

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

MISSION

The Mission of the Department of Civil Aviation is to ensure safety of civil air navigation, to develop and operate a national civil air infrastructure and services, upholding in all activities, sound practices and international standards applicable to civil aviation.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop the aviation industry through safety and economic regulation.
2. To develop and improve safety standards in air transport in accordance with International conventions, standards and recommended practices.
3. To regulate and control operations of airports, air transport, air traffic, flight safety, telecommunications, navigational systems, aviation security, dissemination of flight safety information and aeronautical services.
4. To provide and maintain rural aerodromes/airfields/airports and related infrastructure.

All this is based on the following:

Under the Law, this being the Aviation Act, 2008 under Applications, Section 3 (3) to 3 (4)

- The Provisions of the Chicago Convention and of the Transit Agreement shall have force of law with respect to international civil aviation in Lesotho and for Lesotho aircraft.
- The Provisions of the Chicago Convention may, by regulations made under this Act, be applied with respect to civil aviation in Lesotho, *mutatis mutandis*.

Section 4 (1) (a) The Functions of the Minister.

The Minister shall:

- Be responsible for the administration of this Act and for carrying out the Chicago Convention and the Transit Agreement and he may issue such instructions or orders as he or she considers necessary for such purposes;
- Give effect to any Aviation Treaties, Protocols, Agreements and Conventions as ratified by Lesotho and he may issue instructions for giving effect to the Treaties, Protocols, Agreements and Conventions.

Under Part II, Administration Section 5(1) (a) to (i):

There shall be established a Department of Civil Aviation within the Ministry responsible for aviation in the Public Service whose functions shall among others be:

- To ensure the safety of air navigation;
- To establish and maintain air navigation infrastructure and services;

- To establish, develop and maintain aerodromes;
- To promote and encourage the orderly and economic development of civil aviation;
- To promote the national transport policy as regards civil aviation;
- To carry out research and surveys into any aspect of civil aviation;
- To issue directives or instructions necessary for the safety of air navigation;
- To advise the Minister on all matters affecting civil aviation;

To engage in other matters as it considers desirable in the interest of civil aviation in Lesotho.

The Department of Civil Aviation comprises of the following sections and entities:

- *Flight Operations Inspectorate*
- *Airworthiness and Engineering Inspectorate*
- *Air Traffic Services*
- *Aeronautical Information Services*
- *Air Transport: a) Economic Regulation and Statistics
b) Aviation Law division*
- *Telecommunications*
- *Aviation Security*
- *Aerodromes Engineering**
- *Fire and Rescue Services*
- *Moshoeshoe I International Airport***
- *Human Resources*
- *Information Technology*

Sections' Responsibilities

The role of the **Flight Operations Inspectorate** is the certification of air operations through initial assessments and continued oversight of operators' activities and standards for training flight personnel. It is also responsible for the examination and licensing of flight personnel, enforcement of regulations and making recommendations with respect to the foregoing to the Director of Civil Aviation.

The **Airworthiness and Engineering Inspectorate** on the other hand, while working closely with the Flight Operations Section, is responsible for ensuring mechanical soundness and safety of aircraft, examination and licensing of engineering personnel and engineering organisations. It is also responsible for the enforcement of regulations.

Air Traffic Services is responsible for providing air traffic control and flight information services to all aircraft operating within the Maseru controlled and adjacent airspace so as to ensure safe operation of aircraft in flight; and the provision of an alerting service to aircraft in need of search and rescue or aircraft in imminent danger.

Aeronautical Information Services is responsible for ensuring the effective and smooth flow of information necessary for safety, regularity and efficiency of air navigation. This it effects via a global electronic network

Air Transport Section is responsible for the enforcement of economic regulation. It processes air service permits, prepares traffic and passenger statistics used for forecasting amongst others. It evaluates application for the operation of air services. It prepares points for discussion in bilateral negotiations, and generally looks after facilitation issues. The legal half of the section is responsible for advice pertaining to aviation laws in the day to day operations and interactions of the department with the industry and bilateral partners.

The Telecommunications section based at Moshoeshoe I International Airport is responsible for the provision of reliable and effective navigational aids and communications facilities at national level in order to contribute to the maintenance of high standards of safety and security in air navigation. It also ensures the continuous operation of the navigational aids and facilities in support of other providers of services in navigation.

The Aviation Security section is responsible for the security of passengers, airport personnel, aircraft and facilities for use in civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference e.g. hijackings, sabotage, violence against people on board aircraft etc. Security of national installations such as airports etc. however, is the responsibility of the State, a situation not currently obtaining inspite of concerted efforts to engage the national law enforcement and security forces.

Aerodromes Engineering is responsible for the design and maintenance of all airport infrastructure. Enforcement of regulations pertaining to licensing and or certification of airports, aerodromes and facilities for use in civil aviation. Section currently, since 1996, is unmanned.

Fire and Rescue Services is currently provided only at Moshoeshoe I International Airport. This service is responsible for the saving of lives and property in the unlikely event of an aircraft accident at the airport or its environs.

Moshoeshoe I International Airport (MIA)

This facility provides airlines, importers, exporters, concessionaires, government agencies and other related enterprises with the infrastructure and environment that is necessary for ensuring that such businesses and activities are conducted according to internationally recognized standards.

Human Resources should be responsible for assessing, identifying and effecting recruitment needs of the department and facilitating the required training.

Information Technology is responsible for the general up-keep of the department's computer network and provides necessary liaison and coordination with suppliers and maintenance organisations for the optimum availability of the network. This section is also currently responsible for the development of the department's website, where all the necessary aeronautical, legal, aeromedical and other aviation related information will be posted. The target is the international aviation community, and of course for domestic consumption.

MASTERPLAN

There is no homegrown master plan for various reasons. Chief of these being the severe underdevelopment of the civil aviation regulatory environment and nonexistent air services industry in the country. Mainly the non-existence in Lesotho, of industries that would naturally support aviation, for both domestic and international markets are just some of the economic factors leading to non existence of a sustainable and coherent aviation sector. However, at the international level, there is what is called the Africa Indian Ocean Plan (AFI PLAN). This has been devised by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) as a result of countries like Lesotho being unable to fund strong civil aviation authorities, thus leading to a high incidence of aircraft accidents due to malfunctioning equipment and inadequate infrastructure and absence of required services. If we commit to this Plan, one can say confidently that with respect to the Vision 20/20, Lesotho should be well positioned to attract some aviation investment. We are unlikely to make big capital plans presently given the lack of capacity and finances to manage sustainably any developments.

MAINTENANCE PLANS

The Department of Civil Aviation is responsible for the maintenance of rural airfields. In order to carry this out, the erstwhile Department of Rural Roads now incorporated into the roads Directorate was charged with carrying out inspections of these airfields, draw budgets and employ labour to carry out repairs. This is ongoing.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Airlines
- General Aviation
- Airports/Airfields
- Air Navigation Service Providers
- Air Traffic Services Providers
- Ground Services Providers

EXTRA MINISTERIAL INTERACTIONS

Any interaction with other government ministries is under Part VI of the Aviation Act 2008 Section 15 (1) and (2) Aviation Security and Facilitation Committee. The members are drawn from Tourism, Foreign, Immigration, Lesotho Defense Force, COMPOL, NSS, Health, Agriculture, Customs (LRA).The Committee meets twice a year to coordinate their activities. On the operational front, its Sub-committee at Moshoeshoe I International Airport meets on a monthly basis. The sub-committee's work feeds into the Committee's agenda.

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