



WORKING PAPER

COUNCIL — SPECIAL MODEL SESSION

Subject No. 1: Best practices in attracting and retaining the next generation of aviation professionals

(Presented by CAMEROON)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is presented in the context of the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) program which is established to ensure that qualified people will be available for the shortage foreseen in aviation professions. The subject analyzed here is about attracting and retaining NGAP, so this paper describes the challenges and best practices to achieve that goal. It also considers the practices and challenges specific to the regions. Actions and recommendations given to ICAO should allow a better understanding of the issue and engage a step further in its resolution.

Action: The Council is invited to:

- a) Take note of the recommendations provided;
- b) Elaborate a guideline of best practices for attraction and retention available to all Member States;
- c) Encourage Member States to put in place a task force, undertake initiatives to attract and retain NGAP;
- d) Endorse the development of a global action plan to reinforce and harmonize NGAP initiatives worldwide; this includes creation of a centre for shared experience and knowledge and mobilization of human resources for state assistance.
- e) Encourage industries to continue acting as vector of change and development in all parts of the world;
- f) Review the definition of aviation professions requirements in competencies, education, necessary skills, in order to facilitate mobility among aviation fields and recruitment from different fields;
- g) Reinforce the collaboration with training institutions and industries for management training;
- h) Implement a plan to collect more data about human capacity needs in specific regions and monitor the evolution of the shortage issue.

Financial implications:

No additional resources required, to be met within budgetary resources.

References:

AFI PLAN-SC/14/2014-DP/02
ICAO and AFCAC Human Resources Development Fund
A37-WP/64

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) program was launched in 2009 to address the critical concern of the anticipated shortage of qualified and competent aviation professionals in the future. **This working paper is prepared in support to the Model ICAO council session that will be hosted within the 2nd symposium with the intent to further engage NGAP in the discussion process.**

1.2 As outcomes of the previous NGAP initiatives, it was recognized that a number of factors would intensify the aviation human resource challenge in the future. Several of the recommendations drawn from this previous work are already under implementation as part of the NGAP task force work programme.

1.3 This working paper builds on the conclusions of the 1st symposium and further elaborates on the question of attracting and retaining NGAP. Recognizing that this mainly comes down to filling the gap between the expectations of young professionals and the nature and requirements of the aviation industry, the work first focuses on understanding the core values and interests of the NGAP and outlining the specificities of the aviation industry. Then, best practices of the industry on the matter of attraction and retention are inventoried and recommendations specific to the aviation industry are formulated. Additional recommendations are formulated based on the consideration of existing initiatives.

2. BACKGROUND: GAP BETWEEN NGAP AND AVIATION INDUSTRY

2.1 NGAP profile

The following profile is drawn from numerous studies conducted among different industries.

2.1.1 Interests and values. NGAP are mainly interested by working with advanced technologies, in stimulating their creativity, in working in collaboration with others and in driving change. Also, NGAP value loyalty, recognition for what is well done, quality of life, and education.

2.1.2 Expectations from work. As result of their interests and values, NGAP expect from their workplace: opportunities to work with advanced technologies and stimulate their creativity, rapid career advancement and personal growth, dynamic environment, good wage, job security, loyalty from company, career/quality of life balance, meaningful and value-creating jobs.

2.1.3 Variation of NGAP profiles around the world. As a result of the increased access to information and mobility, there is a trend for the NGAP profile to be harmonized among all regions in the world. However, due maybe to the pressing need of satisfying more primary needs, stability and well-being might be of greater importance in some developing regions.

2.2 Aviation industry profile and requirements.

Several particularities characterize the aviation industry:

- a) It is based on a combination of high-technology products (airplanes, engines, several complex systems); which imply both a long development time and a long lifetime;
- b) It requires different sets of skills, highly specialized professionals and appear to be compartmentalized;
- c) It is a well-structured and regulated industry generally averse to risk taking;
- d) It is a high growth but cyclical industry (about 4 years more recently);
- e) It takes a longer time to achieve return on investment for trained professionals;
- f) It features an international dimension.

2.3 Attraction and retention challenges.

2.3.1 Filling the gap. The question of attracting and retaining NGAP includes finding compromises between (i) a highly standardized environment and a need for innovation and creativity; (ii) an increasing interest for high-level education and professions where competences are acquired on a learn-by-doing basis; (iii) a need for job security in a cyclical industry.

2.3.2 Field and sector specificities. The attraction and retention challenges appear different from traditional to more modern professions. For a given profession, an additional unbalance between the regional and major airlines or the private and commercial sector has to be considered.

