



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

A38-WP/232

TE/98

5/9/13

(Information paper)

English and Spanish only¹

ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 30: Aviation Safety — Implementation Support

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL AMERICAN ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT INVESTIGATION ORGANIZATION

(Presented by El Salvador)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper shows the activities that have been carried out to this date to establish a regional accident and incident investigation organization (RAIO) in the Central American region. This type of organisation will be useful to strengthen and boost the capabilities to investigate aircraft accidents and incidents, both at each individual state and in the region.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety Strategic Objective.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Annex 13 — <i>Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation</i> Doc 9946, <i>Manual on Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization</i> Conclusion 97/5 of the 97th Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of Central America and Panama Final report of the 13th Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of the Central Caribbean.

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by El Salvador

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since 2007, Central American States, together with the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA), which acts as an integration and harmonization organization through the Central American Agency for Aviation Safety (ACSA) (its initials in Spanish), have taken into consideration the need to form a regional accident and incident investigation organization. For this reason, the CT-15/2007-2 resolution of the COCESNA Technical Council has established the Central American group of experts on accident and incident investigation (AIG), formed by representatives of States and ACSA.

1.2 In October 2008, a working paper was submitted by the Central American group of experts (AIG) for the Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIG) Divisional Meeting (2008) (AIG/08), in ICAO Headquarters in Montréal, Canada, under Agenda Item 6 “Regional accident and incident investigation cooperation.”

1.3 A working paper titled “Creation of a board in charge of the investigation of serious accidents and incidents in Central America” was submitted by the representative from El Salvador. The AIG/08 Divisional Meeting unanimously supported the creation of the Central American commission. In addition, ICAO was committed to provide support for the establishment of this board.

1.4 In this same meeting, the ICAO AIG Divisional Meeting recommended the development of guidance for States on how to establish and manage a regional accident and incident investigation system (RAIO). It was not until 2011 that ICAO published the *Manual on Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization* (Doc.9946).

1.5 It is important to mention that COCESNA/ACSA, in the pursuit of the support required for the project, submitted this manual in the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Pan America (RASG-PA), which was accepted by all of its members as Project GSI-4 – Effective accident and incident investigation, in relation to the global safety initiative (GSI) that it represents.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Central American States do not always have resources (trained personnel, equipment, laboratories, funds, etc.) available to conduct investigations. In addition, many of our States lack the capacity to investigate both important and less serious accidents and incidents. These difficulties are evident in the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) audit reports provided to the States of the region.

2.2 The establishment of a regional group for aircraft accident and incident investigation has become a necessity for Central American States in order to attain an effective solution for their countries to achieve the capacity expected and required by Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation* with regard to aircraft accident and incident investigation.

2.3 The search for safety recommendations has become a goal for the Central American States during the last years. This search for information is satisfied with the results provided by the investigations, which are with no doubt a very valuable source that cannot be obtained from each state individually. Therefore, the availability of a source providing safety recommendations to prevent accident recurrence allows meeting the ultimate purpose of an investigation, thus facilitating Civil Aviation Authorities to make safety-related decisions.

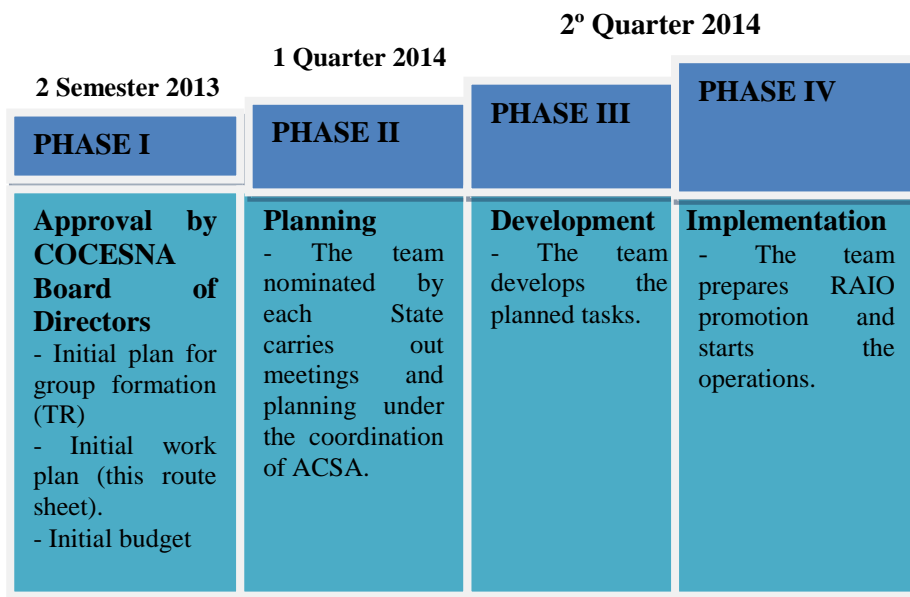
2.4 The creation of this regional group (RAIO) does not mean that States will relinquish their sovereignty or the authority and responsibility they are granted according to Annex 13; instead, the association between States, their direct participation and the synergy obtained as a result of their mutual cooperation brings good results such as:

