

14th ICAEA FORUM Bangkok Thailand November 29th - 30th 2012

Maintaining ICAO Compliance: The Links between Training and Testing

The second ICAEA forum in the Asia Pacific region focused on problems and solutions encountered with the LPRs given that we are now in a new phase of implementation, since the ICAO implementation deadline of March 2011 is behind us.

The forum was generously hosted by the Thai Air Navigation Service Provider, Aeronautical Radio of Thailand (AEROTHAI) and was officially opened by the Vice President. The forum took place in the hotel Pantip Suites in central Bangkok, where most of the delegates also stayed – a successful formula.

82 delegates attended, representing 32 different nationalities. This was the largest cross section of the aviation training and testing industry yet to attend an ICAEA event. It was attended by the full array of those involved in the LPRs: test providers, training managers, instructors, assessors, materials writers, pilots, controllers, airline training representatives, regulators and representatives from both ICAO HQ and the ICAO Asia Pacific regional office.

The aim of the event was to provide an insight into the status of the implementation of the LPRs after the 2011, as many States are between testing cycles. This was achieved through a series of plenary sessions, panels and workshops, giving regional representatives a platform to share challenges and insights in both testing for licensing purposes and providing training support to new personnel and those coming up for retesting soon.

Day 1 was dedicated to examples of what was happening in the field of testing.

Nicole Barette-Sabourin from ICAO provided an update on the ICAO Test Endorsement scheme while **Amal Hawawasam** from the ICAO Bangkok office, presented on the status of the implementation of the LPRs in the Asia Pacific Region. Several major providers gave insights and updates of their positions. **Michael Kay** provided a practical review of how the LPRs are being implemented, focusing on what is being done well and how test instruments can be strengthened. **Karen Mak** of Hong Kong Airlines provided an example of how a test can be developed in-house, with the right resources and expertise. Two test providers then provided insights on what was involved in receiving full ICAO endorsement (ELPAC) and conditional endorsement (RELTA). The afternoon was dedicated to two rater-training workshops using regional samples and the ICAO/ICAEA Rater Speech Samples Training Aid. This involved listening to speech samples and rating, discussing and comparing scores across each of the criteria. Discussions also focused on the relationship with test tasks and the rating scale.

A reception followed in the garden of the hotel and lively exchanges continued and further contacts and friendships were made.

Day 2 continued the format of the forum – input from speakers, followed by panel sessions and afternoon workshops.

The focus was on the relationship between testing and training, touching on topics such as test preparation versus language training and how test content and format influences training programmes.

Terence Gerighty presented the 'Guidelines on Training' ICAO document. He suggested the possibility of establishing a self-regulating accreditation check-list, based on ICAO Circular 323. **Daniel Gorbald** followed on with a concise review of how training can be

influenced by testing, focusing on issues such as negative washback and the need for management to recognise need for effective training regimes within the workplace.

Other speakers gave thoughtful and challenging inputs into the challenges in providing and delivering training from the operational end-user perspectives. Two pilots, **Captain Sutas Dejkunjorn** and **Veronica Foy**, and an air traffic controller **Buntoeng Megchai** presented on issues related to enforcement of the LPRs, scheduling of training times, training formats, developing motivation, self-study versus group training and resistance training and testing and the role of instructors and curriculum. The final afternoon workshops were based on individual experiences from different countries in the Asia Pacific region and the healthy discussions and exchanges that followed was proof that the forum was successful in its aim by providing a platform for delegates to share their achievements and frustrations and hear of solutions from others.

A final round-up session underlined the unanimous decision of the forum to offer a rater-training workshop in the Asia-Pacific region, hopefully within the next six months. This underlined the success of the event and ICAEA's role as a catalyst in bringing together all the aviation English stakeholders.

ICAEA wishes to thank Aeronautical Radio of Thailand for their hospitality and generosity and all the delegates – now members of ICAEA – not only for attending but for doing so with enthusiasm and energetic contributions.

Conclusion

Some common themes and outcomes that emerged from the forum:

- All representative States are fully aware of the intentions of the ICAO LPRs.
- The majority of States have developed tests using local resources.
- Most delegates shared had concerns that importance of language training is not yet fully acknowledged, with challenges associated with test-preparation overriding the key issue of language development.
- While the concept of testing has been accepted, more work needs to be done to develop better tests including larger test banks, valid content and tasks and content related to aviation English for safety.
- Encouraging pilots and controllers to become engaged in their own language development without focusing on just “passing a test” is a recurring challenge.
- Airline and ANSP management committees vary widely in the resources and time given to allow for internal language training. Some have dedicated in-house training departments providing support to personnel while others leave training up to the individuals.
- It was generally agreed that there is likely to be much greater success in providing training and more chance for positive washback in situations where management understands the importance of the LPRs and provides dedicated time and resources to support affected staff.
- Frustrations and concerns exist about the different standards between tests and across States, leading to a lack of uniform and standardised implementation.
- The idea of expanding language proficiency regulations to address the language needs of ground personnel and engineers was seen as a positive future development.
- Delegates expressed a desire to have future opportunities to focus ways to overcome the challenges including focused workshops related to rating and methods to improve staff participation in training and curriculum.