air Navigation Service Provider and Meteorological Service Provider) for back-up service.
- A table listing MWOs and their back-up MWOs be included as an appendix to the CAR/SAM Region’s SIGMET Guide.
- Agreed upon message (e.g., NOTAM, administrative message) to be prepared by the MWO receiving back-up service to notify users of a transfer of service.
- MWOs shall provide a notification mechanism to initiate support back-up service, including telephone numbers, with alternates, and e-mail addresses.
- Back-up service shall be requested via telephone or otherwise agreed upon communication methods.
- MWOs are not expected to monitor their back-up service clients for emergencies that would require them to be backed up.
- Identify data resources required to provide the back-up service for SIGMETs, such as access to satellite imagery, radar data, Special AIREPS, or any other message or source that would help facilitate the issuance of SIGMET (e.g., messages from Volcano Observatory of an eruption).
- MWOs shall ensure that their back-up MWO can acquire appropriate data to function as a back-up MWO.
- Prior to the commencement of back-up program, MWOs shall work with their back-up MWO and their users to conduct a test to ensure that users can receive SIGMETs issued by their back-up office.
  - As part of this testing, the proper Regional Tele-Communication Hubs (RTHs) will work with the MWOs to ensure their SIGMETs are properly transmitted when issued by their back-up MWO.
  - This includes identifying WMO headers and ensuring proper dissemination of products from back-up MWOs.
- MWOs shall conduct annual tests with their back-up MWO and users to ensure the back-up service
  - The results of the backup testing will be reported as a part of the QMS program.
- Back-up SIGMET service is for emergency use only and for events lasting for more than 30 minutes. Unless previously agreed upon with their back-up MWO, MWOs shall not request back-up service to cover non-emergency events, such as staff shortages and training.
- SIGMETs issued during back-up are required to be compliant with the format of ICAO Annex 3.
- The back-up MWO will use the WMO header from the original office.

3. **Conclusion**

3.1 In order for States to provide satisfactory back-up MWO service, additional guidance is needed to establish and maintain a back-up MWO program. The proposed steps arrangements outline in section 2.2, and repeated in **Appendix A**, should be sufficient to provide the necessary guidance for States.

4. **Action by the AERMETSG/11 Subgroup**

4.1 The subgroup is invited to note the information in this paper and to endorse the following draft conclusion:

**DRAFT**

**CONCLUSION 11/XX**

**GUIDANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF BACK-UP MWO SERVICE FOR SIGMET INFORMATION**

That the CAR/SAM Regional SIGMET Guide be updated to include the proposed arrangements between the MWO and the back-up MWO, as outlined in Appendix A.

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**APPENDIX A****Guidelines for the Arrangement of Back-Up MWO Service for the Provision of SIGMET Information**

- Formal agreement between States (Air Navigation Service Provider and Meteorological Service Provider) for back-up service
- A table listing MWOs and their back-up MWOs be included as an appendix to the CAR/SAM Region's SIGMET Guide
- Agreed upon message (e.g., NOTAM, administrative message) to be prepared by the MWO receiving back-up service to notify users of a transfer of service.
- MWOs shall provide a notification mechanism to initiate support back-up service, including telephone numbers, with alternates, and e-mail addresses
- Back-up service shall be requested via telephone or otherwise agreed upon communication methods
- MWOs are not expected to monitor their back-up service clients for emergencies that would require them to be backed up
- Identify data resources required to provide the back-up service for SIGMETs, such as access to satellite imagery, radar data, Special AIREPS, or any other message or source that would help facilitate the issuance of SIGMET (e.g., messages from Volcano Observatory of an eruption)
- MWOs shall ensure that their back-up MWO can acquire appropriate data to function as a back-up MWO
- Prior to the commencement of back-up program, MWOs shall work with their back-up MWO and their users to conduct a test to ensure that users can receive SIGMETs issued by their back-up office
  - As part of this testing, the proper Regional Tele-Communication Hubs (RTHs) will work with the MWOs to ensure their SIGMETs are properly transmitted when issued by their back-up MWO
  - This includes identifying WMO headers and ensuring proper dissemination of products from back-up MWOs
- MWOs shall conduct annual tests with their back-up MWO and users to ensure the back-up service
  - The results of the backup testing will be reported as a part of the QMS program
- Back-up SIGMET service is for emergency use only and for events lasting for more than 30 minutes. Unless previously agreed upon with their back-up MWO, MWOs shall not request back-up service to cover non-emergency events, such as staff shortages and training
- SIGMETs issued during back-up are required to be compliant with the format of ICAO Annex 3.
- The back-up MWO will use the WMO header from the original office

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