

The ICAO State Action Plan Initiative

By ICAO Secretariat

A Long-Term Collective Engagement

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the 193 Member States have a longstanding history of cooperation in the field of environmental protection. While ICAO has exercised continuous leadership to international civil aviation in limiting and reducing CO₂ emissions through the development of policies and standards, the Member States have demonstrated active engagement and cooperation. The cooperation between ICAO and the States has been marked by a common understanding that addressing environmental issues requires a dynamic and multi-stakeholder approach of collaboration.

Since its creation in 2010, the State Action Plans on CO₂ Emissions Reduction has been one of the most successful programmes with ICAO Member States. It is a voluntary initiative and a means to provide States with the capacity and tools to develop and implement a State Action Plan for

CO₂ emissions reduction. At its beginning, the programme was created with a view of leaving “No Country Left Behind” ensuring that all States have the human, technical and financial capacity to develop and implement a State Action Plan. Today ICAO is proud to count 133 State Action Plans received as of July 2022, totaling more than 98% of global Revenue Tonne-kilometres (RTK)¹. This is reflective of ICAO’s continual progress.

The ICAO State Action Plan is a living document to be updated every three years as per Resolution A37-19 and a medium-long term climate change strategy at the national level involving all interest parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As a first step in developing or updating a State Action Plan, is the creation of an integrated team working together to plan, develop and implement a State Action Plan. The team, comprising Headquarter, Regional, and State representatives will work together with all interested parties to define a quantified baseline, select appropriate



FIGURE 1: Map of the State Action Plans submitted to ICAO as of July 2022

1 https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/ClimateChange_ActionPlan.aspx

mitigation measures from ICAO's basket of measures, quantifying emissions reduction derived from each of the selected measures, and quantifying expected results from the implementation of these mitigation measures in terms of CO₂ emissions reduction.

The State Action Plan is also a monitoring and communication tool. It enables ICAO, through the compilation of quantified data from States, both for baseline and expected results, to measure the progress towards the achievement of ICAO's global aspirational environmental goals for international aviation. This represents the annual improvement in energy efficiency of 2% until 2050 and neutral growth in carbon from 2020, as established at the 37th Assembly in 2010. The information gathered by ICAO through the State Action Plans also serves as a gap analysis in terms of capacity building requirements at the State level. ICAO is continuously assessing the needs of States to ensure continual delivery of excellent assistance and support.

ICAO's assistance and support to its 193 Member States with the development and implementation of their State Action Plan takes various forms. ICAO has created a series of guidance documents and quantification tools. Guidance on the Development of States' Action Plan on CO₂ Emissions Reduction Activities (Doc 9988), provides a detailed step-by-step approach to enable States to develop their State Action Plan and meet the basic requirements. The Third Edition of Doc 9988 was published in 2019 and ICAO is preparing the Fourth Edition for publication.

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, face-to-face meetings were replaced by virtual teleconferences. Since March 2020, ICAO has organized multiple online events including the 2020 and 2021 Stocktaking Seminars, an important event in the field of sustainable aviation. Additionally, ICAO Regional webinars were organized between July 2020 and August 2020 to provide additional information for the State Action Plan development process, and ICAO's updated activities and supporting tools. Success stories and examples were also provided to support and inspire States.

Moreover, in 2020, ICAO celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the implementation of the Programme created by the adoption of Assembly Resolution A37-19 on October 9, 2010, at its 30th Session. To celebrate all that has been achieved so far, each ICAO Regional Offices organized celebratory

meetings together with States National Focal Points. It was been an opportunity to discuss further successes, challenges and potential solutions as well as the next steps.

