



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

The Eighth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific
Aerodrome Assistance Working Group (AP-AA/WG/8)

(Bangkok, Thailand, 21 to 24 April 2026)

Agenda Item 7: USOAP CMA in AGA

MALDIVES' ICAO USOAP CMA AUDIT EXPERIENCE

(Presented by MALDIVES)

SUMMARY

This Paper presents the Maldives' experience in preparing for the ICAO USOAP-CMA Audit of 2025. This paper highlights the key phases of planning, coordination, and execution, while outlining the proactive strategies adopted by Maldives to ensure audit readiness.

This paper outlines the State's planning, coordination, and execution strategies, highlights key focus areas during the audit—particularly in the Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA) domain—and summarizes lessons learned. The insights aim to assist other States in enhancing audit readiness and strengthening safety oversight systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 From 11 to 23 June 2025, the Republic of Maldives was subjected to a full-scope ICAO USOAP CMA audit covering all eight critical elements of an effective safety oversight system. The audit assessed the implementation of legislation, organization, licensing, operations, airworthiness, accident investigation, air navigation services, and aerodromes and ground aids.

1.2 While the audit covered all technical areas, this paper focuses on the Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA) area, where the Maldives achieved a score of 90.24%—a significant result that reflects the country's commitment to maintaining safe and compliant aerodrome operations. The Maldives also recorded an overall score of 78.44% in the audit.

1.3 This paper outlines the planning and preparation efforts undertaken by the Maldives Civil Aviation Authority (MCAA) and its stakeholders, with particular attention to the measures implemented to ensure compliance in the AGA domain. It further discusses the key challenges faced during the audit, the coordination mechanisms employed, and the lessons learned—with the aim of offering insights for other States preparing for full-scope USOAP CMA audit.

2. DISCUSSION

Preparation

2.1 Preparation for the audit commenced approximately twelve months prior to the audit dates. A structured preparation programme was established, encompassing self-assessments, gap analyses, regulatory updates, staff training, and coordination with industry stakeholders.

2.2 Key preparation measures included:

- Designation of focal points and technical counterparts for each audit area to ensure clear accountability and effective coordination.
- Establishment of an audit-specific centralized document management and file-sharing mechanism within the CAA to facilitate consistent evidence control.
- Conduct of self-assessments and gap analyses using ICAO Protocol Questions (PQs) and the ICAO Online Framework (OLF).
- Development and implementation of a corrective action roadmap covering regulatory updates, inspector training, document restructuring, and recertification activities were required.

2.3 External technical assistance played an important role in enhancing audit preparedness. The Maldives engaged with the ICAO Regional Office and COSCAP for technical assistance missions and collaborated with international partners, including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), to benchmark practices against international standards and strengthen oversight systems.

Audit Readiness

2.4 To validate readiness, comprehensive mock audits were conducted using real scenarios and actual ICAO PQs. These exercises tested the availability of evidence and familiarity of staff with protocol questions and ways to respond.

2.5 Dedicated audit stations were established for each technical area, equipped with computers, reference materials, and display screens to support efficient auditor interaction. Area counterparts were also briefed on auditee conduct, communication protocol during the audit.

Management Oversight and Coordination

2.6 Strong oversight from senior management contributed significantly to audit success. Regular progress briefings were conducted at executive and board levels, enabling timely decision-making and allocation of resources to address emerging gaps.

2.7 Internally, transversal Protocol Question reviews were conducted to identify common oversight issues and prevent inconsistencies across technical areas. Daily coordination meetings and debriefings helped define responsibilities and track follow-up actions in a structured manner.

Industry Visit

2.8 As part of the AGA audit activities, Velana International Airport (VRMM) was selected for industry visit. The visit verified the implementation of regulatory requirements and the effectiveness of oversight in an operational environment.

2.9 Key focus areas included:

- Rescue and Firefighting Services (RFF): Review of firefighter qualifications, recurrent training, on-the-job training records, participation in emergency drills, and inspection of RFF facilities, vehicles, and equipment readiness, including crew reaction time testing.
- Airport Emergency Planning (AEP): Examination of full-scale emergency exercise records, after-action reports, and documentation of lessons learned.
- Airfield Ground Lighting (AGL): Assessment of testing frequencies, maintenance procedures, fault reporting and rectification processes, and interviews with responsible technical personnel.

2.10 The industry visit underscored the fast-paced nature of audit activities and the importance of readiness at all levels. Auditor placed particular emphasis on the availability of up-to-date records and practical demonstration.

