

# Lessons Learned from Capacity Building Sessions in the Caribbean

By Ashan Edoe (Transport Canada)

## Introduction

In 2014, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)'s Council considered how to better communicate with and assist its Member States in terms of Capacity Building and Implementation. One of the major points considered was with respect to discrepancies in how ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) were being implemented and that ICAO itself should provide more assistance including by playing a more active role on coordinating between States to build capacity.

Consequently, the Council decided that ICAO should review what it can do to better encourage States that have the capacity and resources to provide more comprehensive assistance to States that require support in various areas. Therefore, the No Country Left Behind (NLCB) initiative was endorsed to help coordinate and publicize any Organization-wide activities consistent with these priorities.<sup>1</sup>

## ICAO's ACT-CORSIA Programme

In 2018, after the adoption of Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), the ICAO Council endorsed the ICAO ACT-CORSIA (Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for the CORSIA) Programme which recognized that many ICAO Member States would

need targeted assistance in order to prepare for CORSIA implementation.<sup>2</sup>

Canada has been an active supporter of the ACT-CORSIA programme since its inception, including providing support to Francophonie States in Africa in a partnership with France and more recently supporting Caribbean States through direct coordination with the ICAO North America and Caribbean (NACC) office and Regional Focal Points.

## Importance of Aviation In the Caribbean Region

Air connectivity is key for the movement of people and transport of goods for the small island nations of the Caribbean. While there has been traffic growth overall for aviation within the region, this has been driven by extra regional traffic while intra-regional traffic has decreased.<sup>3</sup> This means that in many cases passengers need to take multiple flights to get between two States given that there may be limited or no routes available.

In a working paper to the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly, the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) outlined the value that had been provided from the ACT-CORSIA programme including invaluable training and partnerships alongside assistance with domestic regulations.<sup>4</sup>

1 [https://applications.icao.int/postalhistory/the\\_no\\_country\\_left\\_behind\\_initiative.htm](https://applications.icao.int/postalhistory/the_no_country_left_behind_initiative.htm)

2 <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/pages/Assistance.aspx>

3 [https://www.caribank.org/sites/default/files/publication-resources/Air%20Transport%20Competitiveness%20and%20Connectivity%20in%20the%20Caribbean\\_0.pdf](https://www.caribank.org/sites/default/files/publication-resources/Air%20Transport%20Competitiveness%20and%20Connectivity%20in%20the%20Caribbean_0.pdf)

4 [https://www.icao.int/Meetings/a40/Documents/WP/wp\\_339\\_en.pdf](https://www.icao.int/Meetings/a40/Documents/WP/wp_339_en.pdf)

## ACT-CORSIA Workshop – Trinidad and Tobago (2024)

### Overview

Ahead of this session, Canada coordinated with the ICAO Secretariat, NACC Regional office and Host State before settling on a date and location for the training. As per the ICAO ACT-CORSIA program, the training was tailored to Trinidad and Tobago (Figure 1) as per their needs and several virtual meetings were held prior to the in-person training to understand the circumstances there and expected attendees to ensure a timely productive workshop. This approach allowed the State to benefit from training that was tailored to their circumstances which is a key part of ICAO's ACT-CORSIA capacity building program.

The training covered a wide range of topics related to CORSIA and provided participants with information on ICAO's work on the Environment, Key Components of CORSIA and latest developments on Sustainable Aviation Fuels. An opportunity was also provided during the workshop to allow for an update from the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority on airspace improvements to improve fuel efficiency of flights in the Piarco Flight Information Region.

Overall, the workshop was well attended with participants from the Civil Aviation Authority, various multiple Government Departments, a fuel producer and a regional airline.



**FIGURE 1:** ACT-CORSIA Workshop – Trinidad and Tobago.

### Key takeaways

- Given that participants had a varied understanding of ICAO's work on the Environment and CORSIA, it was important to provide a high-level overview before diving into the specifics of the scheme and to provide ample time for answering questions.
- It was valuable to have the largest regional airline, Caribbean Airways in attendance as they were able to share their own experiences with CORSIA with participants.
- One challenge was that participants had varying levels of understanding and exposure to the Environment file. Moreover, it was mentioned that representatives have difficulty building up and maintaining a high level of expertise on environmental matters when training is provided to the State only once per year. This was relayed to the ICAO Secretariat.
- Participants discussed setting up future meetings to further discuss Environmental matters to continue making progress, as well as options for updating a SAF Feasibility study.

## ACT-CORSIA and State Action Plan Workshop – Antigua and Barbuda (2025)

### Overview

This workshop was provided in coordination with the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA) and attended by its 6 Member States (Figure 2):

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Grenada
- Dominica
- Saint Kitts and Nevis

Similar to the first workshop, Canada coordinated closely with the ICAO NACC regional office to tailor the agenda to the needs of the Eastern Caribbean States. Along with providing Capacity Building on CORSIA, training was also provided on ICAO's State Action Plan initiative.



**FIGURE 2:** ACT-CORSIA and SAP Workshop – Antigua.

### Key takeaways

- As the Eastern Caribbean States are not members of ICAO’s Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection, it was valuable for them to have access to a Canadian expert both at the workshop and then afterwards. For example, there were specific questions on how ICAO’s CO<sub>2</sub> estimation tool worked and how specific aircraft types are accounted for, and the instructor was able to provide answers and reference material at the workshop on it.
- While a regional air operator had ceased operations during the covid pandemic, it is possible that a new operator may surpass the CORSIA threshold in future years and therefore it was important to have an understanding of CORSIA now and how to prepare for compliance.
- Discussions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the workshop focused on developing the first State Action Plan for the ECCAA Member States. In particular, there were productive discussions on availability of data and selection of mitigation measures.

- It was important to understand that while some measures may work for larger ICAO Member States and airports, they may not be a good fit for smaller island States with smaller airports and lower levels of traffic.
- Another key point was the impact of extreme weather events on airport infrastructure and that this should be considered for future planning.
- The lack of direct intra-regional flights was also noted in discussions, and this results in higher emissions due to longer itineraries. For example, instead of a short flight to get from one island to another island, travellers may instead have to fly through a larger airport like Miami international and face an overnight layover.

### Next Steps

Canada is continuing to support the ECCAA Member States virtually as they work on their first Aviation Action Plan.

### Conclusion

The provision of Capacity Building to requesting States is key to ensuring that they can contribute to Aviation’s green transition and ICAO’s No Country Left Behind Initiative. Such training should be tailored to each State’s individual circumstances to ensure they are impactful while also coordinating with ICAO’s regional offices as appropriate. It is also important that ICAO Member States are aware that there are virtual opportunities for increasing their expertise on Environment such as Webinars organized by the ICAO Secretariat.