In 2021, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment was released which included recent scientific findings and their implications for aviation, ICAO continued its work on the feasibility of establishing a long-term aspirational goal for international aviation as reached during the ICAO 40th Assembly session in 2019, when the Assembly requested its Council to continue to explore the feasibility of adopting a long-term global aspirational goal in light of the 2 °C and 1.5 °C temperature goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

ICAO assessed the feasibility of a global long-term aspirational goal, including possible implementation roadmaps for reducing international aviation CO₂ emissions. Through a robust process involving more than 600 experts from States, and the main stakeholders inside and outside of the aviation industry, ICAO conducted detailed studies assessing the attainability and impacts of any goals proposed. It is important that the impact on growth as well as costs in all countries, especially developing countries, be presented the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly in 2022. This assessment of long-term goals will include information from States on their experiences working towards the medium-term goal.

Capacity Building and Green Funding for Aviation Emissions Reduction

As stated in the latest IPCC Assessment Report, the limitation of global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius requires breakthrough technologies. In that regard, ICAO continues to support States in the implementation of forward-looking mitigation measures for CO₂ emissions reduction. The new and updated State Action Plans should include innovative mitigation measures based on the latest scientific knowledge such as disruptive new aircraft technologies, sustainable aviation fuels, and renewable energy.

Today, States are indeed developing mitigation measures based on current and future methods and ideas that can be qualified as innovative. Some States have also independently set themselves net zero targets for aviation by 2050.

PARTNERS		STATUS OF ACTION PLAN		
State Providing support	State receiving support	Under development	Submitted to ICAO	Posted on the ICAO website
Bulgaria	North Macedonia			
Spain	Ukraine			
Namibia	Zambia			
Kenya	Botswana			
Dominican Republic	Panama			
Namibia	Gambia			
Italy	Madagascar			
Brazil	Mozambique			
Spain	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			

FIGURE 2: List of State Action Plan Buddy Partnerships

Therefore, it is evident that infrastructure will require enhancement and funding to meet these goals and objectives. Therefore, ICAO continues to work on the identification of potential impacts of climate change on international aviation. Infrastructure and investment related needs, as well as incentives to encourage the deployment of clean and renewable energies sources for aviation such as sustainable aviation fuels at a decreased and more accessible cost.

ICAO is also taking into consideration the different circumstances among States in their capacity to respond to the challenges associated with climate change and the need to provide further support in particular to developing countries and States having particular requirements. Specific measures have been put in place over the years by ICAO to facilitate access to financial support, technology transfer and capacity building to these States. These measures included partnerships among States and other international organizations.

For the States who have not yet submitted a State Action Plan or are in process of updating their State Action Plan, ICAO offers the possibility of being matched with another State and serves as an intermediary for the establishment of a Buddy Partnership. This capacity building partnership provides access to financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity and assistance in bridging gaps among ICAO

Member States of terms of capability of developing and implementing a State Action Plan.

ICAO in partnership with the European Union has offered capacity building assistance to its member states for the development of their action plans within the framework of the project: ICAO Assistance Project with the European Union Funding. These projects consists of two phases: the first phase of the Assistance Project which supported 14 States from Africa and the Caribbean, and the second phase includes the implementation of State Action Plans in 10 African States. In the first phase, all expected results were achieved, and the second phase, currently in progress, is demonstrating promising results.

Another funding project in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was created in 2015 to facilitate the sustainable development of the aviation sector. This project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was directed to developing States and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in their efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions from international aviation.

ICAO is working on the publication of a Fourth Edition of the Guidance on the Development of States' Action Plan on CO₂ Emissions Reduction Activities (Doc 9988) which will provide further guidance on how to further assess environmental and social benefits of innovative mitigation measures versus costs, with a view to submit

an application for funding. As the State Action Plan is a platform to showcase States environmental benefits, it can be used to access green funding. It will form the basis for justification for the funding application.

As more and more States are setting targets for international aviation, green funding will secure the achievement of these targets and the State Action Plan will serve as a climate change plan and roadmap.

Conclusion

Today, we are at a cornerstone in the field of sustainable aviation, and the continual implementation and updating of the State Action Plan initiative is very important. Greater accessibility to scientific knowledge, and additional commitments in international aviation, will require additional green finance to achieve global common environmental goals for CO₂ emissions reduction. The International Civil Aviation Organization together with its Member States will continue to deepen their collaboration which have proven to be a key factor of success.