Country Summary

Mauritania

The Problem

Mauritania has seen an increase in drone flights over the last decade. With the increased risks to safety and security this creates, particularly for nearby airports, Mauritania's National Agency of the Civil Aviation (NACA) needs better information about the drones and operators active in the country, to inform regulatory decisions and to manage risks. Compliance is low and the process is not comprehensively recording all drones or drone use. Most unauthorised flights involve drones under 800g. Therefore it is a priority for the NACA to set up a process for tracking drones, including registration, to track, monitor and generate data on operators' activities.

Solution

Like many of their counterparts in the Peer Action Group, Mauritania's NACA were looking for a tracking solution that would enable them to check users were flying authorised drones in the air spaces and at the times they had been approved to do so.

> Mauritania's initial hypothesis, developed in June 2023, was:
>
> **If we** clearly identify our information needs,
>
> **then we will** find an appropriate registration solution so we can know where the drones we authorised are and who is operating them,
>
> **which will** enable us to take steps to reduce risks and improve safety and security.

Key activities and Decisions

To begin, NACA chose to focus on the drone registration process that could be the first module of an online system to ultimately enable increasing drone use in line with Mauritania's security needs and safety best practices.

Aware that the current registration system is not well utilised, the NACA started by discussing which elements of the current registration process might act as barriers and discourage operators or individual users from registering their drone with the Agency.

The system in place at the start of the experiment required registration of the operator, background checks of the owner, specification of the drone including its weight (weight classes - under 5kg, between 5kg and 25kg and over 25kg) and the purpose of the operation. The existing registration process is offline and requires presentation of the physical drone.

Ensuite, the Wakanda Beyond Policy Action Group supported in reviewing the registration process documentation. From the review, areas of interest were identified, and recommendations were shared, alongside some ideas to consider whether adjusting these areas could remove the barriers keeping operators away from registering and become compliant. Some recommendations include:

1. Accommodating weight class requirements depending on purpose of drone use;
2. Assessing which use-cases should require approval from the Authority to perform operations (fly), taking into consideration whether it's for private, aeromodelism, or for commercial purposes, as well as the drone's weight and the complexity of operation;
3. Inclusion of photography as a professional activity within commercial activities in the Unmanned Aeronautical Technical Regulations;
4. Accommodating compliance requirements for operators based on weight, activity risk, and purpose of activities.

Having identified a variety of potential enhancements aimed at increasing compliance with the regulatory requirement to register, NACA set out to evaluate any impact on safety or security of enacting the proposed changes. NACA hopes to accommodate operators' needs without compromising safety or security. Once agreed changes have been implemented, they hope to conduct a mass communication campaign to increase awareness of regulations.

In parallel NACA have been exploring tracking solutions. The team contacted service providers to understand what is available in the market that meets their needs:

1. Enable live data
2. Allow to see the organisation behind any flight (who, when and where)
3. Easy to implement
4. Compatible with operators' systems
5. Affordable for operators and NACA

Outcome and Next Steps

The team continue to make progress with new pilot licence processes and training, an online registration system and a tracking solution, including how these solutions can best be integrated into regulations, in collaboration with the technical committee convened to drive this work forward.