International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG/19 and RASG-MID/9 Meetings

(Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 14-17 February 2022)

Agenda Item 5.7: **Planning and Implementation issues related to ATM/SAR**

USAGE OF ATC SIMULATORS

(Presented by the UAE)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the practices of the MID States related to the use of ATC Simulators for assessment / competency checks and to maintain the level of proficiency, during low-density air traffic caused by COVID-19.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

– ICAO Annex 1

– ICAO Doc .9868: Procedures for air navigation services / Training

– ICAO Doc 10056: Manual on Air Traffic Controller Competency-based Training and Assessment

– MIDANPIRG/18 & RASG-MID/8 meetings (Virtual, 15 - 22 February 2021), WP/45 presented by UAE

– ATM SG/7 Report (Virtual Meeting, 15 – 18 November 2021)

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   The COVID-19 spread prevention measures applied by many States enforced the ANSPs to adjust their staffing requirements, by adapting staff rostering complying with lockdown restrictions and social distancing.

1.2   Additionally, the low traffic volumes for extended durations resulted in possible ATCOs skill fadeout and incoherent rating validation (unit currency) results.

1.3   UAE presented WP/45 during the discussion of MIDANPIRG/18 & RASG-MID/8 meeting, describing GCAA safety decision related to the usage of unit specific Synthetic Training Devices (ATC simulators) to perform the competency examination for renewal and issue of rating validation; in addition to, the use of refresher and emergency training.

1.4   MIDANPIRG/18 & RASG-MID/8 noted that current ICAO provisions (Annex 1, Doc. 10056 and Doc. 9868) proposes the use of simulators for pre-live operational stage (AB-INITIO training) and to supplement OJT training and assessment of abnormal situations.

1.5   Accordingly, MIDANPIRG/18 & RASG-MID/8 meetings Conclusion 18/33 invited MID States to share their practices and experience on the use of ATC Simulators for refresher courses, competency checks and examination/assessment purposes, to continuously ensure the level of proficiency during extended abnormal traffic periods (pandemics, crisis and similar events), and tasked the ICAO MID Office to consolidate the inputs from MID States to be shared with States and ICAO HQ, for appropriate action.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   The ICAO MID Office issued State Letter Ref.: ME 3 & AN 6/16 – 21/059 dated 21 April 2021, to request MID States practices and experience in this regards, and the secretariat consolidated the inputs received from MID States.

2.2   In States replies, it was found that ANSPs identified this issue during the extended duration and developed competency-maintaining programmes for ATCOs not exposed to moderate and high traffic volumes. In addition to the regular refresher programme where the trainee received different workload and emergency abnormal scenarios, as well as part of Airspace change process.

2.3   Simulators were also made available during the pandemic for self-initiative enhancement sessions (un-supervised training).

2.4   ICAO MID Office consolidated States' inputs, summarized in the following Statement:

ATCO training and competency maintaining programmes, were reduction of air traffic density levels are observed for extended periods:

In situations where traffic volumes or operational environment under required to complete the minimum experience normal operational conditions is not possible, ATC simulation could be used for the purpose of competency-maintaining programmes and proficiency checks required for issuance of Certificate of Competence; provided that;

- *ATCO was previously exposed to live traffic representative of the density level and complexity for the normal operation of the Unit; could be accredited up to 50% of the required experience on the current rating.*

- *Candidate ATCO could be accredited 20% of the required experience of the new rating.*

Note: to ensure realistic simulation, the devices, equipment and facility should exactly match the equipment used in live operations; and the training scenarios should demonstrate representative traffic levels and current airspace / sector / runways configurations. Considering the objective of the training and assessment.

2.5   Based on the above, the ATM SG/7 meeting, reviewed the consolidated inputs, and agreed to present the progress to the MIDANPIRG/19.

3. **ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1   The meeting is invited to:

a)   review the consolidated inputs received from MID States in para 2.4 and agree on the way forward; and

b)   encouraged the MID States and ANSPs to maximize the use of realistic simulation to mitigate ATCOs skill fadeout.

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