

## **Guidelines for Seaplane Operations in NSOP under RCS-UDAN**

### **1. General:**

1.1. Seaplane routes have been awarded to Selected Airline Operators (SAOs) in different States/ UTs under RCS-UDAN scheme. To conduct scheduled flights under RCS-UDAN, it is mandatory as per the requirement for operators to operate flights either under Scheduled Operator or Scheduled Commuter Operator (SCO) permit and such flights could be undertaken only from licensed water aerodromes. As the development of water aerodromes under licensed category is likely to take some more time, this has deprived the residents of these remote priority areas from availing the benefits of air connectivity under the UDAN scheme. Considering this delay in achieving the objectives of the scheme, several meetings and deliberations have been organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) with concerned States / UTs, Regulators (DGCA & BCAS), Airports Authority of India (AAI) and concerned stakeholders to explore the way forward.

1.2. Non-Schedule Operators Permit (NSOP) operations for helicopters under UDAN scheme are continuing successfully in different parts of the country and DGCA has a mechanism for oversight of these operations under NSOP. MoCA had issued guidelines in 2019 for RCS Helicopter Operations under NSOP and so far more than 6900 RCS Helicopter flights have been successfully operated under the aegis of the said guidelines. It is pertinent to mention that water aerodromes were developed in Gujarat at Sabarmati River Front, Ahmedabad and Statue of Unity, Kevadia for seaplane operations and M/s SpiceJet Airline operated 186 RCS flights between these two water aerodromes under NSOP category. Based upon the success of NSOP operations under RCS scheme, it has been proposed to commence the seaplane operations under NSOP framework {Para 2.4 of Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), Section-3, Air Transport, Series-'C; Part-III, Issue-II, dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2010}, as an interim measure till infrastructure for water aerodromes gets completely developed for seaplane operations.

1.3. Provision to undertake these RCS flights for seaplanes under NSOP could be considered under Para 2.4 of the CAR, Section-3, Air Transport, Series-C, Part-III, which reads as under:

*2.4 The carriage of passengers by a non-scheduled operator's*

*permit holder may be performed on per seat basis or by way of chartering the whole aircraft on per flight basis or both. There is no bar on the same aircraft being used for either purpose as per the requirement of customers from time to time. The operator is also free to operate a series of flights on any sector within India by selling Individual seats but will not be permitted to publish time table for such flights. Operation of revenue charters to points outside India may also be undertaken as per paragraph 9.2.*

1.4. For the purpose of UDAN scheme, water aerodromes as defined in para 1.4.1.30 of RCS Scheme Document, Version 5.0, April, 2023 issued by MoCA, Government of India will be applicable which is reproduced below:

*1.4.1.30 'Water Aerodrome' shall mean a designated area for landing and take-off of seaplane(s) where scheduled and/or non-scheduled commercial seaplane operations can be permitted as per DGCA regulations and applicable law.*

1.5. The SAO shall abide by DGCA Regulations for NSOP flights of seaplanes. The water aerodrome requirements will be as per CAR, Section 3 - AIR TRANSPORT, Series 'C', Part IX, 'Minimum Safety Requirements for Seaplane Operations' dated 21.06.24 issued by DGCA. Such seaplane flights will be permitted to avail the approved benefits of the RCS scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF), approved ticket cost and airport/ fuel concessions as applicable for RCS flights. As these flights will be carrying fare paying passengers, there is need to provide safety and passenger facilities as provided in the CAR. The responsible participation of all stakeholders like, passengers, operators, AAI (RCS) and water aerodrome owners/ operators is essential so that the flights could be conducted safely and efficiently while all the regulatory requirements are complied with.

1.6. The SAO shall operate multi / single engine seaplanes, duly certified/ accepted by DGCA in accordance with the Type Certificate issued by FAA/ EASA or other authorities acceptable to DGCA and under conditions, if any, as stipulated by DGCA.

1.7. State Governments/ UTs and seaplane operators are required to follow the relevant DGCA Regulations and Security Template issued by BCAS.

## **2. Responsibilities of Airline Operators (SAO):**

2.1. The SAO shall be responsible for providing suitable and serviceable Seaplane/s to meet the requirements in the letter of award and shall comply with the requirements prescribed in CAR, Section 3 - AIR TRANSPORT, Series 'C', Part IX, 'Minimum Safety Requirements for Seaplane Operations' dated 21.06.24.

