

APEC -- Aviation Quality Control standards

Proposal:

APEC economies mitigate the terrorist threat to the international civil aviation network through a shared obligation to set, monitor and enforce high standards of aviation security and to keep their programs under constant review. APEC members agree to:

- Develop civil aviation security quality controls for their jurisdictions by the end of 2006 to meet international standards
- Implement an effective compliance and enforcement program that meets or exceeds international quality control standards by the end of 2007.

Background:

Terrorist networks remain focused on committing large-scale attacks, and on inflicting mass casualties and major political, economic and psychological damage. The nature of international civil aviation – a 24/7 network of travel and trade activity, criss-crossing the globe and linking peoples, economies and lives – offers terrorists targets which match these ambitions very well. Those responsible for aviation security can be sure that terrorists are actively familiarizing themselves with the protective arrangements for international civil aviation, and seeking to develop means of circumventing them.

Nor is the threat confined to only a few economies, airports or airlines. The network character of international civil aviation brings its own vulnerabilities. Networks may be entered at any point, and permit access to all points. Any weakness in one economy's civil aviation security arrangements may provide the unwitting means for an attack against another economy or economies. In many parts of the world and within APEC, international borders are only minutes away in flying time. This places a shared obligation on all APEC economies to set, monitor and enforce high standards of aviation security and to keep their programs under constant review, making adjustments as necessary to ensure the requirements remain current and effective in the face of the changing security environment.

Ingredients of a robust quality control program

An effective quality control program within each APEC economy will promote improved implementation by helping to identify and promulgate best practices.

There is no such thing as a single, off-the-shelf quality control program, suitable for adoption in all APEC economies. Factors such as the physical size of the economy, the number of airports, the threat level, the resources available for regulatory oversight, and the structure of the regulatory authority will all impact on the precise shape of an economy's quality control arrangements.

Good quality control programs, however, have some common ingredients:

- provide a clear legislative basis, consistent with international standards;
- implement legal requirements and maintain required standards;
- validate the effectiveness of the civil aviation security program itself;
- identify any deficiencies in standards and procedures; ensure they are rectified promptly;
- be reliable, consistent, independent and transparent; and
- serve to strengthen aviation security standards.

It is important that all APEC members establish an effective civil aviation security compliance, inspection and enforcement program. An accompanying document provides a blueprint and practical guidance for APEC members in achieving this and bringing greater consistency of approach across APEC members programs.

Benefits of an effective quality control program

The primary aim of an economy's quality control program must be to verify compliance with the economy's civil aviation security program, and to ensure that any deficiencies are rectified promptly, through enforcement action if necessary. A well managed program will thus help secure the civil aviation infrastructure, people's and promote trade and tourism. It will also deliver additional important benefits such as:

- Helping to motivate security staff
- Contributing to the policy making process
- Helping build constructive and effective relationships between the regulator and the aviation industry
- Providing opportunities for exchanging information with the industry, including examples of good practices