INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Concept Note on the Enhancement of APIRG and RASG-AFI

Structure

Version 1.0

2023

Contents

1.   Background

1.1   The AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) was set up by the Council of ICAO, in 1980, as recommended by the Sixth AFI Regional Air Navigation Meeting (AFI/6), 1979.

1.2   Whilst acting on Recommendation 6/8 of AFI/6 RAN meeting (1979), the Council of ICAO established the functions of the APIRG, its position in ICAO, the composition of the Group and the guidelines which should govern its working methods, including relations with States and the relationship with ICAO specialized regional bodies. Based on such guidelines, the APIRG further developed throughout its meetings and other working arrangements considered necessary, for the regular conduct of the Group's activity.

1.3   On 6 October 2009, the ICAO Air Navigation Commission (ANC) reviewed a proposal for the establishment of Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) and decided that the concept of RASGs be transmitted to States and appropriate international organizations for comments prior to the Council consideration. It was highlighted during the discussions that the proposal for RASGs would not fundamentally change the efforts that are presently underway in several ICAO regions. A State letter dated 16 December 2009 sought comments from States and selected international organizations on the need for uniform establishment of RASGs in all regions and provided suggested terms of reference and work programme of the RASGs. The comments by States were supportive of the establishment of RASGs. Consequently, the ICAO Council at the fourth meeting of its 190th Session held on 25 May 2010 (C-DEC 190/4):

   a)   approved the establishment of the following RASGs: RASG-PA for the Caribbean, South American, and North American regions (including Central America); RASG-EUR for the European region; RASG-APAC for the Asia Pacific regions; RASG-MID for the Middle East region and RASG-AFI for the Africa-Indian Ocean Region, with the aim of supporting a regional performance framework for the management of safety;

   b)   agreed to the terms of reference of the RASGs;

   c)   agreed that the report of RASG meetings, similar to reports of Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs), would be reviewed by the ANC on a regular basis and by the Council as deemed necessary;

   d)   approved the inclusion of the sentence "coordinate with respective RASG on safety issues" in the terms of reference of all PIRGs, viz APANPIRG, APIRG, EANPG, GREPECAS, MIDANPIRG and NAT SPG; and

   e)   requested the ANC to report to the Council any duplication in the activities of the PIRGs and the RASGs.

1.4   The main purpose of the Regional Aviation Safety Group for Africa-Indian Ocean (RASG-AFI) would be to develop an integrated, data-driven strategy and implement a work programme that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety. This approach is designed to reduce the aviation fatality risk in the RASG-AFI Region and promote States and industry safety initiatives in harmony with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR). The RASG will build on the work already done by States, ICAO Regional Offices and existing regional and sub-regional organizations (such as the cooperative development of operational safety and continuing airworthiness programmes (COSCAPs), regional safety oversight organizations (RSOOs), regional accident and incident investigation organizations (RAIOs) and industry) to support the establishment and operation of safety management processes for the region.

1.5   In 2019, the Council updated the terms of reference (ToR) for the Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) aimed at improving efficiency and working methodologies, as well as the involvement of States, international organizations and industry in the work, meetings and related activities of the regional groups. The generic ToR serve as a global basis for PIRG and RASG operations and may be further expanded by each PIRG/RASG as required, to maintain the flexibility and efficiency of its work.

1.6   The revised ToR not only outlines the changes introduced but also highlights the important coordination and decision-making roles played by PIRGs and RASGs, in particular, how RASGs have served as a bridge between Member States, the exchange of experiences and by facilitating best practices, which ultimately contributed to the improvement of safety performance.

1.7   The APIRG/22 and RASG-AFI/5 meetings held in July/August 2019, noted with interest the outcome of the Council's review of the terms of reference of the PIRGs and RASGs and welcomed the structure provided by the approved generic ToR sought by the Council to improve the performance and expected results. Accordingly, the ICAO Secretariat was tasked to update the PIRG and RASG handbooks (APIRG/22 & RASG-AFI/5 Decision 1/03).