- a) elimination of duplication of effort by joining human, technical and financial resources, for instance, laboratories and equipment in general;
- b) gathering, analysis and sharing of information on accidents and incidents;
- c) progress in the integration of the Central American region and in the solidarity among the countries;
- d) standardization of the accident and incident investigation regulation and procedures;
- e) standardization of accident investigators' training in the region, not only with regard to theoretical courses and OJT, but also in relation to the experience as part of the regional group;
- f) assurance of independence and achievement of credibility in accident and incident investigation, given the fact that investigations performed by each of the States will be known by an impartial collegial body, such as the COCESNA Board of Directors; and
- g) advantageous use of group capacities.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

3.1 The creation of this regional accident and incident investigation organization in Central America implies the conduction of a particular number of activities in different phases, which would lead to the appropriate implementation of this organization. Figure 1 below shows the route sheet with the phases and activities to be followed for the RAIO implementation:

FIGURE 1



3.2 The RAIO implementation strategy includes the adoption of joint policies, regulations and procedures, the development of an appropriately approved annual operational budget, the search for staff to get to the site of the event, laboratories (e.g. metallurgy, recorders, meteorological devices, photographs and videos), among other activities.

3.3 For the creation of these types of regional organizations, ICAO recommends that a memorandum of understanding be signed between the participant States. Today, there are some initial reference terms to be presented before and approved by the COCESNA Board of Directors so that this important project can be launched.

3.4 As part of the activities carried out lately for the implementation of this regional group, Conclusion 97/5 was issued by the end of February this year, during the 97th Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of Central America and Panama, which with regard to this document, states the following:

- a) that COCESNA can support and coordinate with the States the development of this project; and
- b) that people concerned with this project attend the ICAO regional workshop on accident and incident investigation for North America/Caribbean (NAM/CAR) regions (Mexico, 3 to 7 June 2013).

3.5 The 13th Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of the Central Caribbean took place on 28 to 31 May this year. During this meeting, a NI/25 including a summary of the activities that had been carried out to that date with regard to the project of creating a regional accident and incident investigation organization was submitted to the participants of the meeting. These activities would help strengthen and boost the capacities to investigate aircraft accidents of Central American States both at an individual and regional level. In addition, the ICAO Secretariat reported a phased RAIO implementation strategy, which was developed in a workshop seminar conducted by ICAO in Morocco and is available on the following website: http://www.icao.int/MID/Documents/acac_icao/ACAC_ICAO_Summary_of_Discussion.pdf.

3.6 It is also important to report that representatives of the Central American RAIIO participated in the ICAO North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Regional Office workshop on accident and incident investigation for NAM/CAR regions which was held in Mexico City, 3 to 7 June of this year.

3.7 As part of the initiative implementation activities, the Working Paper 08 (NE-08) was submitted during the RASG-PA 06 Plenary Session, under agenda item 4.2, which reported about the implementation status of this regional group. As a result, the Plenary Session unanimously agreed to support this important initiative as a pilot programme in order to establish this organization in Central America so that it can continue its activities under the aegis of RASG-PA.

3.8 Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Extraordinary Meeting 101 of the COCESNA Board of Directors held in Tela, Honduras, approved the Technical Committee Agreement CT-2013-93-14, through Resolution 101.2, which reads as follows: “*It is recommended that Board of Directors entrust the Legal Commission with the analysis on the best institutional arrangements to form the Accident and Incident Investigation Organisation.*” In relation to the above information, we are waiting for a report from the Legal Commission, which will provide information on the legal route to form the Regional Group.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The Assembly is invited to take note of this working paper and support the effort of the Central American States to establish a regional aviation accident and incident investigation organization in Central America.

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