CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF NEW ZEALAND
Te Mana Rererangi Tūmatanui o Aotearoa

Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions & Transport

Civil Aviation Rules Update Programme

Routine Agricultural Drone Operations project – Technical Advisory Group Terms of Reference

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1. Introduction

1.1 These Terms of Reference (ToR) apply to the Technical Advisory Group (TAGs) established to provide technical expertise and operational insights to inform the Routine Agricultural Drones Project.

1.2 The TAG is an advisory body. It does not make final decisions on regulatory policy design, proposed rules, or project direction.[1]

2. Purpose and scope of project

2.1 The purpose of the Routine Agricultural Drone Operations project is to make it easier for the agricultural, forestry and horticultural sectors to use drones for routine, lower-risk spraying and spreading activities while maintaining high levels of safety.

2.2 The Acting Minister of Transport, Hon James Meager, has directed the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport to create a simpler pathway for routine agricultural drone operations, to make spraying cheaper, faster, and more efficient to support economic growth and productivity.

2.3 The scope of the Routine Agricultural Drone Operations project is to undertake the detailed policy design of the rule changes needed to create the new pathway for routine agricultural drone operations.

[1] The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority retain responsibility for decisions on project direction, regulatory policy design and proposed rules. The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport is responsible for providing policy advice to the portfolio Minister. The portfolio Minister makes civil aviation rules under statutory authority.

3. Purpose and scope of TAG

3.1 The purpose of the Routine Agricultural Drone Operations project TAG is to contribute technical expertise and operational insights to inform the detailed design of the new pathway for routine agricultural drone operations. This may include:

- Advising on current aviation and agricultural sector practices and industry norms
- Testing the practicality, feasibility, and workability of the detailed policy design and proposed rule changes
- Identifying technical dependencies, and system interfaces, and infrastructure implications
- Identifying risks, opportunities, and unintended consequences.
- Identifying sector impacts, including operational constraints, compliance implications, economic considerations, and transition requirements.

Nature of advice

3.2 The Routine Agricultural Drone Operations TAG provides technical advice and insights and has no decision-making role. It is not a forum for negotiation, consensus-seeking, or advocacy.

3.3 The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority retain full responsibility for the project, including detailed policy design and proposed rules. The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport has full responsibility for providing advice to the portfolio Minister on the policy design and proposed rules. Technical advice and insights provided by TAG members will be considered alongside other matters, including:

- Government priorities and Ministerial direction
- economic benefit and productivity imperatives
- safety and security imperatives
- public interest considerations
- international obligations
- statutory responsibilities under the Civil Aviation Act 2023
- system-level impacts across the aviation sector.
- Implications for the agricultural sector.

Out of scope

3.4 The TAG does not:

- negotiate or agree the content of proposed rules or policy decisions
- act as a substitute for broader public consultation, regulatory impact analysis, or ministerial decision-making
- represent organisational or commercial interests in any capacity, including advocacy
- develop draft legal rule text, including drafting of notices of proposed rulemaking (NPRMs)
- provide advice on matters unrelated to the defined project scope
- provide operational approvals, exemptions, or certification decisions.

4. Confidential information

4.1 TAG members must not share information that the project team says is confidential, or that is clearly sensitive. They may use this information only for their work with the TAG. Members must continue to keep this information confidential after they leave the TAG.

4.2 This does not apply to information that is publicly available.

5. Engagement approach

5.1 The project will engage with TAG members as and when needed.

5.2 Engagement may be via email, digital application, or meetings (held in person at an agreed location or virtually (MS Teams)).

5.3 Members are responsible for meeting their own costs associated with attending any in-person meetings. The Civil Aviation Authority will not reimburse expenses associated with attending in-person meetings. Catering will be provided for in-person meetings scheduled for more than three hours.

6. Project team

6.1 The Routine Agricultural Drone Operations project is jointly led by the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority. The project's Policy Managers are **Stuart Worden** (Manager, Regulatory Policy and International Engagement,

Civil Aviation Authority) and **Dr Carolina Durran**t (Manager Aviation, Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport).

6.2 The project team includes:

- Brigid Borlase (Project Co-Lead, Principal Regulatory Policy Advisor, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Sarah Jardine (Project Co-Lead, Principal Policy Advisor, Aviation, Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport)
- Corey Price (Manager, Unmanned Aircraft Certification and Monitoring, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Sam Horsefield (Senior Regulatory Policy Advisor, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Tanya McKenzie (Senior Advisor, Guidance, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Elizabeth Mazuecos (Senior Solicitor, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Jon Pheloung (Senior Advisor, External Relations Projects, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Anna Ramsey (Senior Advisor, Communications and Engagement, Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport)
- Kate McNabb (Project Manager, Civil Aviation Authority)
- Sophie Kelsall (Project Coordinator, Civil Aviation Authority)

7. Document control

Title	Routine Agricultural Drone Operations
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