1.8   Thereafter, during the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly, it was decided to align the meeting schedule of the Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) with the annual reporting requirement to the Council. The Council, (C-DEC 219/7), during the Review of Assembly Resolutions and Decisions working paper (C-WP/14983, Rev. 2), implemented the Assembly decision and on 7 August 2020, the President of the ICAO Council approved the amendment of the Terms of Reference of the PIRGs and RASGs to include annual meetings.

2.   **Introduction**

2.1   The Twenty-fifth Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/25) and the Eighth Meeting of the AFI Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI/8) were held from 7 to 11 November 2022 at the Kigali Serena Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda.

2.2   The APIRG/25 & RASG-AFI/8 Joint session held on 7 and 11 November 2022, discussed the enhancement of APIRG and RASG-AFI Structure. The meeting recalled that the Council established Terms of Reference that serve as a global basis for PIRGs/RASGs activities which may be further expanded by each PIRG/RASG as appropriate, to maintain the flexibility and efficiency of their work.

2.3   With the experience gained by hosting the APIRG and RASG-AFI back-to-back, the meeting agreed that in view of the high number of common areas and subsequent coordination layers, it may be necessary to establish a small group to study the feasibility of combining APIRG and RASG-AFI into a single entity in the future, as discussed in 2019 during APIRG/22.

2.4   It was proposed to form a small group consisting of APIRG and RASG-AFI members to work remotely under the leadership of the Secretaries and in close coordination with the Chairpersons to study the feasibility of combining APIRG and RASG-AFI and submit the result to the next meeting of the groups for consideration.

3. AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG)

3.1 The APIRG has the obligation to apply the most effective and efficient organizational structure and meeting modalities that best suit the characteristics of the AFI region's implementation work programme while maintaining to the extent possible, alignment with the Termes of reference (ToR), the regional work programme and the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP).

3.2 The APIRG is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of the AFI Air Navigation Plan (ANP, ICAO Doc 7474), as well as the identification and resolution of air navigation deficiencies. It is a planning and coordination mechanism and, while implementation is the responsibility of States, APIRG can play a significant role in supporting the implementation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as well as Regional requirements.

3.3 The ToR and working methods of the APIRG have been approved by the Council of ICAO in accordance with Decisions C-DEC 219/7 of 2019. Amongst others, the Council in establishing the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) identified the need for coordination between the APIRG and the RASG-AFI. In this regard, the terms of reference of the Group are particularly to:

   a) ensure continuous and coherent development of the AFI Air Navigation Plan and other relevant regional documentation in a manner that is harmonized with adjacent regions, consistent with ICAO SARPs and reflecting global requirements;

   b) facilitate the implementation of air navigation systems and services as identified in the AFI Air Navigation Plan with due observance to the primacy of air safety and the environment;

   c) Identification and addressing of specific deficiencies in the air navigation field; and.

   d) Coordinate with RASG-AFI on safety issues.

3.4 APIRG/19 meeting agreed on the application of the ASBU methodology in its work and that due consideration should be given to planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting aspects. Furthermore, project management principles should be applied to the work of APIRG and its contributory bodies.

3.5 To discharge its tasks and responsibilities, the APIRG is structured into two (02) Sub-Groups:
   a) The Airspace and Aerodrome Operation Sub-Group (AAO/SG); and
   b) The Infrastructure and Information Sub-Group (IIM/SG)

3.6 The IIM/SG is established and mandated by APIRG to support the implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and carry out specific activities aimed to enable APIRG to discharge its functions and responsibilities in the areas of CNS, AIM and MET.

3.7 The AAO/SG is established and mandated by APIRG to support the implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and carry out specific activities aimed to enable APIRG to discharge its functions and responsibilities in the areas of AOP and ATM.

3.8 The two Sub-Groups report to the APIRG Projects Coordination Committee (APCC) which is established by the APIRG primarily to undertake tasks that have previously been an increasing challenge to the Group. These include reducing the volume of material for consideration by APIRG meetings to manageable levels, carrying certain tasks in between APIRG meetings to facilitate continuity and efficiency in implementation, and supporting the coordination with RASG-AFI.

