



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

Sixth Meeting (DGCA-MID/6) (Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1-3 November 2022)

Agenda Item 9: Implementation Planning and Implementation Support

ACI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT FOR AERODROMES IN THE MID REGION

(Presented by Airports Council International (ACI))

SUMMARY

ACI has been assisting ICAO in implementation support in the area of AGA, in particular, aerodrome certification with a number of tools: guidance materials, training and APEX in Safety. APEX in Safety is a peer assessment program whereby voluntary aerodrome safety and operations professionals are invited to conduct safety reviews at ACI member airports based on ICAO SARPS and industry best practices. More than 100 airports worldwide have undergone such reviews since 2012. The reviews have proved helpful for airports to improve safety compliance. The Meeting is invited to note the benefits of APEX in promoting aerodrome certification and consider urging States to include the programme in their NASP in alignment with GASP and MID-RASP.

REFERENCES

Doc 10004: GASP 2020 – 2022
MID-RASP 2020 – 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ACI has been using a number of tools to assist ICAO in implementation support worldwide in the area of AGA, in particular, aerodrome certification. These tools include [guidance materials](#) such as the [runway safety handbook](#) and the recently published [aerodrome certification guide](#); [training courses](#); and most importantly [APEX in Safety](#).

1.2 APEX in Safety is an ACI aerodrome safety peer review program launched in 2012 aimed at helping ACI member airports improve safety by adopting industry best practices and complying with ICAO SARPS.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 **Background and Update on APEX in Safety Review**

2.1.1 APEX in Safety has already been presented at previous DGCA conferences and RASG-MID meetings such as DGCA-MID/4 and RASG-MID/2. Only a brief description will be given here.

2.1.2 APEX in Safety is not an audit program. The review is done by voluntary “peers” of the airport concerned (the “host”) which takes the initiative to ask for such a review.

2.1.3 The review usually takes one week. During this week, a team of assessors (the peers) review the procedures of the airport, e.g. SMS, wildlife hazard management and aerodrome manuals; its physical characteristics, e.g. taxiways, runways and aprons; and firefighting and emergency response capabilities.

2.1.4 At the end of the review, the host receives a report on observations made and recommendations therefor. The report is kept confidential and the host is not obliged to implement the recommendations.

2.1.5 The host will be charged a nominal administrative fee and the travelling expenses of the voluntary assessors who are not remunerated for their services.

2.1.6 To date more than 100 airports have hosted such reviews, including 8 in the Middle East. A map indicating their locations can be viewed online [here](#).

2.1.7 The COVID-19 pandemic, although somewhat easing now, has so far been largely restricting international travels. Reviews can now be done online but are understandably limited to reviews of documents such as SMS and aerodrome manuals. Nonetheless in the second quarter of 2022 ACI noted with encouragement that international borders were progressively reopening and as a result some onsite APEX in Safety review activities had resumed.

2.1.8 More details on the program can be found online at <https://aci.aero/programs-and-services/apex/>.

2.2 **The Role of APEX in Safety in Promoting Aerodrome Certification**

2.2.1 Many aerodrome operators who have undergone the review find it useful in identifying safety gaps and hence in facilitating compliance with national regulations, primarily because the review is not just about finding shortcomings but also providing practical recommendations and tips for rectifying the problems from the prospective of fellow safety compliance managers who have gone through a similar inspection process for certification.

2.2.2 Some regulators also find APEX in Safety facilitates aerodrome certification because operators having gone through such review have rectified most problems before the certification inspection. Some States now even use APEX as a precondition for aerodrome certification.

2.2.3 To ensure a sufficient supply of qualified and competent assessors, ACI in collaboration with ICAO has developed the Airport Safety Professional (ASP) designation training program. More details on the ASP program can be viewed online [here](#).

2.2.4 APEX in Safety is a recognized industry program referred to under SEI – 1 (Strategic collaboration with key aviation stakeholders to enhance safety in a coordinated manner) in Doc 10004: GASP 2020 – 2022. It is also part of MID-RASP 2020 – 2022 as G4-SEI-01 (Promote the use of Industry Programmes).

2.2.5 Furthermore G3-SEI-01 (Certification of International Aerodromes) in MID-RASP 2020 – 2022 encourages States to certify their international aerodromes to improve infrastructure to support safety operations.

2.2.6 Given that NASP should be aligned with GASP and MID-RASP, it would be sensible for States, especially those which are still to certify their international aerodromes, to include APEX in Safety in their NASPs, e.g. by encouraging their airport operators to host such reviews or participate as safety assessors.

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