

**23<sup>rd</sup> COSCAP SOUTHEAST ASIA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (SCM/23)**

**(22-23 April 2026, Bali, Indonesia)**

**Discussion Paper 01 (DP/01)**

**Agenda Item 3: Updates from Member States**

(Presented by Singapore and Thailand, co-sponsored by  
European Union Aviation Safety Agency-EASA)

**SUMMARY**

This paper proposes enhancements to strengthen the effectiveness, responsiveness and resource utilisation of COSCAP-SEA in the next phase of the Programme (Phase VI), in order to support Member States in the effective implementation of ICAO SARPs.

The proposals focus on three areas:

- strengthening the implementation of a risk-based approach,
- enhancing inspector competency development, and
- improving resource utilisation and work programme effectiveness.

These enhancements build on existing provisions within the COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework and Programme Document and aim to improve their practical implementation. They are intended to reinforce COSCAP-SEA's role as a regional capability development mechanism aligned with ICAO global and regional safety priorities, while preserving its established governance principles.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Under the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Contracting States are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective safety oversight systems to ensure compliance with ICAO SARPs. ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) promotes a structured, risk-based approach to safety improvement, supported by Regional Aviation Safety Plans (RASPs) and National Aviation Safety Plans (NASPs).
- 1.2** COSCAP programmes were established to support these objectives through regional cooperation, pooling of resources, and provision of technical assistance and training. The COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework reflects these principles, including the objective of enhancing the safety



oversight capability of participating States and providing a cost-effective approach for obtaining technical assistance<sup>1</sup>.

- 1.3** As COSCAP-SEA transitions into Phase VI, evolving operational demands and increasing system complexity in the region highlight the need to strengthen the Programme's effectiveness, responsiveness and strategic alignment. In particular, current delivery remains largely activity-driven and does not systematically ensure alignment with evolving regional risks, Member State capability gaps, or measurable safety outcomes.

## 2 DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Strengthening the Risk-Based Approach for Implementation

- 2.1.1** ICAO's global safety priorities are implemented through regional coordination mechanisms, including the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia and Pacific (RASG-APAC), the Asia Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Team (APRAST), and associated international organisations and industry associations.
- 2.1.2** The COSCAP-SEA Phase V Programme Document positions the Programme within this broader framework, including alignment with GASP and the APAC Regional Aviation Safety Plan (RASP). It also emphasises a risk-based prioritisation of efforts to address immediate safety risks while managing longer-term capability development<sup>2</sup>. Efforts should include support to State Safety Programme (SSP) implementation and the sustainability and resilience of safety oversight systems.
- 2.1.3** As part of such a risk-based approach, the Programme Document also outlines that COSCAP has implemented mechanisms such as annual State assistance surveys and progress monitoring<sup>3</sup>. Building such an understanding of Member States' needs and unique risks is supplemented by COSCAP-SEA's support in areas such as preparation for USOAP CMA activities and development and implementation of corrective action plans, as provisioned in the Institutional Framework<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.1.4** In practice, COSCAP-SEA activities have largely been delivered through pre-planned annual work programmes and ad hoc activities. While these respond to Member State requests, they do not systematically ensure alignment with evolving risks, variations in State capability, or regional priorities, nor do they consistently target underlying capability gaps, including institutional constraints.

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<sup>1</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 1.2.2: *Ensuring a coordinated and cost-effective approach for obtaining technical assistance in the field of aviation safety oversight, accident/incident investigation and safety management, by minimizing duplication of efforts and allowing the sharing of available resources whenever possible.*

<sup>2</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 2.2 *A balanced, risk-based and result-oriented approach will be followed to prioritize, determine and implement the Programme activities.* COSCAP-SEA Programme Document Phase V pg iii: *Phase V will follow a balanced, risk-based and result-oriented approach to prioritize, determine and implement the COSCAP-SEA Programme activities.*

<sup>3</sup> COSCAP-SEA Programme Document Phase V: 1.10 *The Programme initiated/completed the numerous activities to improve the service delivery, at both organizational and technical levels. In particular, the Programme: -Conducted Annual States assistance needs surveys;*

<sup>4</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 1.2.6 *Assisting Programme Member States in the preparation for, and follow up on USOAP CMA activities, and provide guidance regarding the development and amendment/update of Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).*



2.1.5 Existing mechanisms – such as annual surveys<sup>3</sup> and USOAP-related support<sup>4</sup> – provide some useful insights into Member State needs. However, there is currently no structured methodology for comprehensive, system-wide assessment for the identification of underlying capability gaps in the region.

2.1.6 To further operationalise the risk-based principles already reflected in the Institutional Framework, the following enhancements are proposed:

i) Strengthened alignment with ICAO regional safety frameworks

COSCAP-SEA activities should be more systematically aligned with:

- GASP safety enhancement initiatives,
- APAC RASP priorities,
- Member States' NASPs and SSP implementation plans, and
- Outputs from RASG-APAC and APRAST.

