



## DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

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

#### Agenda Item 3: Global and Regional Developments

##### ESTABLISHMENT OF FUTURE AVIATION THINK TANK IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*(Presented by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)*

#### SUMMARY

This paper presents the initiative [and proposal] by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to engage in the feasibility and establishment of a **Future Aviation Think Tank (FATT)** in the Middle East region, with the main purpose of conducting research, surveys and studies related with and promoting the future development of aviation [in the region and worldwide]. This paper also gives insights for a common awareness of the need and the benefits esteeming from the think tank.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.1 of this paper.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the present time, the challenges that faces the global aviation system are multiple-fold, somehow unexpected, and particularly related to sustainability, resilience, and recovery.

1.2 In the context of such challenging times which require profound understanding of the issues impacting the aviation system and, at the same time, the pursue of the most suitable, reliable and achievable strategies, the recourse to scientific research reveals to be paramount.

1.3 The benefit of research is unquestionable in basically all areas of the society, especially for the economic development. Already, the civil aviation industry applies critical research and development, often at high costs, to create and improve their products and services. Research also serves as backbone to the development of products and services which are safer, appropriate, and sustainable.

1.4 Research in aviation is itself a challenge, since the aviation eco-system covers a diverse range of interrelated activities, either operational, engineering, economic, social, environment, etc. The integration of multi-disciplinary research in these subjects within the specialties of aviation requires top-level well-conceived institutions, and expertise from diverse backgrounds.

1.5 The importance and need of research in aviation has, therefore, led to the establishment of few international think tanks, either within universities or as autonomous entities, and either dedicated to specific areas or covering all fields of aviation and air transport. These entities have been playing an important role as partners to States and international organizations in the definition of policies for the development of aviation globally.

## **2. DISCUSSION [ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUTURE AVIATION THINK TANK]**

2.1 The creation and establishment of a Think Tank for the future of aviation, the ‘**Future Aviation Think Tank**’ (FATT) has the global perspective not only to study and understand the challenges affecting the aviation ecosystem, but also aims to outlook and shape its future development. FATT seeks to promote impactful research as well as to expand the knowledge and practice of evidence-based decisions, policies, and strategies. FATT should furthermore act as a forum to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of ideas and knowledge [and deliver workshops/training] on a collaborative multi-national and/or inter-disciplinary research teams on topics of regional, continental, and global interest.

2.2 The focus shall be set on rigor, excellence, relevance, and actionable research. To be successful, the creation of the think tank shall be supported by a careful feasibility study outlining its purposes, organizational structure, functioning and funding; and mandatorily taking into consideration the environment evolving the sector and its critical research needs. [FATT will primarily consider research related to the development of civil aviation in the Middle East region].

2.3 The organizational structure of the think tank shall be composed of qualified personnel, from different professional backgrounds, aviation subject matter experts, academics, and researchers [with recognized work in the sector], but it shall also be open to prospective researchers. The type of research structure and research process should be established in a way to accommodate a dynamic application of the most appropriate and modern research approaches and methodologies.

2.4 The main global areas of research should cover, among others, the wide range of actual and future challenges facing the global aviation system and industry, namely:

- a)* the aviation’s critical role as an enabler of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- b)* ICAO strategic objectives 2023-2025;
- c)* global megatrends and aviation, such as climate change and environment, economic power shift, global connectedness, innovation, new technology, demographics change, rapid urbanization;
- d)* digital aviation;
- e)* passenger experience;
- f)* infrastructure development and industry development;
- g)* unmanned aviation;
- h)* aviation data;
- i)* regulatory global best practices, smarter regulation.

2.5 FATT will be located in [Saudi Arabia] and while carrying on its research activities it will establish deep-rooted cooperation, collaboration and networking in all areas of aeronautics [and aerospace] with a diversity of stakeholders such as public and private international organizations operating in the field of aviation (ICAO, IATA, ACI, CANSO,...), organizations of other sectors linked with aviation (WTO, UNWTO,...), the aviation industry, the academia and universities, scholars and publishers, institutes and societies, and other Think Tanks and aviation academies, in Saudi Arabia, in the MID region, and worldwide.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) take into consideration the initiative [and proposal] of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- b) encourage States in the MID region to, under a collaborative decision, support Saudi Arabia's endeavour in the establishment of the FATT in Saudi Arabia.

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