

# ACT-CORSIA Programme: Capacity-Building and Assistance to States in Times of the Pandemic

By ICAO Secretariat

## Introduction

From its initial launch in July 2018, the ICAO ACT-CORSIA (Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) Programme has been the cornerstone of ICAO and its Member States' continuous commitment to capacity building vis-à-vis the implementation of Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). The importance of taking all necessary actions in providing capacity building activities by ICAO and its Member States, through the Programme's coordinated approach under the umbrella of ICAO, was particularly highlighted at the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the ICAO Assembly in 2019.

Despite the challenges posed from the global COVID-19 pandemic, in particular to the international aviation sector, significant progress and adjustments to cater to the challenges of the pandemic have been made on various elements of the Programme, in particular on the ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnerships, Frequently Asked Questions, brochures and leaflets, videos, CORSIA seminars' and workshops' materials and recordings, and online tutorials.

A complete list of information about the Programme and progress made is available on the ICAO CORSIA public website<sup>1</sup>.

## Progress made on the ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnerships

At the center of the ACT-CORSIA Programme is the Buddy Partnerships, where bilateral or multilateral partnerships among the ICAO Member States are formed in the coordination with the ICAO Secretariat. Through these partnerships, Member States help each other to prepare for CORSIA implementation, with 'supporting States' providing CORSIA technical experts to work together with the CORSIA focal points of 'requesting States' (hence, Buddies) on the preparation and implementation of the requesting States' CORSIA CO<sub>2</sub> Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system, in a coordinated yet tailored manner to the needs of the requesting States. Typically, the assistance is in the form of on-site training delivered by the CORSIA-technical experts of supporting States, and additional follow-ups with the requesting States as needed, in close coordination with the ICAO Secretariat.

Building on the successful implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Buddy Partnership, which focused on the preparation of Emissions Monitoring Plans and CORSIA regulatory framework, and the reporting and verification of CORSIA baseline year emissions, the Phase 3 of the Buddy Partnerships was launched at the beginning of 2020. The focus of Phase 3 was supporting the State's readiness to proceed with reporting to ICAO aggregated 2019 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other relevant information through

1 ICAO CORSIA website - <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CORSIA/Pages/default.aspx>

the CORSIA Central Registry (CCR), as 2020 was the very first year for States to report such data to ICAO.

However, shortly after the initiation of the Phase 3, the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic required rapid adjustment of the Buddy Partnerships from on-site training, to virtual remote training to cater to various mobility restrictions. States nonetheless strove to continue the Buddy Partnerships bearing in mind of the challenges, in particular, in view of the relevant deadlines in Annex 16, Volume IV, Appendix 1 and ICAO Council's decision to allow more flexibility to accommodate Member States facing difficulty in meeting the deadlines.

Such efforts were well received by the Member States, as exemplified by the increase in the number of Member States' participating in the Buddy Partnerships, from 113 States (15 supporting States and 98 requesting States) at the start of the Buddy Partnerships to 134 States (16 supporting States and 118 requesting States) in Phase 3 (as of March 2022). Furthermore, the training provided has contributed to the high level of CORSIA implementation globally, as demonstrated by the fact that 97% of total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for 2019 and 2020 were submitted to ICAO through the CCR.

Phase 3 of the Buddy Partnerships has progressed further in 2022, with additional material and information covered to consider differing reporting requirements reflected in Annex 16, Volume IV for the baseline years (2019 and 2020) and the pilot phase of the CORSIA (2021-2023).

The list of Member States participating in the Phase 3 of the Buddy Partnerships are available on Figure 1, and further information on Buddy Partnerships can be found on the ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnership webpage<sup>2</sup>.