3.9 Projects approved by APIRG or APCC, in the eras of AIM, MET, CNS, AOP and ATM are conducted by project teams under both IIM and AAO subgroups.

4. Regional Aviation Safety Group for Africa - Indian Ocean (RASG-AFI)

4.1 The mandate of the RASG-AFI is:

    a) to develop and implement a work programme that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety on the basis of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR); and

    b) using the GASP and GASR, to build on the work already done by States, existing sub-regional organizations and programmes such as Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs) the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) and industry, and to support the establishment and operation of a performance-based safety system for the region.

4.2 To fulfill its assigned mandate, the Group shall:

    a) analyze safety information and hazards to civil aviation at the regional level and review the action plans developed within the region to address identified hazards;

    b) facilitate the sharing of safety information and experiences among all stakeholders;

    c) ensure that all safety activities at the regional and sub-regional level are properly coordinated to avoid duplication of efforts;

    d) reduce duplication of efforts by encouraging collaboration, cooperation and resource sharing;

    e) conduct follow-up to GASP/GASR related activities as required;

    f) coordinate with APIRG on safety issues;

    g) develop and implement specific projects aimed at addressing identified safety deficiencies in the region; and

    h) provide feedback to ICAO to continually improve and ensure an up-to-date global safety framework.

4.3 A RASG-AFI Steering Committee (RASC) composed of representatives from States, international/regional organizations and industry is established to guide the work of the RASG-AFI and ensure that safety initiatives are accomplished in a timely, effective, and efficient manner. To this end, the RASC will:

    a) propose the RASG-AFI work programme;

    b) coordinate the activities of the RASG-AFI and all GASP safety related initiatives and adjust strategy as necessary;

    c) act as an advisory body to the RASG-AFI;

    d) provide regular safety environment assessments to the RASG-AFI; and

    e) undertake any action required to ensure that the RASG-AFI achieves its objective to reduce aviation risks and minimize or avoid duplication of efforts in the AFI Region.

4.4 Four Safety Support Teams (SSTs) are presently created, namely SSCs (Significant Safety Concerns), FSO (Fundamentals of Safety Oversight), AIG (Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation) and ESI (Emerging Safety Issues). The SSTs will operate under the guidance of the RASC. They should accomplish their tasks by developing mitigation strategies based on gathering and processing safety data and information. These mitigation strategies shall be focused on the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), corresponding Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs) and the associated Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR).

5. SWOT analysis of the aviation system in the region

5.1 A tentative SWOT analysis of the current system is presented in the table below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
- APIRG and RASG-AFI experience in regional Planning and implementation Framework - ANSPs committed to cooperate for interoperability of systems. - Availability of RECs with political commitment for regional economic integration including civil aviation - Support of ICAO and the industry - Regularity of meetings - States with high Effective Implementation of ICAO SARPs - Commitment of some States for the development of the aviation sector - Support by the AFI Plan	- Lack of comprehensive and effective national Strategic Vision, Programmes and Plans for Civil Aviation - Insufficient commitment/participation of Administrations/Organizations - Lack of adequate human capacity and skills in aviation - Poor pace of implementation - Heavy charges and Taxes - Poor funding capabilities - States with low pace of establishment of safety oversight systems - States with Significant Safety Concerns
Opportunities	**Threats**
- ICAO "No country left behind" Initiative - AFI Region is a transit airspace with a regular notable annual traffic growth - Youth of the population with ambition for the future development - Potential wide market for aviation - Emerging new technologies	- Political and social unrest - Terrorism an unlawful acts - Recurrent pandemics impacting harmfully the air transport sector (Ebola, COVID-19, etc.) - Cyber threats of aviation system

6. Concept of the enhanced structure

6.1 A Joint APIRG/RASG-AFI Coordination Task Force has been established as a subsidiary body to APIRG and RASG-AFI, responsible for coordinating the activities of APIRG and RASG-AFI on routine basis to:

   a) strengthen existing arrangements and adequately address the requirements for coordination and collaboration between the two Groups;

   b) facilitate consistency and efficiency and ensure lack of duplication and conflict between the activities of APIRG and RASG-AFI;

   c) ensure mutual exchange of information on the Conclusions and Decisions reached at the Groups' Meetings, or any other activities undertaken by the Groups in line with the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP); and

   d) identify any challenges faced by the Groups in achieving their set objectives and targets, alert the Groups and their Secretariats on these challenges, conflicts and / or inefficiencies with proposed strategies to address them, for the endorsement of the Groups.

