

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
Second Meeting of the AFI Volcanic Ash Steering Group (AFI VOLCEX/SG2)
(Virtual, 18 July 2022)
Agenda Item 3 AFI VOLCEX 23 Framework
WP3.4. Exercise aims and objectives.
(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY
<p>This paper presents the aims and objectives of the volcanic ash exercise and proposes the objectives of the 2023 VA event for consideration by the meeting.</p> <p>Action by the meeting in paragraph 3</p>
<p>REFERENCE(S):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFI Volcanic Ash Exercise Operational Instructions (OPINS) • AFI VOLCEX 21/01 Report • Doc 9766 Handbook on the IAVW • ToR of AFI VOLCEX SG
<p>Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A – <i>Safety</i>, B – <i>Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In accordance with the provision of the OPINS, the volcanic ash exercise should be conducted every two years in the AFI Region. The exercise is led by an Exercise Leader supervising the work of a Directing Staff in charge of negotiating and designing the exercise scenario, conducting the exercise, debriefing the exercise, and writing the Initial Exercise Report.

1.2.1.2. The conduct of the exercise requires the participation of several key stakeholders to ensure the provision of quality VA information to airspace users.

2. DISCUSSIONS

2.1. In accordance with the OPINS, the exercises are designed to:

- a) Practice the conduct of volcanic activity response in accordance with the regional reference documents;
- b) Verify existing information, AIS and MET message routing on AFTN addresses, relevant e-mail addresses, telephone and fax number, and internet addresses (URLs);
- c) Maintain appropriate information and message routing between all involved agencies and organizations;
- d) Provide volcanic activity response training for key personnel involved;
- e) Verify and develop existing procedures; and

- f) Provide, when appropriate, recommendations for amendment of the reference documents, in accordance with the lessons learned and conclusions contained in the Final Exercise Report.
- 2.2. Within the framework of the first volcanic ash exercise in the AFI region, the objectives were focused on technical matters (flow of information – VONA from the volcano observatory – VAA/VAG from the VAAC – issuance of SIGMET from the MWO – issuance of NOTAM from AIS etc.) as follows:
- a) Demonstrate coordination procedures between all participating parties (ANSPs, ATM Centres, AIS, VO, VAACs, MWOs, Users)
 - b) Verify existing information and messages routing between all involved agencies and organizations.
 - c) Demonstrate transmission of air-reports on volcanic ash in accordance with Annex 3 (Aircraft ->ACC ->MWO ->VAAC)
 - d) Demonstrate information sharing via teleconferences and website.
 - e) Provide recommendations for amendment of the procedures, in accordance with the lessons learned and conclusions formulated.
- 2.3. This first exercise of volcanic ash in the AFI Region was based on the simulation of message exchanges and coordination between the entities involved in the exercise.
- a) The simulated high level volcanic ash cloud contaminated two FIRs (SAL and Dakar); affecting major air traffic routes in SAL and Dakar FIRS.
 - b) The exercise was led by the Cabo Verde Climatology and Geophysics Service Provider, Aeronautical Information Service Provider and Air Traffic Service Provider and the Cabo Verde CAA. Mr. Alberto Silva was the Exercise Leader. The exercise involved participants from some agencies in Senegal, The Bulletin Compiling Centre (Kenya) and the Pretoria Regional OPMET Data Bank (RODB Pretoria) participated in the exercise.
 - c) Volcanic ash information was disseminated through e-mails (e.g., VONA, Ground Observation reports, SIGMET, NOTAM, VAA/VAG, METAR/SPECI, special air-report), the AFTN/AMHS network, website (e.g., VAA/VAG) and direct links/phone/voice.
- 2.4. Considering the lessons learnt from the first VA event, the Steering group first meeting recommended that the followings be considered when developing the 2023 exercise objectives:
- a) COM links /Networks are not tested.
 - b) local Contingency Committee not activated.
 - c) Functioning of agreements between stakeholders to be tested
 - d) The following was also recommended:
 - Insufficient preparation of some participants
 - Sufficient preparation of stakeholders in handling SIGMETs and NOTAM information
 - Ensuring sufficient involvement at the high level
 - Ensuring the update of contact details of Volcano Observatory States
- 2.5. In view of the above, the 2023 VA exercise objectives can cover the followings:
- a) Coordination procedures between all participating parties (ANSPs, ATM Centres, AIS, VO, VAACs, MWOs, Users)
 - b) Verify availability and functioning of COM links /Networks.
 - c) Tests functioning local Contingency Committee
 - d) Functioning of agreements between stakeholders to be tested
 - e) Improvement recommendations from lessons learnt from the VA event.

3. ACTIONS BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) review and amend the proposed objectives of the 2023 VA exercise provided in paragraph 2.5 of the tis working paper.

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