**FIGURE 1:** List of Member States participating in the Phase 3 of Buddy Partnerships

### Seminars, Workshops, and Training

With the spread of COVID-19 and the associated mobility restrictions, it became difficult for ICAO to support its Member States in conventional, face-to-face settings. Hence, a number of web-based capacity building events and activities has been organized by the ICAO Secretariat, in particular:

- In April 2020, five online pre-Seminar training<sup>3</sup> for all ICAO regions were conducted to help CORSIA Focal Points of each Member States familiarize themselves with the main functionalities of the CCR and, in particular, on the ways to report 2019 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by the deadlines contained in the Annex 16, Volume IV. The training was conducted prior to the official launch of the CCR in June 2020, to allow smooth operationalization and use of the CCR. The trainings on the CCR were also complemented by the initiation of the Phase 3 of the ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnerships.

<sup>2</sup> ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnership webpage - <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CORSIA/Pages/CORSIA-Buddy-Partnerships.aspx>  
<sup>3</sup> 2020 Pre-Seminar Remote Training on the CCR - <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CORSIA/Pages/VRS2020.aspx>

- Mobility restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic brought about some concerns from Member States and aeroplane operators in terms of their requirements for third-party verification under CORSIA. Particularly, aeroplane operators in some Member States were having difficulty with the verification of their Emissions Report as the site visits were not feasible due to travel restrictions, and social distancing measures imposed in several Member States. To address the concerns, an online verification webinar<sup>4</sup> was conducted in May 2020 and clarified relevant provisions of CORSIA SARPs (Standards and Recommended Practices) and guidance, in particular with respect to site visits. In this regard, the webinar was conducted to shed light on the CORSIA guidance material stating that while site visits are recommended, it is not a requirement under the CORSIA SARPs. The webinar also provided an opportunity for Member States to receive answers to their questions on verification under CORSIA.
- The 2021 CORSIA Forum<sup>5</sup> was held as a virtual and open event, from 6 to 7 October 2021, with an overview of the “state of play” in CORSIA implementation, focusing on milestones successfully reached thus far. It served as a platform for several ICAO Member States, in particular those actively participating in the ACT-CORSIA Buddy Partnerships, to share success stories and lessons learned regarding CORSIA implementation.

The event also provided information on the process and progress made regarding the 2022 CORSIA periodic review that the ICAO Council embarked on as requested by the ICAO Assembly, along with the analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on CORSIA and recovery scenarios.

## Navigating CORSIA on ICAO TV

Benefiting from the launch of ICAO TV in 2020 – the video hosting platform of ICAO that streams live and on-demand videos from ICAO and civil aviation partners – the Secretariat unveiled “Navigating CORSIA – a guide to the scheme’s design and implementation”<sup>6</sup> in November 2020. It includes a package of videos on CORSIA, prepared for an audience interested in CORSIA, but not fully conversant with the scheme’s design and implementation features. The available videos are as follows:

- Introduction to Navigating CORSIA
- CORSIA Overview
- CORSIA’s Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification system and related tools
- CORSIA Eligible Fuels
- CORSIA Eligible Emissions Units

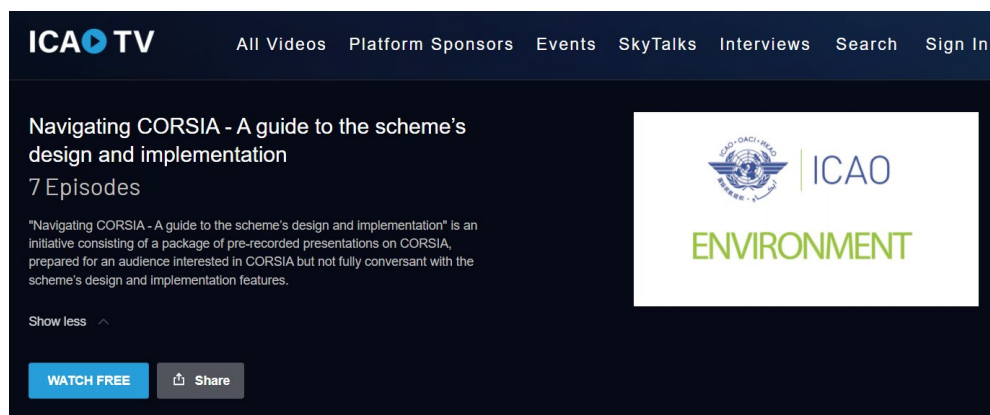


FIGURE 2: Frontpage of Navigating CORSIA video on ICAO TV

4 ICAO Webinar on CORSIA verification - <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CORSIA/Pages/2020VERCORSIA.aspx>