6.2 The APIRG and RASG-AFI meetings are currently organized jointly at the same venue, with common Opening and Closing plenaries of the two Groups and a back-to-back working session of the Groups in between, to facilitate coordination and to ensure the efficient use of resources.

6.3   The main objective of fully merging APIRG and RASG-AFI is to rationalize scarce resources (human, financial, time, etc.) and ensure tight linkage and harmonization in planning, implementing, operating, regulating, and overseeing the civil aviation industry in the AFI Region. The benefit awaited from merging the two Groups can be summarized as building based on the identified strengths and considering the opportunities while minimizing the risk impact of the threat and closing the weaknesses.

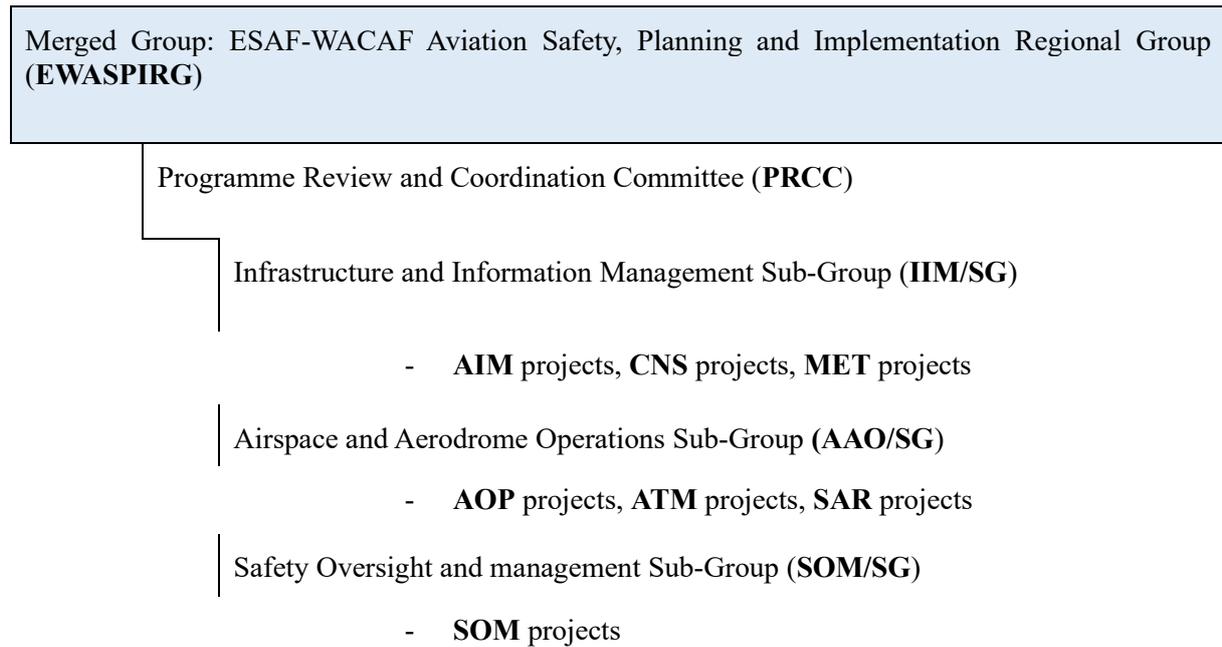6.4   In this regard the following aspect can be considered:

a)   The structure of the merged Group would include the following sub layers:

    i.   Programme Review and Coordination Committee (PRCC)

    ii.   Subgroups

    iii.   Projects

b)   The PRCC as equivalent of the current ARC-TF, will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the merged Group.

