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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

Agenda Item: A.9.6	**WORKING PAPER**	**WP No: 51** **IFATCA'26**

Report on the Website Task Force

Presented by JF Lepage, Deputy President

SUMMARY

At the IFATCA Annual Conference in Singapore in April 2024, the Directors approved the creation of the Website Task Force (WTF). Under the responsibility of the Deputy President (DP), the WTF oversees the overhaul of the website, as recommended by the IFATCA 2030+ Task Force, and as approved by the Directors. This working paper presents a progress report of the task force.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   1.1.   The WTF is responsible for assessing business needs and opportunities with respect to the website, benefits, risk, costs, technical solutions, timescale, impact on operations, and organisational capability to deliver the project outcomes, as decided by the Directors at the 2024 IFATCA Conference. The WTF is in charge of defining the goal, identifying what obstacles may be faced, evaluating how much change is required, and determining if the proposed solution will achieve the targeted goal.

2. **DISCUSSION**

   2.1.   At present, the WTF is chaired by IFATCA's DP, and composed of the following members: Amiruddin Mustafa (Malaysia), Hosni Bona (Philippines), Nejc Ferjan and Samo Mandič (Slovenia), Frank Sendowooza (Uganda). The group is quite small, but works effectively, taking into account the time zones and the fact that we are all active controllers, with the rostering constraints our job implies. We nevertheless would never say no to extra talents, so should anyone be interested in joining the group, please get in touch with jf.lepage@ifatca.org.

   2.2.   **Current State and progress made**
   2.2.1.   Since last Conference, a lot has happened with the WTF. The temporary domain has been created, thanks to our webmaster and web guru Philip Marien (EGATS). The Platform WordPress, as well as the Elementor builder, have also been installed. The team familiarized itself with those, and also tested a number of themes (colours, appearance, fonts, etc.) and made a decision on one.

2.2.2. A full inventory of existing pages, sub pages and links to external pages was conducted by the DP, with some additional remarks for the creation of the new website. This inventory was presented to the WTF, and the work was divided more or less equally among the members. So far, more or less 20 pages have been created, including some more complex ones that involve libraries and searchable folders. The home page is still in needs of significant work, but the group decided this could be done last, because of the many implications related to that page (where the menus will be, how they will be organized, what will be displayed, what will be linked to what, etc.).

2.2.3. Some of the features that could be challenging to implement include advanced user authentication (the group is looking at Double Factor Authentification – 2FA), customized membership dashboards and logins, real-time applications, forums, and payment solutions. That said, the group is working on potential solutions.

2.2.4. At the beginning of the current year, I recruited a freelance web developer and designer who works in Montreal, and who is specialized in Wordpress and Elementor. After exposing our needs and the potential challenges we are facing, it was agreed that the group would continue to work autonomously as much as possible, and we would flag areas where assistance may be required to him. This freelancer can be hired by the hour, which is extremely convenient. The plan is to seek his expertise for things we cannot do ourselves, and as much as possible to find solutions that do not require home-made coding, so that we (IFATCA) can modify whatever is needed ourselves in the future.

2.2.5. At the moment, the 20,000.00$USD budget that was allocated by Directors remains untouched, but some of the funds may be required to pay the freelancer. Also, two members of the WTF (Nejc and Samo – Slovenia) have been particularly instrumental in the creation of most pages of the website. It is my wish, once the project is complete, to find a way to recognize their contribution – while IFATCA cannot realistically pay them a salary, some other form of recognition, in kind or else, should be considered by the Directors.

2.3. Considerations

2.3.1. To follow up on last year's report, I am happy with the direction taken by the WTF. Initially, it took a while to gain momentum, decide which solution would be chosen, which platform and builder would be used, how the work would be divided, etc. Once these challenges were resolved, the group really started to work on the end product, which produced tangible results that encouraged the team to progress even further. Sadly, some members are not contributing as much as they promised they would, for a variety of reasons.

2.3.2. Building a website the size of IFATCA's takes time. And a lot of efforts. Members of the WTF are all volunteers and they spend many hours in their free time to work on this project, and I obviously cannot pressure anyone to do more or go faster. However, we are on track, and we should be able to present something (at least a sneak peek) during

Conference in April 2026. Also, as mentioned above, it is my desire to recognize exceptional contributions later on when the project gets close to completion. Last year, I asked Directors to allow an extra year for the WTF to complete the project. I have no reasons to believe we will not be able to meet that deadline.

2.3.3. Some functions may not be fully deployed, some bugs and errors will undoubtedly be discovered, I expect the roll out and subsequent use by members, Standing Committees, Task Forces, Executive Board and others will reveal potential improvements. For this reason, I do not foresee dismantling the WTF until at least a year after the roll out of the new website. Directors should also consider keeping some sort of structure where a small number of web enthusiasts will continue to work on the website, assist in the maintenance, and by doing so, avoiding single points of failure.

2.4.   Next steps

2.4.1. The group will continue building all the different pages, until they are all completed. The following logical step would be to finish building the home page, test links, create users and permissions, work on the IHB (the goal is ambitious, but the idea is to have individual MA logins and the possibility for Directors to amend their information themselves), and prepare for the go-live and retirement of the old website.

2.4.2. Other features, such as payment options (for example, for registration for Conference and/or Regional Meetings), a repository for documents and some sort of Wiki for IFATCA members to exchange ideas, and more, are also on the table, but will be dealt with once the core functions are in place and the roll out completed.

3.   CONCLUSION

3.1. The WTF has been very active over the last year and gained significant momentum. The budget for the new website remains untouched, but some expenses are foreseen for this year. A number of pages are ready, but a lot of work remains to be done also. The deadline of April 2027 for the rollout remains achievable, there is no reason to believe at this point it couldn't be achieved.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. It is recommended that this report is accepted as information.

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