5 2021 ICAO CORSIA Forum - <https://www.icao.int/Meetings/CORSIA-Forum/Pages/default.aspx>

6 Navigating CORSIA on ICAO TV - <https://www.icao.tv/navigating-corsia>



FIGURE 3: Main webpage of CORSIA Verification course

## Launch of CORSIA Verification Course

In May 2020, ICAO launched an online version of the CORSIA Verification Course<sup>7</sup> to continue to support training of potential verifiers and other CORSIA stakeholders (particularly, those with experience in the verification of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions using ISO 14064-3:2006) on the relevant provisions of CORSIA third-party verification. The four-day long virtual course provides a full explanation of the CORSIA monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) requirements, with practical exercises and case studies focused on the verification of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Reports that have been prepared by aeroplane operators.

## CORSIA Newsletter

The CORSIA Newsletter was launched in early September 2020, as a monthly outreach publication with a view to continuously inform Member States and the wider public on the status of CORSIA implementation. Since the launch, it has become a major medium and a most valued outreach material on CORSIA, where a snapshot of all progress made on CORSIA implementation in the preceding month is showcased, amongst others: information on the evolution of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reported by States through the CCR; new publications and updates of ICAO Documents and tools necessary for CORSIA implementation; progress made on the 2022 CORSIA Periodic Review; and, upcoming

events and implementation deadlines. The newsletter also provides a periodic update on carbon market transactions data of CORSIA-eligible emissions units, thanks to a new partnership between ICAO and Ecosystem Marketplace.

All past newsletters are published and archived on the CORSIA Newsletter website<sup>8</sup>.

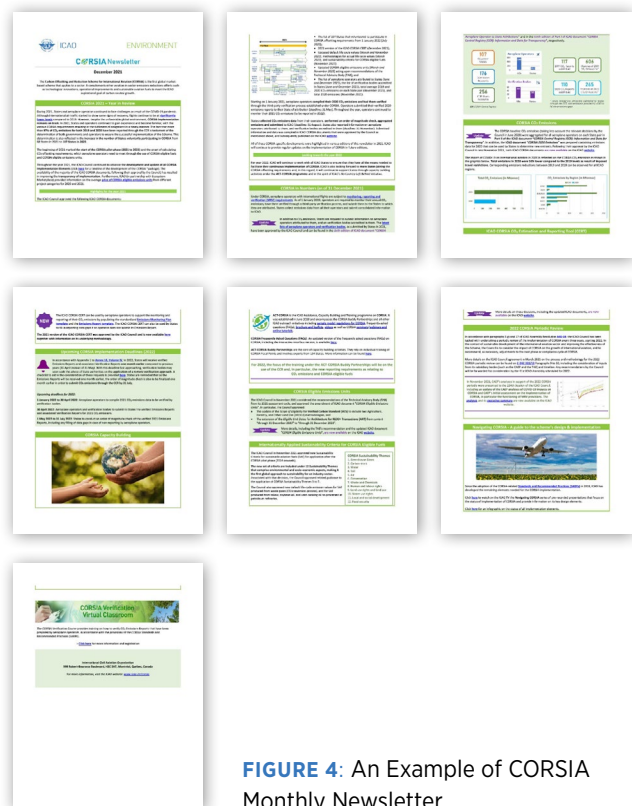


FIGURE 4: An Example of CORSIA Monthly Newsletter

7 <https://www.icao.int/training/Pages/CORSIA.aspx>

8 CORSIA Monthly Newsletter - <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CORSIA/Pages/CORSIANEWSLETTERS.aspx>