



**OPERATIONAL LETTER OF AGREEMENT  
FOR THE PROVISION OF SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES  
BETWEEN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION, THAILAND  
AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION, MALAYSIA**

**SEPTEMBER, 1985**

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1. AGREEMENT

1.1 Pursuant to the Standards and Recommended Practices of Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and to the ASEAN Agreement For The Facilitation of Search For Aircraft In Distress And Rescue of Survivors of Aircraft Accidents dated 14th April, 1972 and any reservations made thereto, the Department of Civil Aviation, Malaysia, and the Department of Aviation, Thailand, hereby agree to mutually assist each other, as provided for in this Agreement, in the provision of Search and Rescue (SAR) services in their respective Search and Rescue Regions (SRRs).

1.2 This Operational Letter of Agreement supplements the relevant ICAO documents and shall be equally binding on both parties concerned. Any amendments to this Agreement shall be made only with the concurrence of both parties concerned.

2. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

2.1 Both Departments hereby agree that their respective Rescue Co-ordination Centres (RCCs) shall:

- i) Promptly exchange SAR information concerning a distress situation or a potential distress situation.
- ii) Assist each other, to the extent possible, in conducting SAR Operations in their respective SRRs.
- iii) Take appropriate measures for the entry of SAR Units into each other's SRR and for the use of facilities in each other's SRR while engaged in a SAR mission.

- iv) Exchange information on current SAR resources available to ensure mutual knowledge of SAR capabilities.
- v) Conduct SAR communications test exercises with each other at least once a month to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the SAR organisation.

3. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE RCCs

The following procedures are agreed upon:

3.1 INITIATION FOR SAR ACTION

3.1.1 While the responsibility for declaring an emergency phase and initiating local action rests with ATS Units, the responsibility for initiating subsequent SAR action rests with the RCCs. The appropriate RCC responsible for initiating SAR action shall be determined as follows:-

- a) When the aircraft's position is known, action shall be initiated by the RCC in whose SRR the aircraft is located.
- b) When the aircraft's position is not known, SAR action shall be initiated by:-
  - i) The RCC first becoming aware of an aircraft needing assistance.
  - ii) The RCC in whose area of responsibility the aircraft was operating when the last radio contact was made.
  - iii) The RCC in whose area of responsibility the aircraft was proceeding to if the last radio contact was made on the common SRR boundary.

3.2 CONTROL RESPONSIBILITY FOR A SAR MISSION

3.2.1 The RCC initiating SAR action shall remain responsible over the mission until such time the responsibility

is transferred to the other RCC when circumstances dictate.

3.2.2 Before a transfer of responsibility for the overall SAR operations takes place, either from subsequent establishment of an aircraft's position or movement, or because an RCC other than the one initiating the action is more favourably placed to assume control of the mission by reason of better communication, proximity to the search area, more readily available facilities or any other reasons, the following procedures shall be adopted:-

- i) direct discussions, wherever possible, shall take place between the Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinators (SMCs) concerned to determine the course of action.
- ii) If it is decided that a transfer of responsibility is appropriate for the whole mission or part thereof, full details of the SAR mission shall be exchanged.
- iii) The initiating RCC shall continue to retain responsibility until the accepting RCC formally assumes control for the mission.

3.3 ENTRY PROCEDURES FOR SAR UNITS INTO ADJACENT SRR'S

3.3.1 When it becomes necessary for an RCC to deploy SAR Units into the area of responsibility of another RCC, the SMC of the RCC initiating the SAR action shall immediately deploy SAR Units for the mission. Simultaneously, he shall send an Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunication Network (AFTN) message to the other RCC informing of the entry of the SAR Units into the SRR of the other State with the following information:-

- a) Notification of the SAR Operation.

- b) Details of the distressed aircraft such as:
  - i) Identification and type.
  - ii) Last known position.
  - iii) Point of departure, route and destination.
  - iv) Total persons on board.
  - v) Radio frequencies in use.
  - vi) Nature of emergency and other details.
- c) SAR area of operations.
- d) Number, identity and types of SAR aircraft/vessels deployed.

3.3.2 If the AFTN circuits are deemed to be inadequate, the information detailed in para 3.3.1 above shall be forwarded by any of the following means:

- a) Inter-centre ATS speech circuits.
- b) Air-ground-air HF frequencies.
- c) Public services.

3.3.3 The SMC at the counterpart RCC shall, on receipt of the above message, immediately send an acknowledgement to the initiating RCC and indicate the conditions, if any, under which the projected mission is to be undertaken. He shall also render all possible assistance to enable the SAR mission to be carried out successfully.

#### 3.4 PROMULGATION OF SEARCH AREA(s) BY NOTAM

3.4.1 Once the area of probability has been determined, the RCC initiating the SAR action shall, in co-ordination with the counterpart RCC, arrange for the issuance of a joint NOTAM Class One to promulgate the search area(s).

#### 3.5 LIAISON DURING A SAR MISSION

3.5.1 During the course of a SAR mission, the RCC's concerned shall maintain close liaison in order to ensure the smooth and successful execution of the SAR mission.

The RCC in charge of the mission shall periodically keep the other RCC informed of the number of SAR Units engaged in the SAR mission, areas to be searched, actions taken to date and the decision to suspend or terminate the SAR mission.

4. ENTRY INTO AND USE OF FACILITIES BY SAR UNITS OF STATES

4.1 A State shall recognise the vested interests of the other State whose aircraft is the subject of SAR operations and shall permit without delay the entry of SAR units of that State into its SRR for the purposes of rendering SAR assistance.

4.2 SAR Units assigned by another State to the RCC in control of a SAR mission, shall be placed under the charge of that RCC for the period of their assignment.

4.3 The RCC of the State requesting for assistance or for the use of suitable facilities of another State, shall provide all pertinent details on the scope of the assistance/facilities required. The requesting RCC shall provide full briefing, directly or indirectly, to the SAR Units that have been made available on the scope of the mission before the units enter the SRR of the requesting RCC. If it is deemed necessary for SAR Units of a State to land at an airfield and/or to make use of the facilities of the requesting State in the course of performing an assigned SAR task, the RCCs concerned shall make all necessary arrangements to facilitate the above.

5. SAR OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

5.1 Each State shall be responsible for the expenses incurred by its own SAR Units deployed during a SAR mission. Aircraft engaged in a SAR mission shall be exempted from Government levied aviation charges.

6. RECOVERY OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

6.1 The recovery of re-usable supplies and survival equipment

shall be arranged between the respective RCCs. Recovered items shall be returned to their owner unless other arrangements for their disposal are agreed to in specific instances.

7. TENURE

7.1 This Agreement becomes effective upon the date the signatures of the authorised representatives of both parties concerned have been affixed, and will remain valid unless modified by mutual agreement. This agreement may be terminated at any time by mutual consent or by either party upon giving 90 days notice in writing.

For the Department of  
Aviation, Thailand.

For the Department of  
Civil Aviation, Malaysia.

*Chitt Wachasindhu*

MR. CHITTI WACHARASINDHU  
Director General of Aviation,  
Thailand.

*14 Oct. 1985*

*DR. Abdul Kuddus Bin Ahmad*

DR. ABDUL KUDDUS BIN AHMAD  
Director General of Civil Aviation,  
Malaysia.