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ICAO's Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services

Tenth Edition, 2024



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AMENDMENTS

Amendments are announced in the supplements to the *Products and Services Catalogue*; the Catalogue and its supplements are available on the ICAO website at www.icao.int. The space below is provided to keep a record of such amendments.

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS AND CORRIGENDA

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FOREWORD

ICAO's Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services contains the recommendations and conclusions of the ICAO Council resulting from ICAO's continuing study of charges in relation to the economic situation of airports and air navigation services provided for international civil aviation. The policies, which are intended for the guidance of Member States, are mainly based on the recommendations made in this field by the various conferences on the economics of airports and air navigation services, which are held regularly by ICAO. The last such conference took place in Montréal from 15 to 20 September 2008 (*Report of the Conference on the Economics of Airports and Air Navigation Services (CEANS)* (Doc 9908) refers). As per a recommendation adopted at the CEANS and endorsed by the ICAO Council, States are encouraged to incorporate the four key charging principles of non-discrimination, cost-relatedness, transparency and consultation with users into their national legislation, regulations or policies, as well as into their future air services agreements, in order to ensure compliance by airport operators and air navigation services providers (ANSPs).

ICAO's commitment in the field of airport and air navigation services charges has its principal origin in Article 15 – *Airport and similar charges* of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention). This commitment has found further expression in the Organization's *Consolidated Statement of Continuing ICAO Policies in the Air Transport Field*, which is updated at each regular Session of the ICAO Assembly; currently, in Resolution A37-20, Appendix F – *Airports and air navigation services*, the Assembly, inter alia, requests the Council to ensure that the guidance and advice contained in Doc 9082 are current and responsive to the requirements of Member States.

The Council wishes to draw attention to the distinction between the policies contained in this document, which concern airport and air navigation services charges only, the policies on customs duty in Article 24 of the Chicago Convention, and the Council's policies and guidance on taxation set out in *ICAO's Policies on Taxation in the Field of International Air Transport* (Doc 8632), which address taxation of fuel, lubricants and other consumable technical supplies, as well as taxation of income of international air transport enterprises and aircraft and other moveable property; and taxes on the sale and use of international air transport. As considered by the Council, a charge is a levy that is designed and applied specifically to recover the costs of providing facilities and services for civil aviation, and a tax is a levy that is designed to raise national or local government revenues, which are generally not applied to civil aviation in their entirety or on a cost-specific basis.

The financial situation of airports and of ANSPs, as well as of their primary users, fluctuates with the performance of global, national and regional economies. Airports and ANSPs have a high proportion of fixed costs, mainly funded by traffic, and therefore in times of decreased demand are challenged to maintain high standards of safety, security and quality of service.

It is recognized that it is difficult to reconcile the long-term planning horizon of airports and ANSPs with the shorter-term requirements of aircraft operators. That is, aircraft operators seek to reduce the charges they pay. Therefore, a mutual understanding between providers and users is important in addressing these challenges.

A number of factors exert an important influence on the organization and economic development of airports and air navigation services. These include the growing liberalization of air services, air carrier concentration including mergers and alliances, changes in approaches to financing with airports (in particular) and ANSPs being expected to assume primary responsibility for financing investments in their infrastructure requirements, capacity management and environmental concerns.

The number of autonomous entities operating airports or air navigation services is expected to increase. This is resulting in more situations where an airport is operated by a different entity from that providing air navigation services (both approach/aerodrome control and route air navigation services). Also, changes will be required to deal with the problem of airport and airspace congestion, and to implement new, more efficient technology for communications, navigation and surveillance (CNS) and air traffic management (ATM) systems, based on the ICAO Global ATM Operational Concept, as well as other multinational facilities and services.

Under these circumstances many airports and ANSPs may find it necessary to increase their charges and, in the case of airports, place greater emphasis on further developing revenues from non-aeronautical sources. However, recognizing that users face restrictions with regard to their choice of particular airports and of routes to be flown, it is recommended that caution be exercised when attempting to compensate for shortfalls in revenue and that account be taken of the effects of increased charges on aircraft operators and end-users.

There should be a balance between the respective interests of airports and ANSPs on one hand and of aircraft operators and end-users on the other, in view of the importance of the air transport system to States and its influence in fostering economic, cultural and social interchanges between States. This applies particularly during periods of economic difficulty. It is therefore recommended that States encourage increased cooperation between airports and ANSPs and aircraft operators to ensure that the economic difficulties facing them all are shared in a reasonable manner.

The problems involved in providing and maintaining the airport and air navigation facilities and services required by the Regional Air Navigation Plans are particularly difficult for the less advanced economies, principal among these problems being the limited financial resources available for economic development in general, the higher priority assigned to other sectors of the economy whose needs are considered more urgent, the underutilization of airports and air navigation services, the high cost of obtaining equipment from other States and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified personnel. The Council will continue to take appropriate action towards obtaining more assistance for the States concerned in planning and financing airport and air navigation infrastructure as well as with regard to the provision of adequate human resources.