2.3.3 Regional specificities. In most developed countries the shortage is driven by massive retirement, with the issue of the attraction and retention. In regions of fast growing economies, it is due to the mismatch between the training capacity and the accelerated growth of the industry causing training requirements. In developing countries, the lack of adequate training and the displacement of competencies through massive emigration have to be considered.

3. BEST PRACTICES TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN NGAP

3.1 Best attraction practices

3.1.1 Improvement of global industry image, by featuring traditional factors (as high-tech products, mobility) and additional considerations such as care for people and environment. In addition, marketing strategies should be put on place to advertise the improved image.

3.1.2 Revision of aviation professions practice and required skills, by including dimensions of innovation and creativity. Even in such a highly standardized environment, it is recommended to define a framework within which the use of latest technologies would be allowed.

3.1.3 Facilitation of access to aviation professions, by increasing exposure to aviation fields and removing access barriers as follows: recruit at an earlier stage, favour on-job training, and promote a skill-based recruitment strategy to attract professionals from other fields.

3.1.4 Innovative ways of recruiting. It is now a general practice in the industry to leave the conventional ways of recruiting for communication on social media and web outreach.

3.2 General retention practices

3.2.1 Be the best deal. Competitive salaries and benefits, work-life balance through flexibility of schedule are motivation factors. A minimum harmonization of the benefits package between fields and among sectors (especially private versus commercial) is encouraged to reduce the unbalance noted in 2.3.2.

3.2.2 Management practices and policies. There is a need to shift the management culture to include aspects such as: recognition and valuation of all jobs, encouragement of initiative and responsibilities taking, increased communication of companies' vision.

3.2.3 Development, growth opportunities and career paths. That includes professional development programs, mentoring and fellowship programs to expand experience and knowledge, and continuous training and education. Also defining clear career paths for young professionals would account for adding in-between steps and titles to traditional career paths and capitalize on career mobility.

3.3 Additional specific recommendations

3.3.1 Harmonization of existing initiatives. Initiatives like the AFI and HRDF programs in Africa, in place to attract and retain NGAP at national and regional levels should be encouraged, in order to avoid unbalance in the industry. It would be of added value to put in place a centre to share knowledge and experience, and to mobilize human resources to assist states in the implementation of their programs.

3.3.2 Adding value and creativity through research programs. It is necessary that the aviation industry capitalizes on its role as vector of development to improve attraction and retention of NGAP, especially in developing countries with: installation of local industries for aviation needs, installation of aviation schools and establishment of active research programs with universities and industries.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The different recommendations given and actions foreseen are mostly directive guidelines and do not require additional budget. Implications on states and industry are very minimal and should be met within the available budgetary resources.

5. ACTIONS

Following the recommendations and considering the financial implications, the council is invited to:

- i) Take note of the recommendations provided;
- j) Elaborate a guideline of best practices for attraction and retention available to all Member States;
- k) Encourage Member States to put in place a task force, undertake initiatives to attract and retain NGAP;
- l) Endorse the development of a global action plan to reinforce and harmonize NGAP initiatives worldwide; this includes creation of a centre for shared experience and knowledge and mobilization of human resources for state assistance.
- m) Encourage industries to continue acting as vector of change and development in all parts of the world;
- n) Review the definition of aviation professions requirements in competencies, education, necessary skills, in order to facilitate mobility among aviation fields and recruitment from different fields;
- o) Reinforce the collaboration with training institutions and industries for management training;
- p) Implement a plan to collect more data about human capacity needs in specific regions and monitor the evolution of the shortage issue.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 ICAO program for NGAP dedicated this 2nd symposium to prepare for the future. The issue discussed in this paper is about challenges and best practices to attract and retain aviation professionals, and it comes down to filling a gap between young professionals' expectations and aviation professions requirements. By analyzing NGAP profile and particularities of aviation professions, challenges have been illustrated for the issue: finding the compromises between aviation professions and NGAP interests, taking into account fields and regions particularities. Also, best practices for attracting NGAP have been presented, mainly improving aviation global image, revising practice of profession, facilitating access to profession, innovating in the recruitment. In addition, best practices for retaining NGAP result in being the best deal in terms of salaries, management policies, development growth and career paths. Therefore, actions required by ICAO on the issue focuses on harmonizing initiatives among all states members, implementing a global initiative to avoid unbalance in the profession and encouraging industries to participate in that initiative.