Lessons Learned

2.11 Key lessons identified from the preparation and audit process include:

- Conducting gap analysis and updating PQs with all evidence in the OLF in advance allowed time for auditor to review the evidence and understand the system prior to the on-site audit.
- Providing comprehensive evidence for each review item of Protocol Questions (PQs) is essential during the audit, not just the specific items asked for by the auditor. Keep additional set of evidence readily available.
- Mock audits revealed documents were inconsistently organized/stored, making them difficult to navigate and not readily accessible when needed. Immediate actions were taken to improve accessibility.
- Conducting periodic (e.g., annual) self-assessments instead of audit-specific assessments saves time and improves audit readiness.
- Adopting digital tools such as cloud sharing facilitate easier management and tracking of audit processes.

2.12 Several good practices emerged from the audit process, including early transversal PQ reviews, routine internal coordination meetings, daily audit debriefings to clarify responsibilities, and pre-audit engagement session to establish constructive rapport with auditors. These practices contributed to improved coordination and overall audit effectiveness.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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ICAO USOAP CMA Audit 2025

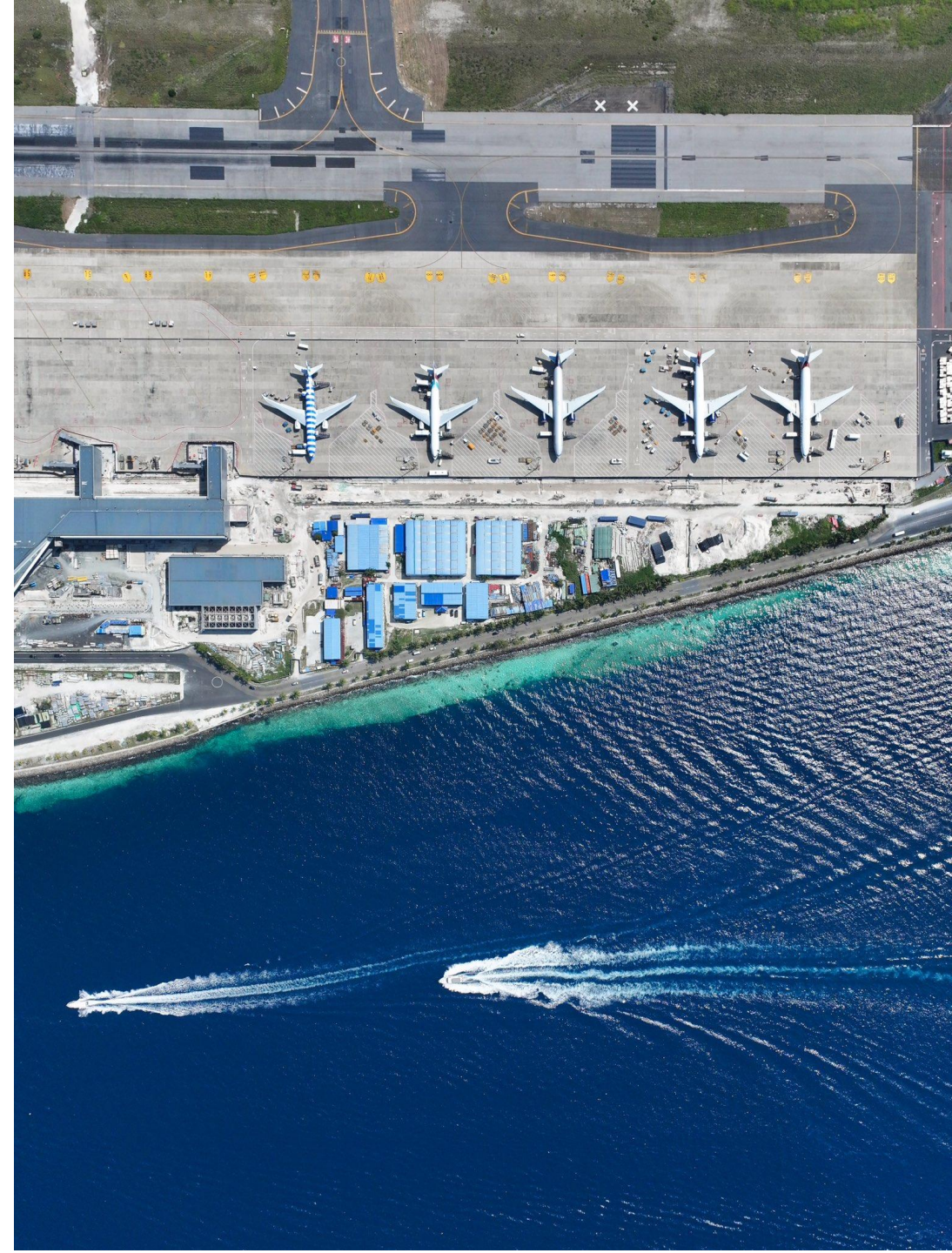
Maldives CAA Experience



Republic of Maldives

Airports in Maldives

Airports (Domestic)	15
Airports (International)	5
Under development	10+
Seaplane Platforms Platforms	100+



USOAP Audit History

The first ICAO Audit was conducted for the Maldives in 2010. Followed by ICVM in 2014.

