



International Civil Aviation Organization

**THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF ASIA/PACIFIC ROBEX
WORKING GROUP (ROBEX WG/11)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 11 – 13 March 2013

Agenda Item C1: VAAC Backup Tests

**REPORT ON BACK-UP TESTS CONDUCTED BETWEEN
THE VAAC TOKYO AND DARWIN**

(Presented by Japan)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the successful outcomes from recent backup tests conducted between the VAAC Tokyo and Darwin.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The group will recall that at the last meeting (OPMET/M TF/10, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 – 19 April 2012) a working paper¹ was presented by Australia introducing the outcome of the backup test conducted on 18 January 2012 by Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAACs) Tokyo and Australia. The working paper concluded the test identified communications issues within the AFTN network, and made recommendations such as a further test to be conducted in late 2012 and a longer lead-time before a test for issuance of State Letter.

1.2 Since the first test, substantial progress has been made regarding the operational back-up arrangements. Representatives from Darwin and Tokyo VAACs met in Darwin in March 2012 and Tokyo in May 2012 in order to discuss details of the back-up agreements and to coordinate a series of back-up tests. Operational back-up tests were conducted in August and September 2012, in accordance with the VAAC back-up test procedures that were also incorporated in the Asia/Pac SIGMET Regional Guide update in September 2012.

2. VAAC BACK-UP TEST

2.1 Internal test

2.1.1 On 2 August, the second test was implemented in a closed manner, i.e. both VAACs sent test messages only to each other, in order to confirm if the problems identified in the first test were resolved. To this end both VAACs adapted the temporal destinations (only to the other VAAC) registered in their communication systems.

¹ Working paper 13 to OPMET/M TF/10

2.1.2 As a result of this internal test, test advisories were exchanged successfully, which demonstrated the communication issues identified in the first test had been resolved.

2.2 **Final test**

2.2.1 In response to the success of the internal test, we planned to conduct the last test, in which we again tried to send test advisories to related institutions. To ensure the success of the test, we notified institutions concerned of the test via State Letter from ICAO APAC regional office dated 21 August 2012, a month in advance of the scheduled date, 19 September.

2.2.2 The test messages were disseminated within each VAAC's areas of responsibility with no problem and recipients confirmed receipt of them. This outcome proved that our back-up procedures work appropriately.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 Thanks to the efforts of Tokyo and Darwin VAACs, the back-up tests demonstrated the communication issues detected in the test conducted in January 2012 were completely solved and the back-up procedures work well.

3.2 In light of the successful outcomes, Letters finalising the back-up arrangement is expected to be exchanged between both VAACs after they agree with detailed procedures of back-up operations, but no later than the end of 2013.

4. **ACTION BY THE ROBEX**

4.1 The group is invited to:

- a) review the information in this paper; and
- b) recommend that the 'draft' status be removed from the VAAC back-up test procedures in Appendix K of the Asia/Pac Regional SIGMET Guide following agreement between VAACs.