c)   Subgroups will discharge the merged Group responsibilities in technical matters related to the planning and implementation of air navigation services as well as to the oversight and management of aviation safety. Coordination will be reinforced among Subgroups on subjects of common interest.

d)   To carry out the work of the Sub-Groups the project management approach will be followed. 'Projects' will be identified and executed by 'teams' of subject matter experts reporting to the Sub-Groups. In certain circumstances, the merge Group may, as it deems necessary, agree on a Project Team that does not report to a Sub-Group, but to the Group itself through the PRCC. In delivering its tasks, each Project should cover all the following aspects:

- *Applicable Regulations on the components of the Project*

- *Safety management (including Safety studies -pre and post implementation, safety risks assessments and resolution of safety issues, etc.).*

- *Safety oversight by the regulator.*

e)   A better coordination will be ensured in the development or update of the Regional Aviation Safety Plan (RASP) and the Air Navigation Plan (eANP).   The issuance of a joint annual Report on Aviation Safety and Air Navigation should be considered.

f)   The procedural handbook of the new Group will merge provisions from both procedural handbooks of APIRG and RASG-AFI.
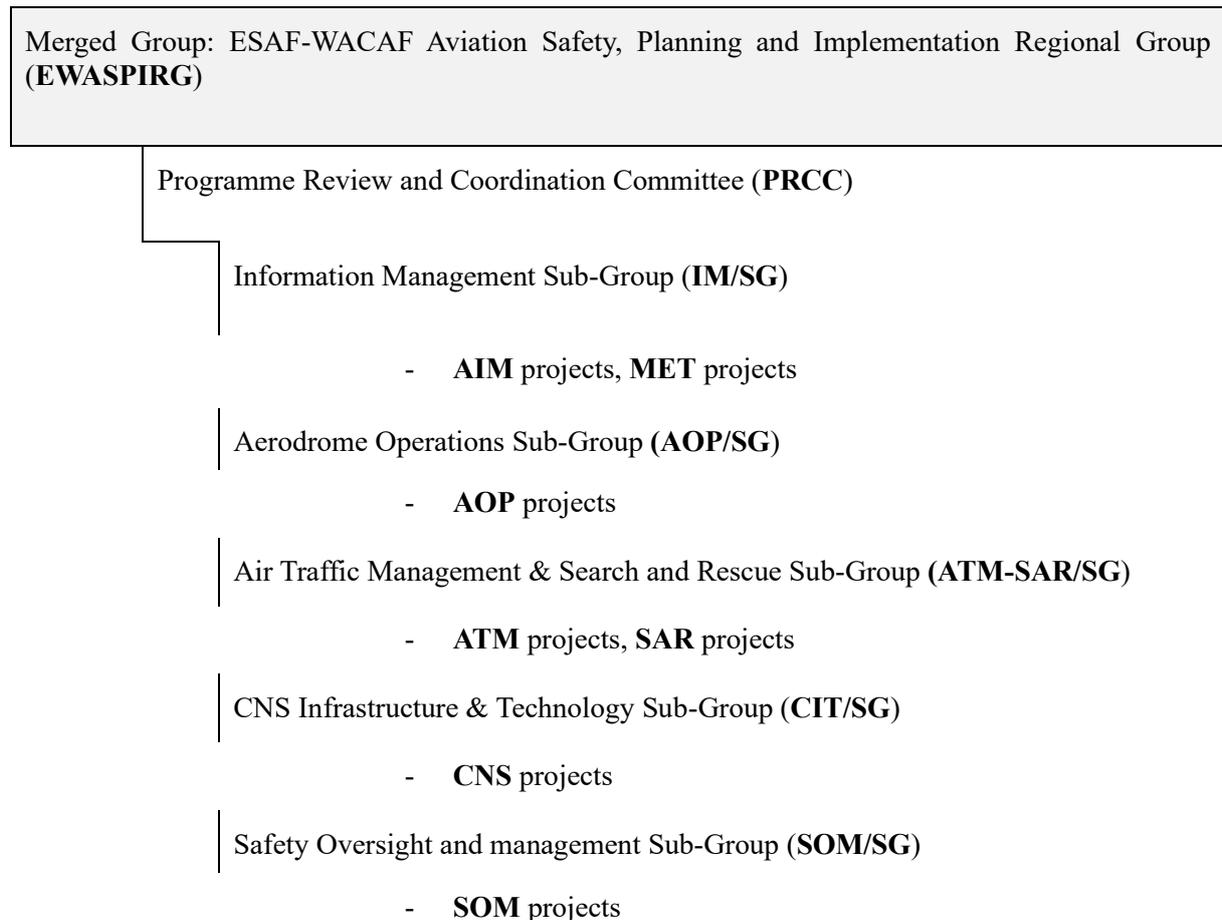
7.   Options for structuring the Merged Group