Last ICAO CMA Audit was conducted on June 2025. In between multiple CAT missions were conducted to check on the Maldives progress.



USOAP Audit 2010

October 20, 2010

to

October 28, 2010

✓ Completed

ICAO Coordinated Validation

June 16, 2014

to

June 22, 2014

✓ Completed

CMA Audit 2025

June 11, 2025

to

June 23, 2025

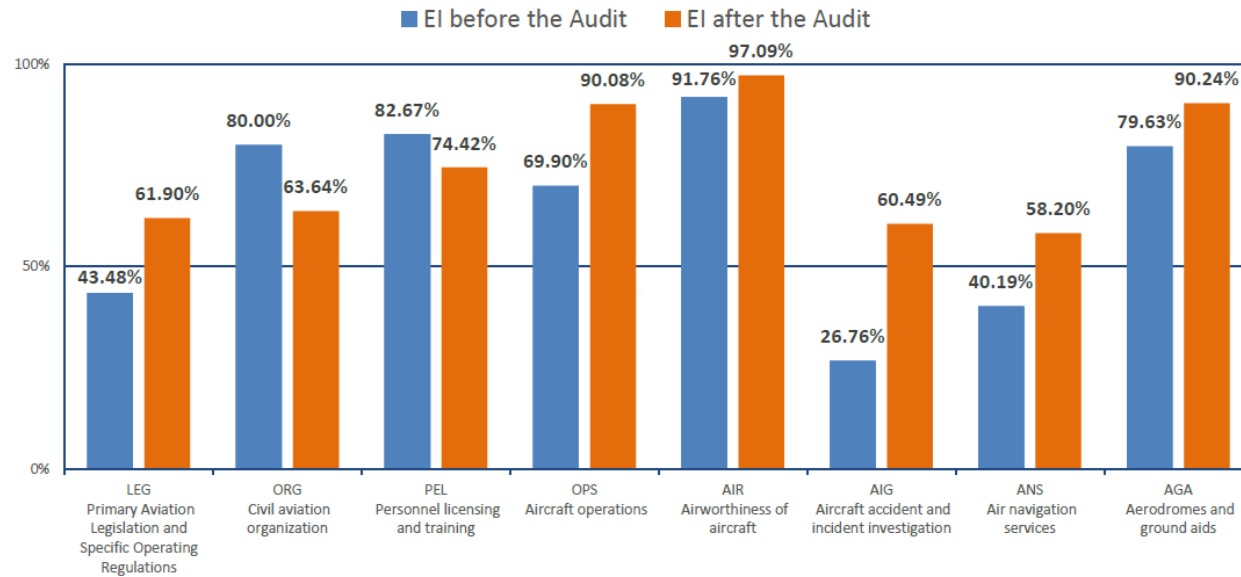
✓ Completed



2025 CMA Audit Results

790

Total PQs



Satisfactory PQs

524 out of 790 total



Not Satisfactory PQs

144 out of 790 total



Not Applicable PQs

122 out of 790 total

Overall (EI) After Before Audit

66.83%

+11%

Overall (EI) After 2025 Audit

78.44%



Audit Preparation

1 Planning & Preparation

- 12-month preparation period from the date of initial notification allowed comprehensive readiness.
- Designated counterparts for each area identified in advance to streamline responsibilities.
- Established centralized file sharing and communication system within CAA for all audit areas.
- Self-assessment process initiated.
- Gaps identified and roadmap developed, covering regulatory updates, staff training, document reviews, and recertification activities.

2 External Support & Collaboration

- Engaged ICAO Regional Office and COSCAP to conduct Assistance Missions.
- Collaborated with EASA to assist in USOAP audit preparation.

3 Audit Readiness

- Conducted comprehensive mock audits using real scenarios and actual ICAO PQs to test readiness.
- Prepared audit stations for all areas, including tables, computers, and display screens, to ensure smooth audit execution.
- Area counterparts trained on auditee ethics, including proper conduct, DOs, and DON'Ts during the audit.

4 Oversight & Management

- Regular top-management briefings (board level) on overall audit scores and progress ensured strategic oversight.



