



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Tenth Meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group for the AFI Region (RASG-AFI/10)

7 November 2024

Agenda Item 4: Status of implementation of the GASP safety goals, targets and indicators including the priorities set for the RASG-AFI Region

4.3. Other Safety initiatives

Modernizing Aviation Licensing for Enhanced Safety: The Impact of CASSOA’s Examination System on Air Traffic Controller Certification

(Presented by CASSOA)

SUMMARY	
<p>This paper presents CASSOA’s innovative efforts to modernize Air Traffic Controller (ATC) licensing in the East African Community (EAC), enhancing safety and consistency through a standardized online examination system. Developed with regional experts, the system covers essential ATC modules, while the syllabus aligns training across Approved Training Organizations (ATOs), promotes regional integration, and geared to support Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA). By underpinning a project on automatic license validation, the syllabus facilitates mutual recognition of ATC licenses, fostering a cohesive aviation framework across Partner States.</p>	
<p>The action by the Meeting is in paragraph 3</p>	
Strategic Objectives	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objectives: Safety

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CASSOA supports East African Community (EAC) Partner States in enhancing aviation safety and security by harmonizing regulatory frameworks, ensuring compliance with ICAO Standards, and implementing safety initiatives. Through technical support, guidance, and capacity-building, CASSOA helps Partner States consistently meet international safety standards.
- 1.2 Over a decade ago, CASSOA introduced a standardized online examination system, initially for flight crew and mechanical engineers, which has since expanded to include Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs). To ensure consistency, CASSOA developed a standardized syllabus for use across all Approved Training Organizations (ATOs) in the region. Aligned with its commitment to Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA), CASSOA collaborates with the ICAO Regional Office to promote CBTA through education and capacity-building, equipping ATOs and inspectors in Partner States with the necessary tools to implement these standards. This paper explores the development, implementation, and impact of these initiatives on ATC training, assessment, and licensing to enhance safety in the EAC.

2 DISCUSSION

- 2.1 CASSOA’s online examination system has modernized ATC licensing in the EAC, shifting from a manual process to a standardized digital platform with a comprehensive question bank. This system covers key ATC areas, such as Procedures, Surveillance, and Human Factors, providing a thorough evaluation of candidates’ competencies in air traffic management.
- 2.2 CASSOA developed a standardized syllabus to unify training across Approved Training Organizations (ATOs) within the East African Community (EAC), creating a consistent knowledge base for Air Traffic Control (ATC) professionals. This syllabus aligns with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and ensures that ATC personnel across Partner States receive training that meets international safety benchmarks. By standardizing content, the syllabus promotes operational predictability, reduces discrepancies in ATC practices, and facilitates smoother cross-border cooperation. Additionally, the unified approach aids in regulatory compliance and supports regional integration efforts, ultimately enhancing safety and fostering a cohesive framework for ATC operations throughout the EAC.
- 2.3 The examination system is expected to support regional integration by enabling implementation of automatic license validation project under development in the region, allowing for mutual recognition of licenses and facilitating cross-border mobility. Additionally, the syllabus reinforces compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), strengthening the region’s adherence to global safety standards.
- 2.4 To create a comprehensive question bank for ATC licensing, CASSOA formed a taskforce of regional experts, selected based on criteria outlined in a Terms of Reference document shared with Partner States. This taskforce developed questions aligned with the PEXO platform and ICAO Standards, covering essential ATC areas such as Aerodrome, Approach, and Area Control. Their collaborative efforts tailored the content to EAC-specific needs, establishing a consistent, reliable examination process for ATC licensing across the region.
- 2.5 CASSOA is committed to implementing Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) across the region, emphasizing practical skills aligned with real-world competencies. In collaboration with key stakeholders, CASSOA has taken initial steps by launching capacity-building initiatives, starting with sensitization workshops for inspectors. Moving forward, CASSOA will continue to engage CAAs, ICAO ESAF and other stakeholders through targeted initiatives, building a safety-focused, skills-based training framework that supports the region’s evolving aviation needs.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
- a) Note the information contained in the WP;
 - b) Recognize the efforts of CASSOA in developing a standardized, in-house examination system and syllabus, which enhance ATC certification, operational safety, and regulatory consistency across the EAC region;
 - c) Support the ongoing collaboration between CASSOA and the ICAO regional Office in implementing Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) by endorsing capacity-building initiatives and encouraging Partner States to adopt CBTA-aligned training frameworks; and
 - d) Encourage other regions to consider the benefits of a harmonized, digital examination system and standardized syllabus for ATC licensing, as a means to ensure efficiency and improve safety, facilitate mutual recognition of licenses, and strengthen regional aviation integration.