



## DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

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

#### Agenda Item 8: Economic Development of Air Transport

##### A SUGGESTED APPROACH TO ESTABLISHING THE ICAO MID AIR TRANSPORT STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2035

(Presented by Airports Council International (ACI))

#### SUMMARY

This paper suggests a) foundations and overarching principles based on which the ICAO MID Region Air Transport Strategic Plan 2020 – 2035 (the “Plan”) should be established; b) how the Plan should be structured; c) and high-level objectives that should be aimed at.

#### REFERENCES

UNSDG  
GASP  
GASeP  
Muscat Declaration 2017  
Declaration on Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation, Dubai 2017

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As per DGCA-MID/5 Conclusion 5/8, a MID Regional Airport Transport Strategic Plan 2020 – 2035 should be drafted and inputs from States and International Organizations be solicited.

1.2 With this paper ACI offers its input to the Plan.

#### 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 DGCA-MID/5 agreed that the objective of the Plan is to ensure that “all MID States can enjoy the benefits of air transport with greater **air connectivity**, under optimum conditions of **safety** and **security**, with duly strengthened civil aviation authorities acting autonomously and independently, with due care to environmental protection. It is sought to orientate the priorities to achieve **greater access** of the population **to air transport**, combining at the same time the three dimensions of sustainable development: **economic**, social and **environmental**”.

2.2 ACI thus would offer its inputs to the Plan from the following four perspectives:

- Foundations of Plan
- Overarching Principles
- Structure of Strategy
- Objectives and Enablers

### 2.3 **Foundations of the Strategy**

The Plan should be in principle:

2.3.1 Aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG);

2.3.2 Consistent with previous ICAO MID regional declarations and global documents such as:

- Muscat Declaration 2017;
- Declaration on Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation, Dubai 2017; and
- GASP and GAsEP.

### 2.4 **Overarching Principles**

2.4.1 The following points should be borne in mind and considered overarching in drafting the Plan and achieving its objectives:

- The vertical integration model between airports and airlines has been a distinctive feature of success in MID. This model can continue to prosper if the specificities of each player are taken into account, including the transformation of the airport from a simple service provider to a business in its own right. In a 15-year horizon the sector has to be prepared for further transformations, such as the increasing participation of private investors in the airport sector under the PPP (Public Private Partnership) model.
- In planning for the long-term capacity on the ground and in the sky, an appropriate level of coordination should be ensured to respond to the increase in passenger and cargo traffic. ACI estimates, as of September 2022, that passenger traffic in MID for 2022 is expected to climb back to 83% of the volume observed in 2019, and by 2025 to recover above 2019 levels, reaching 475 million passengers per year by then. The predicted long-term (2020 to 2040) compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for total passenger traffic in MID is approximately 10.9%-- the highest among all world regions. This pace of growth will require relevant policies to be put in place in advance to ensure an adequate level of investment in airport infrastructure and services, either through public financing or through the user-pays principles model.
- Major hubs in the region are in keen competition for passengers connecting through the MID region between other regions of the world.

## 2.5 Structure of Strategy

2.5.1 For each of four pillars of the Plan, i.e., Air Connectivity, Aviation Safety, Aviation Security and Environmental Protection; the following should be established and defined:

- Ambitious but achievable and quantifiable key objectives, e.g., a certain percentage of population in the Middle East Region (MID) to have access to air transport within a certain distance by a certain year;
- Enablers and obstacles that would favor or impede the achievement of the said objectives;
- A strategy to provide the said enablers and remove the obstacles; and
- A concrete action plan to implement the strategy.

## 2.6 Air Connectivity

2.6.1 Establish and agree on common measures of connectivity, assess current connectivity and identify gap. The [ACI Europe Connectivity Study](#) could be of useful reference.

2.6.2 Identify and introduce relevant policy instruments to influence air connectivity outcomes.

2.6.3 Facilitate access to air transport market, e.g., by promoting liberalization of air services regimes.

2.6.4 Ensure there are adequate airport capacities:

- Ensure availability of adequate airport capacities in national development plans especially for hub airports. Consider the role to be played by private and foreign investors in the aviation sector, e.g., by easing limits on FDI (foreign direct investments).
- For capacity constraints at airports in the region - ensure slot allocation policy objectives and principles are taken into consideration of the future reform direction at global level under the World Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG). Continue to reform and modernize the airport slot allocation model through a collaborative decision-making process driven by airport operators, airlines and slot coordinators at the Worldwide Airport Slot Board (WASB).

2.6.5 Ensure adequate airspace efficiency and capacity.

2.6.6 Enhance regional connectivity:

- Consider the value that airport networks, systems and groups generate.
- Consider providing financial incentives or support to promote connectivity to small airports in remote locations.
- Consider consolidation of hubs and expansion of secondary airports.

2.6.7 Stimulate travel demand and facilitate travels:

- Taxation policy favorable to air travel.
- Less restrictive visa policy and facilitation of visa applications, e.g., by putting visa application online.

2.6.8 Enhance the passenger experience, making travelling through MID airports a remarkable customer experience by:

- anticipating consumer trends and preference;
- including the biosafety aspect;
- taking full advantage of emerging technologies; and
- working very closely with airlines and other service partners to transform the way in which airports operate.

## **2.7 Aviation Safety**

2.7.1 Implement State Safety Program (SSP).

2.7.2 Certify international aerodromes.

2.7.3 Promote a positive safety culture as required in Annex 19.

2.7.4 Promote regional cooperation on training.

## **2.8 Aviation Security**

2.8.1 Balance Security and Facilitation:

- Consider adding Facilitation to the Plan, e.g. by changing the heading to SECFAL, or consider adding FAL as separate heading.
- Consider potential information technology applications that would enhance competitiveness of air transport: blockchain, big data, artificial intelligence and automation.
- Ensure operational impact assessment of security measures before implementation.

2.8.2 Follow through the [Declaration on Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation](#) made in Dubai in 2017.

2.8.3 Enhance regional cooperation in:

- Harmonization of security measures;
- Sharing of intelligence; and
- Training.

2.8.4 Promote security awareness and culture.

2.8.5 Promote One Stop Security to enhance connectivity and hub efficiency.

## 2.9 Environmental Protection

2.9.1 Climate Change (related to UNSDG 7, 9 and 13):

- Mitigation of climate change:
  - a. Integrate mitigation measures into airport master planning, operations planning, and facilities design.
  - b. Implement COP-21 agreement reached in Paris in 2015 by:
    - i. Enhancing management of greenhouse gases e.g. with a program of electrification of currently fossil fuel powered equipment (GSE, airside passenger bus);
    - ii. Establishing long term carbon goals for service providers; and
    - iii. Including Airport Carbon and Emissions Reporting Tool (ACERT) and Airport Carbon Accreditation in State Action Plans.
- Adaptation to Climate Change:
  - a. Perform climate change risk assessment for airport infrastructure and establish adaption plans; and
  - b. Include adaptation to climate change in airport master plans.

2.9.2 Consider adding environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) objectives for service providers (related to UNSDG 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15).

2.9.3 Encourage including in airport environmental management plans: waste management (UNSDG 12), water management (UNSDG 6) and aircraft noise management (UNSDG 3 and 11).

2.9.4 Establish plans to combat wildlife trafficking via air transport (UNSDG 14 and 15).

2.10 Other UNSDG

2.10.1 The Plan may include other UNSDG not mentioned above but could be of concern for the air transport industry such as gender equality (UNSDG 5) which could be promoted via the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative.

## 3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The Meeting is invited to consider the ACI's suggestions in the principles and objectives for the drafting of the MID Air Transport Strategic Plan 2020 – 2035.