Further to a suggestion arising from the 2008 Conference (CEANS), the ICAO Secretariat collects information from States on their implementation of the principles applicable to charges for airports and air navigation services, as set out in the present document. This information is published on the ICAO website (www.icao.int) in the form of a supplement to this document and is updated from time to time.

This document contains a glossary of terms as used in the present policies on charges. To assist States in the implementation of the policies, the ICAO Secretariat has developed and maintains two manuals: the *Airport Economics Manual* (Doc 9562) and the *Manual on Air Navigation Services Economics* (Doc 9161). Parallel Assembly and Council policy on the regulation of air carriers is contained in *Policy and Guidance Material on the Economic Regulation of International Air Transport* (Doc 9587), which is similarly complemented by the *Manual on the Regulation of International Air Transport* (Doc 9626). ICAO collects and publishes information on aeronautical charges worldwide in *Tariffs for Airports and Air Navigation Services* (Doc 7100), while traffic and financial data for airports and air navigation services are collected through statistical forms and periodic surveys that are published on ICAO's website.

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GLOSSARY

The following terms are described as they apply in the context of these policies.

Air navigation services. This term includes air traffic management (ATM, see Appendix 2), communications, navigation and surveillance systems (CNS), meteorological services (MET) for air navigation, search and rescue (SAR) and aeronautical information services (AIS). These services are provided to air traffic during all phases of operations (approach, aerodrome control and en route).

Air navigation services provider (ANSP). Any entity providing ATM and/or other of the air navigation services mentioned above.

Annex 11. Refers to ICAO Annex 11 – *Air Traffic Services to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

Annex 16. Refers to ICAO Annex 16 – *Environmental Protection to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

Annex 17. Refers to ICAO Annex 17 – *Aviation Security to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

Autonomous entity. An independent entity established for the purpose of operating and managing one or more airports and/or air navigation services, which is empowered to manage and use the revenues it generates to cover its costs.

Benchmarking. The process of either making comparisons over time within a single organization (internal benchmarking) or of comparing performance between two or more organizations (external benchmarking) in order to make improvements.

Best practices. Practices that, over time, have proven cost-effective, efficient and successful in bringing quality products and services to the marketplace.

Commercialization. An approach to management of facilities and services in which business principles are applied or emphasis is placed on development of commercial activities.

Concession. The right to operate a certain commercial activity at an airport, commonly on an exclusive basis and usually at a specified location.

Corporate governance. Overseeing the running of a company or an entity by its management and its accountability to shareholders and other interested parties.

Council. The Council of ICAO.

Depreciation of assets. The decrease in the value of an asset due to wear and tear through use, action of the elements, inadequacy or obsolescence normally over a predetermined period of time (depreciation period/book life of the asset).

Differential charges. Any preferential charges, rebates, discounts or other reductions in the charges normally payable for the use of airport and air navigation facilities and services.

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Economic oversight. The function by which a State supervises commercial and operational practices of an airport or an ANSP.

Financial statements. These include the income statement and the balance sheet. The income statement summarizes all revenues and expenses, with the difference between the two totals being either a profit or a loss. The balance sheet summarizes assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two representing an increase or decrease in net worth.

Fixed costs. Costs which in the short term remain unchanged regardless of whether or not the volume of services provided increases or decreases.

Free zones. A defined area adjacent to or within the boundary of an international airport of a State where goods may be imported, stored, processed and exported without being subject to any such import, export or transit duties and taxes as may normally be applicable to goods moving to or from that State.

Fuel “throughput” charges. A concession fee levied by an airport on aviation fuel sold at the airport.

Global Air Navigation Plan. Strategic document that describes the methodology for global air navigation harmonization. It contains guidance on the ATM improvements necessary to support a uniform transition to the ATM system envisioned in the ICAO Global ATM Operational Concept.

Global Air Traffic Management (ATM) Operational Concept. A high-level description of the ICAO vision of an integrated, harmonized and globally interoperable ATM system.

Great circle distance. The length of the shorter arc of the great circle joining two points. (**Great circle.** A circle on the surface of the earth, the plane of which passes through the centre of the earth.)

Key performance areas (KPAs). Key areas of performance corresponding to the expectations of providers, regulators, users and other interested parties.

Local air quality (LAQ) emissions-related charges. Charges levied on aircraft with respect to aircraft engine emissions that have effects on local air quality.

Modulated charges. Charges that are adjusted according to the time and/or situation of use of the facility or service concerned (for example, peak/off-peak hours, air traffic congestion, noise and local air quality aspects).

Multinational facility or service. A facility/service established for the purpose of servicing international air navigation in airspace extending beyond the airspace serviced by a single State. It could be operated by one State, a group of States or an international operating agency. Guidance on the establishment of such a facility or service is included in all regional air navigation plans.

Performance management. An interactive process through which the performance of providers is expected to improve over time. This process consists of several steps, i.e. defining performance objectives, selecting performance indicators and setting their targets, monitoring performance, and reporting and assessing performance.

Pre-funding. Financing of an airport or air navigation facility project through charges levied on users prior to completion of the facility concerned.

Privatization. Transfer of full or majority ownership of facilities and services to the private sector.

Providers. In this document, refers to entities providing and operating airports or air navigation services.