7.1   To implement the concept discussed above on merging APIRG and RASG-AFI, two scenarios of structure are proposed as follows:

a)   Scenario 1: a three-Subgroups structure

b)   Scenario 2: a five- Subgroups structure

7.2 The three-Subgroups structure will be composed as follows:

Merged Group: ESAF-WACAF Aviation Safety, Planning and Implementation Regional Group (**EWASPIRG**)

Programme Review and Coordination Committee (**PRCC**)

Infrastructure and Information Management Sub-Group (**IIM/SG**)

- **AIM** projects, **CNS** projects, **MET** projects

Airspace and Aerodrome Operations Sub-Group (**AAO/SG**)

- **AOP** projects, **ATM** projects, **SAR** projects

Safety Oversight and management Sub-Group (**SOM/SG**)

- **SOM** projects

7.3 The five-Subgroups structure will be composed as follows:

Merged Group: ESAF-WACAF Aviation Safety, Planning and Implementation Regional Group (**EWASPIRG**)

Programme Review and Coordination Committee (**PRCC**)

Information Management Sub-Group (**IM/SG**)

- **AIM** projects, **MET** projects

Aerodrome Operations Sub-Group (**AOP/SG**)

- **AOP** projects

Air Traffic Management & Search and Rescue Sub-Group (**ATM-SAR/SG**)

- **ATM** projects, **SAR** projects

CNS Infrastructure & Technology Sub-Group (**CIT/SG**)

- **CNS** projects

Safety Oversight and management Sub-Group (**SOM/SG**)
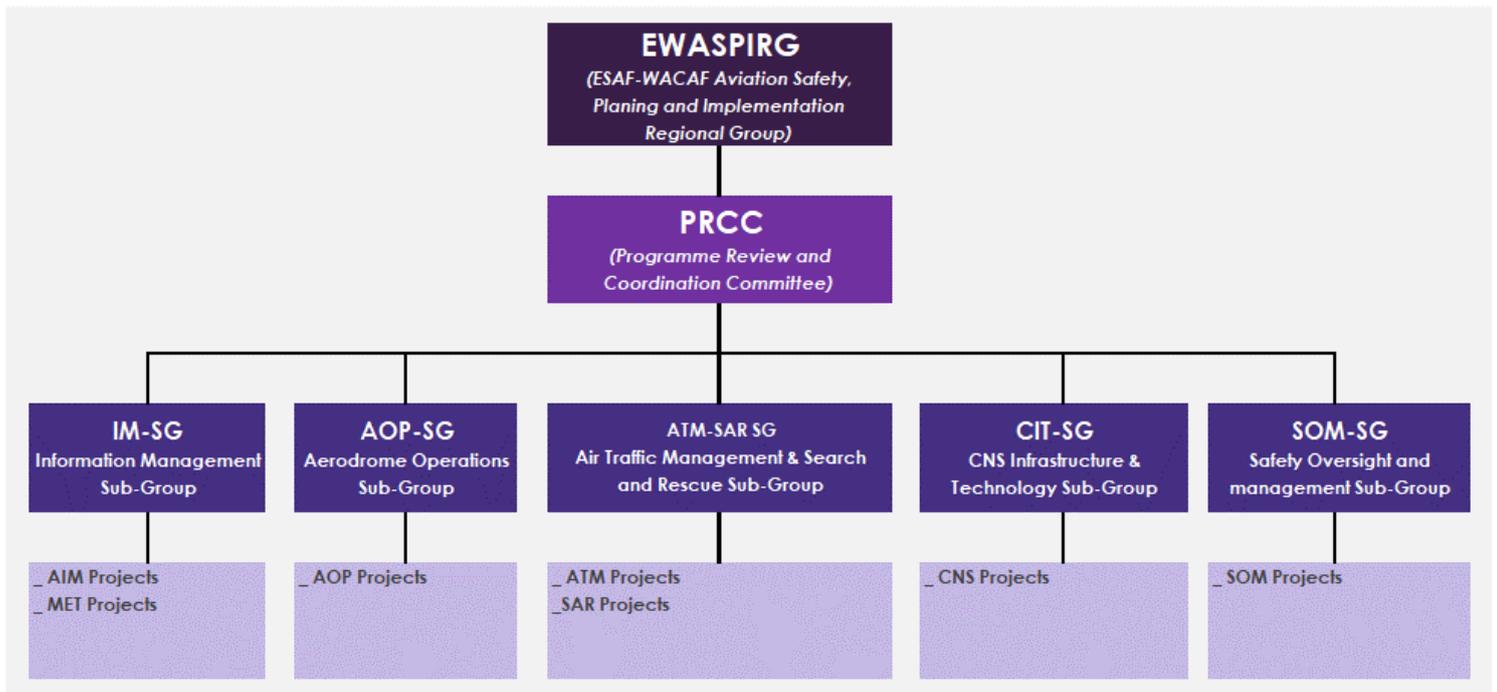
- **SOM** projects

