

GASOS Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the global aviation safety oversight system?

The global aviation safety oversight system (GASOS) is an ICAO assessment and recognition programme for safety oversight organizations (SOOs) that provide aviation safety oversight assistance to ICAO member States. ICAO will assess the capability of SOOs to provide specific safety oversight functions, and if the assessment is satisfactory, issue recognition to the organization for its capability to provide those functions to States. ICAO will also publish a directory of recognized SOOs and the safety oversight assistance functions they provide so that ICAO member States that need assistance in certain safety oversight functions can easily find competent organizations to help them.

2. What is the purpose of GASOS?

GASOS will enable the strengthening of State safety oversight capabilities, by providing States with a range of solutions for the delegation of safety oversight functions or activities to recognized competent SOOs. The aim is also to strengthen the safety oversight capabilities (through the improvement incentives of the recognition process itself) of existing SOOs including RSOOs, States, and other organizations, to make them more effective and efficient in supporting States.

3. What type of organizations will be recognized SOOs?

GASOS will be open to various types of SOOs including, Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), Regional Accident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs), States that offer support to other States, and other competent organizations.

4. Does a State's use of an SOO for safety oversight by delegating functions relieve the State from its responsibilities and obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation?

No. The only case where State responsibility can be transferred remains under the use of Article 83bis of the Convention. GASOS is not changing in any way the responsibilities as defined under the ICAO Convention.

5. What are the GASOS Safety Oversight Functions and Delegation levels?

Safety oversight functions encompass functions and activities which are directly related to a state's obligations in the domain of safety oversight, and which are derived from provisions included in the ICAO Convention on International Civil Aviation, ICAO SARPs or other ICAO documents pertaining to safety oversight obligations of a state. A State can delegate certain safety oversight functions at three different levels, which correspond to different levels of authority delegation or legal empowerment:

Delegation at level 1: Advisory and coordinating functions, including but not limited to:

- Development of regulations for transposition into national or regional regulations system
- Assistance in the identification and notification of differences to SARPs
- Training of inspectors or experts
- Development of manuals, checklists and other guidance material
- Coordination of a pool of inspectors or experts

- Expert advisory services in any area of State safety oversight, of safety management or safety investigation

Delegation at level 2: Operational assistance functions

- Conduct of inspections or full technical investigations aiming at supporting the decision to issue, maintain, amend or revoke a certificate, license or approval
- Conduct of surveillance activities, identification of safety deficiencies, recommendations for corrective actions (without enforcement powers)
- Conduct of parts of safety investigations (under Annex 13)
- Safety management activities

Delegation at level 3: Certifying functions, issuance of regulations, full safety investigations

- In addition to the level 2 type of delegation, the delegation includes the actual empowerment to issue, amend or revoke certificates, licenses and approvals, i.e. the empowerment to issue certain legally binding decisions.
- Empowerment to issue aviation safety regulations and to make them effective
- Conduct of full Annex 13 safety investigations including issuance of the investigation report and safety recommendations

6. Will ICAO mandate the use of recognized SOOs when a State delegates safety oversight functions

GASOS will be a voluntary programme. The use of recognized SOOs by a State will be voluntary but encouraged by ICAO if a Member State has a need to delegate safety oversight functions.

7. What added value does GASOS provide States compared to the existing arrangements for safety oversight delegation?

When delegating safety oversight functions to a GASOS recognized SOO, the State will have the assurance that the safety oversight capability of the SOO has been thoroughly assessed by ICAO, and that it will be further monitored regularly.

8. What benefit will using GASOS recognized SOOs provide States under USOAP?

When a State delegates safety oversight functions to a recognized SOO, the scope and depth of USOAP CMA activities for that State will be reduced, as applicable, depending on the functions delegated and on the associated levels of delegation. In the case of delegation of functions at level 1, it is expected that the State will indirectly benefit under USOAP CMA through improvements brought into the relevant area of the State safety oversight system.

9. How will GASOS improve State safety oversight systems?

GASOS will provide more solutions to States to implement safety oversight functions with the assurance of the competence of the SOO. Furthermore, through the recognition process itself, GASOS will help reinforce those SOOs already providing support to States, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of the State's safety oversight system.

10. How will GASOS strengthen RSOOs?

RSOOs will be encouraged to seek GASOS recognition for those functions they already perform, and in later stages, seek recognition for progressively more functions. The recognition process will be based on standardized criteria providing a common benchmark and is expected to motivate both RSOOs and their Member States in making the necessary efforts or investing the required resources, and implement more safety oversight delegations; thereby, supporting the strengthening of the RSOO's safety oversight capabilities.

11. How will GASOS provide efficiency and cost benefits to industry?

As more and more States make use of the services of ICAO assessed and recognized SOOs the industry will benefit from efficiencies related to a more harmonized implementation of the ICAO standards and recommended practices and a reduction in the duplication of surveillance activities.

12. What oversight of GASOS recognized SOOs by States is expected by ICAO?

States can have confidence in the ICAO assessments of SOOs, however **under GASOS the State retains its responsibilities for safety oversight under the Convention** on International Civil Aviation and should satisfy itself as it deems necessary.

States are responsible for assuring themselves that the SOO's competence is valid in relation to State specific aspects, such as language, knowledge and application of national aviation regulations and procedures, and specificities of the national aviation activity.