Lessons Learned



Early Gap Analysis and Evidence Upload

Conducting gap analysis and updating PQs with all evidence in the OLF early allowed time for auditor to review the evidence and understand the system prior to the on-site audit.



Routine Self-Assessments

Conducting routine self-assessments instead of audit-specific assessments saves time and improves audit readiness.



Mock Audits

Mock audits revealed documents were inconsistently organized and maintained, making them difficult to navigate and not readily accessible when needed.



Make best use of technology

Adopting digital tools such as cloud sharing facilitated easier management and tracking of audit processes.



Lessons Learned (contd.)



Comprehensive Evidence

- Provide evidence that covers each and individual points in PQs, not just what's specifically requested by the auditor.
- CE 2: Scrutiny on transposition of ICAO Annex 14 into national regulations. Can each ICAO requirement be clearly mapped to a national regulation?
- CE 6 & 7: Ensure you provide adequate evidence for every step of the certification and ongoing surveillance. Review whether checklists are fully completed, not just "ticked off".
- Have 2 to 3 examples readily available.

One bullet point "non-sat"



Entire PQ "non-sat"

CE-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws, treaties • Bilateral agreements on Article 83 bis of the Chicago Convention
CE-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations, directives • Procedures for the amendment of regulations; • Procedures for identifying and notifying differences, if any, to ICAO
CE-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents related to nomination, delegation, cooperation, etc. (MOU, letters, etc.); • Organizational charts; • Documents describing functions and responsibilities; • Sample of job descriptions; Sample of credentials; • Budget decisions • Documents on the process to determine staffing needs
CE-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document defining the minimum qualification and experience requirements • Training policy, programmes, training plans; • Completed OJT forms, Training records
CE-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuals, Handbooks • Procedures • Checklists
CE-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed check-lists used for licensing/ certification/ approval and/or authorization processes • Issued licences, certificates, approvals and/or authorizations; • Copies of exchange of letters with the industry
CE-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance policy; • surveillance programme and plans • Copies of inspection or audit reports and/or monitoring activities;
CE-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange letters with the industry regarding deficiencies and corrective actions • Enforcement procedures • Evidence of actual enforcement actions (imposed fines or restriction/limitations, suspended or revoked licences/certificates/ approvals/authorizations;

Good Practices Identified



Transversal PQs Reviews

Conducted CAA-wide common PQs reviews well before the audit to identify conflicts.

💡 Early identification of discrepancies



Regular Internal Meetings

Held working-level meetings to discuss audit audit preparation and share information information across teams.

💡 Improved coordination



Industry Collaboration

Regular meetings with industry to address compliance gaps and evidence preparation.

💡 Stakeholder engagement



Daily Debriefings

Conducted daily debriefings to decide WWWs (who when what) to be done.

💡 Clear action plan



Ice Breaker

Organized an ice-breaking session with auditors before the audit to foster rapport.

💡 Collaborative atmosphere



Key Outcome

These practices created a collaborative environment that facilitated audit readiness.

🏆 EI 90.24% (AGA)

Example: (Task Planning)

My plans > **AA USOAP - Aerodromes** Grid **Board** Schedule Charts Timeline Share

Filters Group by Labels

EASA Mission

+ Add task

Completed tasks 2

CAT Mission

+ Add task

CAT Mission

ANA (AGA) could not produce any evidence to suggest that environment authorities, military authorities, town planners, civic authorities are consulted or coordinated during the development of an aerodrome and its certification.

To do

ANA (AGA) could not produce any evidence to suggest that environment authorities, military authorities, town planners, civic authorities

1 / 1

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

CAT Mission

Demonstrate process being followed for determination of cases for filing differences.

To do

Put the respective files in latest ASC 139-5 a1

0 / 1

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CAT Mission

Hiring/Training/HR

+ Add task

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

Hiring/Training/HR **Reporting**

Coordinate with HR: develop a training plan

To do

8.053

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

Evidence Collection **Hiring/Training/HR**

From HR Collect the training files of each individual inspector including Induction, Theoretical, OJT trainings.

To do

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

Evidence Collection **Hiring/Training/HR**

Get recruitment records from HR for aerodrome inspectors. (personal files) (Advertisement, Recruitment records, evaluation forms, selection/notification)

To do

8.042

CAP Actions

+ Add task

airports and obstacle Information which penetrates the OLS will be updated and published in AIP.

To do

8.277

31/12

CAP Actions

Obstacle surveys will be conducted for the aerodromes to identify the penetrating obstacles

To do

8.277

30/09

CAP Actions

Review and update the OJT form to include the training activities performed (participation as an observer or performance of tasks under supervision and their outcome.)