8. Organizational structure of the Merged Group

8.1 The two organizational structures of the Merged Group are proposed for the respective scenarios as displayed below:
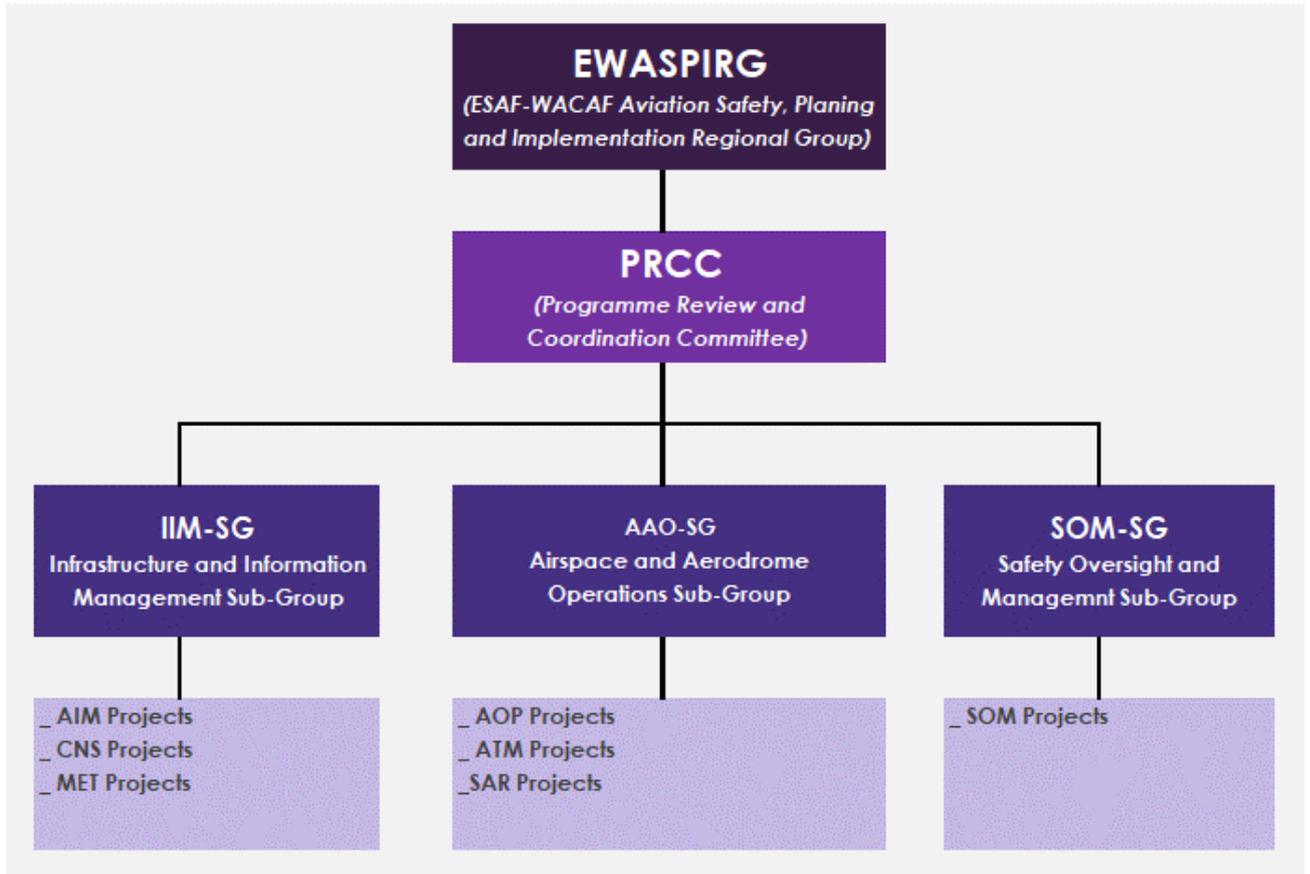
Organizational structure of EWASPIRG with three subgroups

