



International
Civil Aviation
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Международная
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Ref.: AN 11/65-IND/24/1

3 January 2024

Subject: Establishment of the True North Advisory Group (TRUE-AG)

Action required: Nomination of an expert to the TRUE-AG by 16 February 2024 and acceptance of the invitation to participate at its first meeting to be held in Montréal, Canada, from 6 to 10 May 2024

Sir/Madam,

1. I have the honour to inform you that the Air Navigation Commission (ANC), at the seventh meeting of its 224th Session, held on 7 November 2023, supported the establishment of the True North Advisory Group (TRUE-AG). The Advisory Group will assist the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in developing a framework for a transition to True North as the reference system for heading and tracking in air operations, including conducting in-depth studies, developing a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and transition plan, and providing strategic advice to ICAO. The work of the TRUE-AG, including the framework, will form the basis of the decision to be made on whether the international aviation community will move to True North and the possible implementation phases.

2. In this regard, I would like to request that you nominate an expert to the TRUE-AG to support ICAO in this important initiative. The Advisory Group is planned to begin with a series of teleconference meetings, followed by an in-person meeting planned from 6 to 10 May 2024 at ICAO Headquarters, Montréal.

3. The work will be progressed principally through teleconferences and in-person meetings, as necessary. The draft terms of reference for the advisory group is contained in the Attachment and will be reviewed by the group at its first meeting.

4. You are kindly requested to confirm acceptance of this invitation, together with the name, address, telephone number and email with a brief description of the background and current position of the nominee to the TRUE-AG to OPS@icao.int by **16 February 2024**.

5. For your information, invitations to make experts available for participation in the work of this advisory group are being sent to:

Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Airports Council International (ACI), Aeronautical Radio, Incorporated (ARINC), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL), General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), International Association of Institutes of Navigation (IAIN), International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), International Committee for Airspace Standards and Calibration (ICASC), International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industries Associations (ICCAIA), International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), International Federation of Helicopter Associations (IFHA), and the International Flight Procedure Design and Validation Association (IFPDVA).

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Juan Carlos Salazar
Secretary General

Enclosure:

Terms of reference of the True North Advisory
Group (English only)

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

TRUE NORTH ADVISORY GROUP (TRUE-AG)

Background	<p>The topic of transitioning from Magnetic North to True North was initially raised by Canada through working papers presented at the Twelfth and Thirteenth Air Navigation Conferences (AN-Conf/12 and AN-Conf/13). From these submissions, AN-Conf/13 Recommendation 3.5/4 – True North was agreed, which recommended that ICAO conduct a detailed study into the technical, operational, and economic feasibility of changing to a “True North” reference system. This prompted further studies and discussions, including an information paper presented by Canada at the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021) to provide an update on their on-going study of True North.</p> <p>At the fifteenth meeting of the ICAO Instrument Flight Procedures Panel (IFPP/15), held in March 2022, Canada presented a working paper asking for the Panel to consider switching to a True North reference system for aviation operations. The Panel supported the initiative but expressed some concerns about the size of such a project, the challenges with implementing it globally and the need to do a robust safety assessment. The Panel recommended that ICAO should first investigate the level of support of States and industry on such an initiative before commencing any work.</p> <p>As such, in December 2022, ICAO carried out a survey (Reference: AN 11/57-22/87) to measure the level of support among States and any relevant industry organizations in their State on a transition to True North and to identify any challenges that may need to be addressed.</p> <p>The True North survey received a total of 564 replies from various stakeholders including civil aviation authorities (CAAs), air operators, air navigation services providers (ANSPs), aerodrome operators, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), flight procedure design organizations, training organizations and military. The replies showed a significant acceptance for a transition to True North with 61 per cent in support, 9 per cent not in support and 30 per cent indicating neutral.</p> <p>Many respondents to the survey highlighted the need for ICAO to develop a concept of operations (CONOPS) and comprehensive transition plan which would support a harmonized global transition to True North.</p>
Scope	<p>The True North Advisory Group (TRUE-AG) will assist ICAO in developing a framework for a safe and efficient global transition to True North, including conducting in-depth studies, development of a CONOPS and transition plan, and providing strategic advice to ICAO.</p>
Tasks	<p>a) Develop a CONOPS for the global implementation of True North;</p> <p>b) conduct further studies on the impact of a True North transition on different stakeholders, based on the CONOPS, including a cost-benefit analysis, safety assessment and SWOT analysis;</p>

	<p>c) present such information as would assist the ANC in evaluating the outcome of the TRUE-AG, including at the results of a) and b), for review and agreement by the ANC followed by validation by States and industry stakeholders;</p> <p>d) develop a comprehensive transition plan; and</p> <p>e) coordinate with relevant Panels, on the development of work programme items for job cards, subject to the outcome of the review in c).</p>
Required Expertise	<p>The TRUE-AG will be a multi-disciplinary group comprised of experts from States, international organizations and industry, including but not limited to:</p> <p>a) Air navigation service, regulatory and policy experts;</p> <p>b) economic and analytical experts;</p> <p>c) experts from aircraft and avionics manufacturers;</p> <p>d) air navigation systems engineers;</p> <p>e) operators, commercial and general aviation pilots;</p> <p>f) aeronautical information and charting experts;</p> <p>g) air traffic control experts;</p> <p>h) instrument flight procedure designers; and</p> <p>i) aerodrome experts.</p>
Specific Working Arrangements	<p>The TRUE-AG will conduct its activities either as a whole or as specialized working groups by:</p> <p>a) participating in teleconferences and/or online meetings held regularly;</p> <p>b) organizing face-to-face meetings as necessary;</p> <p>c) reporting to the Air Navigation Commission through the ICAO Secretariat as work progresses; and</p> <p>d) sharing information and interacting with other ICAO expert groups, as required.</p>
Timelines	<p>The tasks described in section 3 above are expected to be completed within three years of the first meeting of the TRUE-AG.</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>All rights, title and interest in and to the intellectual property conceived, originated, created, or developed by the TRUE-AG (either collectively or by members individually), shall be solely and exclusively retained by ICAO, except as ICAO may voluntarily and expressly choose to transfer, in full, or in part.</p>