States are also responsible to ensure that efficient technical coordination mechanisms are in place, between the CAA and the SOO, and also between SOOs if more than one SOO is engaged. In case of delegations where the State CAA retains the final approval, it is expected furthermore that the CAA retains the capability to review the report or equivalent outcome in order to take the necessary approval decisions.

Finally States will be strongly encouraged to provide regular feedback to ICAO on how they view the performance of the SOO; as such feedback will be used as input in the ICAO GASOS continuous monitoring process.

13. What happens if a State uses an SOO which loses recognition and the State no longer has the organization or resources to provide safety oversight?

The State may require the SOO to put in place the necessary corrective actions for re-gaining recognition and continue meanwhile delegating safety oversight functions to it, possibly with some additional mitigation, or the State may decide to delegate to another recognized SOO.

14. What happens if a GASOS recognized SOO is found to be providing negligent or incompetent deficient services?

As part of ICAO's continuous monitoring of recognized SOOs, ICAO will have the possibility to decide to limit, suspend or revoke the SOO recognition certificate.

15. How will disputes between States and SOOs be reviewed and resolved?

This will depend on the nature of the dispute. In most cases it is expected that the dispute be reviewed and resolved within the legal and working framework defined by the delegation mechanisms that have been put in place by the State.

In case the dispute relates to the safety oversight performance or capability of the SOO, the State and the SOO are encouraged to bring the matter also to ICAO's knowledge, in order to feed the GASOS continuous monitoring process. ICAO may then engage with the SOO to agree on any required corrective actions.

It is not envisaged that the ICAO Council have a role in settlement of disputes between States and SOOs.

16. Will other types of SOOs threaten the existence of RSOOs and other inter-governmental SOOs?

RSOOs and other inter-governmental SOOs have essential roles to fulfill at regional levels that other SOOs cannot fulfill, such as for example the harmonization of regulations, policies and safety oversight procedures at the regional level. Inter-governmental SOOs have also privileged knowledge of the regional languages, aviation safety regulations and aviation activity.

It is therefore expected that States which are already engaged with a RSOO or inter-governmental SOO will favor investing political will and resources into the GASOS recognition of their RSOO and in delegating more functions to it.

17. How will ICAO separate and ensure independence between GASOS recognition of SOOs and TCB provision of safety oversight services?

These two ICAO programmes or activities are functionally independent. They have their own organizations, processes and decision making lines which are kept separate.

18. What are the differences and interfaces between the ICAO GASOS programme and USOAP CMA programme?

The GASOS and USOAP programmes have different aims and objectives. These two ICAO programmes are functionally separate but interdependent.

USOAP CMA is measuring the safety oversight performance of States; GASOS is recognizing the safety oversight competence (for a defined scope of functions) of SOOs that States can call upon to reinforce their safety oversight capability by delegation of functions.

USOAP CMA is mandatory for States; participation to GASOS is voluntary for SOOs and use of it is voluntary for States.

As both programmes involve the monitoring of safety oversight capability/competence there is a need to avoid duplication of monitoring. Therefore, in the case of a State delegating certain oversight functions to a GASOS recognized organization credit will be given to the results of the GASOS continuous

monitoring results in order to minimize the extent of USOAP CMA activities on the State, as applicable depending on the delegation level.

19. May ICAO provide Level 2 services?

ICAO currently provides services which are in the domain of level 1 safety oversight services. It is possible in principle for ICAO to provide level 2 services, provided functional independence between the role of ICAO as providing support to States and the role of ICAO to monitor safety oversight performance is ensured.

20. Can an SOO be assessed and recognized for functions if it has not actually performed those functions for a State before?

In the case that an SOO seeks recognition of competence for functions that it has not yet actually performed, but that it is willing to undertake, the assessment activity will look for alternative evidence of competence, such as for example the experience available at the level of individual staff, and may also consider mitigation measures such as reinforced monitoring activity.

21. What is the benefit to GASOS objectives of including Level 1 SOOs which do not perform direct operational safety oversight functions?

Level 1 functions, although not being direct operational safety oversight functions, can be as essential as level 2 or 3 functions to support State CAAs in developing their safety regulatory framework and in increasing their safety oversight capabilities. Level 1 functions cover indeed activities such as developing safety regulations, coordinating the engagement of pools of experts, providing training to civil aviation safety inspectors, developing guidance and checklists for operational safety oversight functions, etc.

Including level 1 functions in the scope of GASOS will enable to provide assurance of the competence of SOOs engaged in such functions, and will furthermore enable some SOOs to step in GASOS in preparation of future extensions of scope of recognition.

22. What is the difference between GASOS and the Civil Aviation Safety Inspector (CASI) database?

GASOS is a system to recognize organizations competent to perform certain safety oversight functions while the CASI database is a database of ICAO recognized qualified and experienced civil aviation safety inspectors that are capable of performing specific, specialized tasks for a State on a short term basis.

In certain cases functions and tasks can be equivalent (e.g., issuance or renewal of a certification of airworthiness, issuance of export certificates of airworthiness), but the most frequent situation would be that the implementation of a safety oversight function across the scope of national aviation activity requires the involvement of more than one person and is better performed by an organization.

23. Is it mandatory for GASOS recognized SOOs to use CASIs?

It is not mandatory for an SOO to use CASIs. However the use of recognized CASIs by an SOO is expected to facilitate the compliance with GASOS assessment criteria related to the competence of inspectors.