2.2. The operator shall be responsible for undertaking the scheduled (Unpublished) flight times as mutually agreed with the States/ UTs.

2.3. The operator shall be responsible to conduct the seaplane flights under RCS as per the provisions of DGCA regulations pertaining to NSOP.

2.4. Before each flight, necessary clearances should be ensured for flight planning and other operational requirements in coordination with respective agencies such as AAI, ATC, PCT (Port Control Tower) and Marine Department, as applicable, for safe operation.

2.5. The operator shall be responsible for informing the State/ UT Authorities regarding any disruption in services.

2.6. The operator shall be responsible for informing the State/ UT Authorities regarding any degradation of services and facilities at the water aerodromes.

2.7. Prior to commencement of operation, operator should ensure availability of suitable maintenance facility or ensure that arrangement is made for maintenance by appropriately DGCA approved AMO for seaplane and standby seaplane.

2.8. The operator shall make arrangements for escorting of passengers to and from the seaplane landing site.

2.9. The operator shall be responsible for submitting periodic reports and returns to the RCS Cell, AAI about the flight details / passengers carried .

2.10. Operator shall prepare and follow SOP for security related procedures.

2.11. Necessary arrangement for picketing /mooring of seaplane shall be made at water aerodrome located at the River Fronts, Coastal Areas which are likely to be affected by strong winds/ bad weather.

2.12. Crew Briefing Room/ Crew Waiting Room with facility for Breath Analyser (BA) Check should be made available.

2.13. The operator shall be responsible for continuing airworthiness of the seaplanes.

### **3 . Responsibilities of State Governments/ UTs/ Water Aerodrome(WA)-Operators:**

3.1. The State Government/ UT shall be responsible to obtain the permission from local Administration/ owner of water aerodrome/Port Authorities/Marine department (as applicable) as well as all statutory clearances to operate from the designated water aerodrome.

3.2. The State Government/ UT will be responsible for nomination of water aerodrome manager.

3.3. The State Government/ UT will be responsible for making arrangements for sale of tickets and publicity of flight schedules.

3.4. State Government/ UT/WA Operator will be responsible for preparation and upkeep of water aerodrome. The water aerodrome must meet the requirements as specified in Annexure 4 to CAR, Section 3 - AIR TRANSPORT, Series 'C', Part IX; "Minimum Safety Requirements for Seaplane Operations". The requirements as per CAR will be ensured by the State Government / UT with regard to site selection & protection, movement area, water runway & runway strip, taxiways, apron, mooring areas, visual aids, passenger transfer vessel, Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS) and emergency planning and wildlife hazard management.

3.5. First Aid Facility as minimum medical requirement may be provided at the landing site and also arrangements with locally available medical facilities should be made to deal with emergencies.

3.6. The State Government/ UT shall take necessary measures to protect the water aerodrome site by suitable measures to prevent entry of unauthorized persons, boats etc.

3.7. The State Government/ UT shall ensure that security and anti-hijacking arrangements are made as per NSOP's approved Security Manual and norms issued by BCAS from time to time in this regard. Water aerodrome security requirements including the security program, security equipments and security personnel, as laid down by BCAS from time to time, shall be arranged by the State Government/ UT.

3.8. State Government/ UT shall make necessary arrangement for seaplane refuelling at water aerodrome meeting the Quality Control Requirements issued by DGCA.

3.9. Operations may be inspected by DGCA during the course of operation subject to availability of resources. Facilitation for the inspection and transportation to such remote locations shall be provided by the State Government/ UT.

3.10. State Government/ UT/WA-Operator shall make necessary arrangement for passenger facilitation including Ticketing/Check-in Counters, Waiting area, Security Hold Area, Drinking Water and Toilets etc.

#### **4. Responsibilities of MoCA/ RCS Cell, AAI:**

4.1. RCS Cell, AAI will be responsible for approval of VGF scheme for the proposed routes under NSOP.

4.2. RCS Cell, AAI will be responsible for obtaining the regular feedback on the details of the executed flights.

4.3. RCS Cell, AAI will facilitate to provide the support & concessions offered by the Central Government, State Government and Aerodrome Operators to the SAOs as stipulated in the Scheme Document, issued by MoCA, Government of India.

4.4. For any violation, the operator will be liable for action if there are sufficient reasons to indicate non-compliance of regulatory provisions. In such cases, the award would be cancelled by RCS Cell, AAI as per the Scheme Document.

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