Organizational structure of EWASPIRG with five subgroups

9. Comparative analysis (benefits and challenges) of the proposed options

9.1 The table below presents a short analysis of both scenarios:

Item #	Comparative Item	Scenario 1 - The three-Subgroups structure	Scenario 2 - The five-Subgroups structure	Comments
a.	Number of Subgroups to be managed by the PRCC	Less number of Subgroups to be managed by the PRCC	More number of Subgroups to be managed by the PRCC	The scenario 1 may be easily manageable by the PRCC
b.	Compositions of the Subgroups	Subgroups composed of heterogeneous technical areas and expertise (e.g., AAO/SG include AOP, ATM, SAR), leading sometimes to deliberations through breakout sessions during regular meetings	Subgroups are homogeneous	Scenario 2 is more viable as it leads to homogeneous subgroups.
c.	Functioning of the Subgroups	The Size of Subgroups (big) may lead to an inappropriate functioning of the Subgroup (problem of coordination, difficulty to reach the group members, etc.)	The size of the Subgroups is suitable for good productivity	Scenario 2 suits for good productivity
d.	Costs	Less costly (reduce of the number of meetings as well as interpretation services and logistics)	Expensive (increased number of meeting with all related logistics)	Scenario 1 seems to be more advantageous

10. Procedural handbook of the merged group

10.1 The following table of content is proposed for the procedural handbook of the Merged Group.

PART I - EWASPIRG
    Terms of Reference of the Group
    Working Arrangements
    Rules of Procedures for the Conduct of Meetings of the Group

PART II PRCC
    Terms of Reference of the Committee
    Working Arrangements
    Rules of Procedures for the Conduct of Meetings of the Committee

PART III - Subgroups
A – Subgroup A
    Terms of References
    Key Fonctions
    Tasks
    Working Methods
    Composition
B – Subgroup B
    Terms of References
    Key Fonctions
    Tasks
    Working Methods
    Composition
    …….
    ……
X – Subgroup X
    Terms of References
    Key Fonctions
    Tasks
    Working Methods
    Composition
Z - Coordination among subgroups

PART IV - Projects
    Projects identification
    Projects Approval
    Projects Teams
    Projects functioning and life cycle
    Projects reporting

PART V - Regional Plans
    Regional Aviation Safety Plan
    Regional Air Navigation Plan

PART VI - Resolution of Air Navigation Deficiencies and Significant Safety Concerns

A - Uniform Methodology for the Resolution of Air Navigation Deficiencies

B - Procedure for the Resolution of Significant Safety Concerns