To do

8.057

Reporting

+ Add task

Develop/ Revise SOP **Reporting**

Complete SOP610 (Stage 1 & 2).

To do

8.069
8.119

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Hiring/Training/HR **Reporting**

Coordinate with HR: develop a training plan

To do

8.053

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

Evidence Collection **Reporting**

Get the action plans for the issues identified in the LRST meetings. Get hazard identification and risk mitigation records

To do

8.204

HS Completed by Hassan Samaah o...

Example: (Checklist)

Audit Section Detail		
Audits	AGA-2024-07-038 - Aerodrome Audit Checklist (VRMM)	
Section	14. On-site Inspection - On-site Inspection	
Checklist Items For Section		
Item	Description and Reference	Result
11	Maintenance of pavements - Onsite check	
11.1	<p>Are standing water, mud, dust, sand, oil, rubber deposits, and other contaminants removed from runways in use as quickly and completely as possible to minimize accumulation?</p> <p>Reference(s): Reference(s): ASC 139-5, 10.3.1</p>	<p>Partially Compliant</p> <p>Comment: Inspection of runway 18/36 conducted and noticed rubber deposits on the runway. Refer to finding: AGA-2023-08-004</p>
11.2	<p>Are taxiways kept clear of standing water, mud, dust, sand, oil, rubber deposits, and other contaminants to the extent necessary for safe aircraft taxiing to and from an operational runway?</p> <p>Reference(s): Reference(s): ASC 139-5, 10.3.2</p>	<p>Compliant</p> <p>Comment: All TWYs are in a good condition clear from contaminants during the inspection. Regular maintenance of TWY C is being conducted.</p>
11.3	<p>Are aprons kept clear of standing water, mud, dust, sand, oil, rubber deposits, and other contaminants to the extent necessary to ensure safe aircraft manoeuvring, towing, or pushing?</p> <p>Reference(s): Reference(s): ASC 139-5, 10.3.3</p>	<p>Compliant</p> <p>Comment: Aprons are maintained in a satisfactory condition.</p>
11.4	<p>When simultaneous clearance of contaminants from all movement areas is not possible, is the priority order—after the runway(s) in use—established in consultation with affected parties such as the rescue and fire-fighting service?</p> <p>Reference(s): Reference(s): ASC 139-5, 10.3.4</p>	<p>Compliant</p>
11.5	<p>Are chemicals with harmful effects on aircraft or pavements, or those with toxic effects on the aerodrome environment, prohibited from use on the movement area?</p> <p>Reference(s): Reference(s): ASC 139-5, 10.3.6</p>	<p>Compliant</p> <p>Comment: Maintenance procedures were reviewed and there is no evidence of use of chemical with harmful effects.</p>

Industry Visit

RFF

- **Facility Inspection**

- Reviewed Task Resource Analysis (TRA).
- Auditor physically inspected the RFF station, including:
 - Equipment condition and readiness
 - Fire vehicle serviceability and condition

- **RFF Training facility and records**

- The auditor reviewed firefighter qualifications, recurrent training, on-the-job training records and emergency drill participation
- Pressure-fed fuel fire training facility and records.



Industry Visit

RFF

- **Crew reaction time-testing**
 - Time taken for the crew to react on the fire alarm and drive the vehicle out of the fire garage.
 - Use of proper protective gear and respiratory equipment.



- **Records must be easily retrievable and up-to-date**
- **Ensure routine drills and maintenance are documented**
- **prepare training records for each employee (Initial, Recurrent, and OJT) and ensure records are up-to-date**
- **Fire crews should be confident and audit-aware**

Industry Visit

- **Airfield Lighting System**

- Auditor reviewed airfield lighting system testing requirements, frequency and maintenance procedures.
- Checked records of inspections, fault reports, and rectifications.
- Interviewed staff responsible for testing and maintenance of AGL system.
- Verification of scheduled test frequency and results



Industry Visit

- Movement Area
 - Field inspection of the Taxiway C.



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-
-
-

Industry Visit

Key Reminders for Audit Readiness

Fast-Paced Environment – Be Prepared:

Expect the visit to move quickly. Ensure all teams are ready and responsive.

Evidence and Documentation – Make It Easy for the Auditor:

Organize and label all proof of compliance clearly. Quick access to evidence reflects well on the organization.

Industry Awareness – Ensure Everyone Is Informed:

All relevant staff, including from external stakeholders, must be aware of the audit and their roles.

Professional Demeanor – Stay Calm and Confident:

Demonstrate competence through a calm, composed, and confident approach during the audit process.



Thank You