Strengthening this alignment would support COSCAP-SEA's role as a regional implementation mechanism translating strategic priorities into targeted assistance.

In line with the Institutional Framework, COSCAP-SEA should coordinate with the ICAO APAC Regional Office to reduce duplication and improve efficiency, to support more effective collaboration with regional partners, ensuring relevance, and maximise regional safety impact<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to seek greater clarity on COSCAP-SEA's specific function and role in the ecosystem of ICAO's regional safety platforms, including the synergies with RASG-APAC and its subsidiary bodies of APRAST and APAC-AIG. Given that SEARAST (Southeast Asia Regional Aviation Safety Team) currently meets on a limited basis, has had constrained opportunities to fully deliver against its Terms of Reference, and considering restricted regional resources, it may be beneficial to focus efforts through the wider and more established APRAST platform to avoid duplication.

ii) Introduction of structured capability needs assessments

It is also proposed that COSCAP-SEA introduce structured capability needs assessment missions aligned with GASP, RASP and State NASPs.

Such assessments would provide a more comprehensive understanding of:

- inspector workforce capacity,
- competency levels,
- institutional and systemic constraints, and
- priority risk areas.

<sup>5</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 1.2.2 Ensuring a coordinated and cost-effective approach for obtaining technical assistance in the field of aviation safety oversight, accident/incident investigation and safety management, by minimizing duplication of efforts and allowing the sharing of available resources whenever possible & 3.2 It will maintain regular coordination with the ICAO APAC RO on the Programme work plan to reduce duplication and improve efficiency.

To ensure consistency, these assessments should be conducted using a defined methodology by appropriately trained and qualified personnel.

## 2.2 Enhancing Inspector Competency Development

2.2.1 Developing and sustaining a competent inspector workforce remains a key challenge in the region and is fundamental to effective safety oversight.

2.2.2 While the COSCAP-SEA framework recognises training as a core activity<sup>6</sup>, current delivery has often relied on ad-hoc workshops, seminars and short courses, which do not consistently support structured, competency-based development pathways.

2.2.3 The Programme Document also allows for the procurement of goods and services in support of COSCAP-SEA objectives, as well as in-kind contributions in the form of training courses, seminars or workshops including those developed by external partners. Operationally, however, COSCAP funds have been used to organise unofficial and ad-hoc events that do not count as formal training. These funds could be used to support participation in existing training courses, including those provided by the various training organisations in the APAC region, which also then reduces duplication and ineffective resource allocation. It is important to note that the provision in Programme Document Section 7.5 does not prohibit the use of programme funds to support participation in external training (i.e. ICAO-certified training courses that may already be running independently outside of COSCAP-SEA, or customised courses that Donors may develop upon request by COSCAP-SEA Member States).

*“7.5 Policy/Guidelines on evaluation in monetary terms of in-kind voluntary contributions provided by Programme Members and Donors for the purpose of their recognition*

*(a) Training Courses/Workshops*

*(i) Preparation time required by Donor staff. This will vary considerably depending on whether the course/workshop has been developed specifically for the Programme or has been adapted from previously developed material. The donor will provide the number of days (hours) spent on preparatory work and the cost of employees' time.*

*(ii) Air transportation cost may be calculated on the basis of actual expenses.*

*(iii) Per diem or DSA requirements (as per Donor rules).*

*(iv) Training material actual costs.*

*(v) Total of above cost.”*

*- from COSCAP-SEA Programme Document Phase V*

2.2.4 In this context, Phase VI should clarify and reinforce the use of COSCAP-SEA resources to support participation in existing training programmes, including ICAO-recognised or regionally established courses that form part of structured inspector qualification pathways.

2.2.5 Leveraging existing regional training capacity would:

- reduce duplication of effort,
- improve cost-effectiveness, and
- support more consistent, competency-based inspector development across Member States.

<sup>6</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 2.3 ii) *Services at request: Providing support to individual or groups of Programme Member State, as required and within available resources and the Programme timeframe, for: b) developing, amending and implementing training policies, programmes and plans related to the technical personnel (including inspectors and investigators) of Programme Member States*

## 2.3 Enhancing Resource Utilisation and Work Programme Effectiveness

2.3.1 The COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework emphasises cost-effective delivery of technical assistance. However, current delivery constraints, including rigid planning and limited use of external training, indicate a reduced effectiveness of resource utilisation, necessitating adjustments to current processes in the following areas:

iii) Strategic Allocation of Resources

While USOAP CMA and CAT missions are the primary responsibility of the ICAO APAC regional office, the Institutional Framework<sup>7</sup> and Programme Document<sup>8</sup> include USOAP-related support in the scope of COSCAP service and activities. Nevertheless, COSCAP-SEA is fundamentally intended as a capacity-building mechanism and should not be confined to merely support for USOAP CMA preparation, follow ups, and CAP development.

More effective SARP implementation in the region would be supported through a more risk-based allocation of COSCAP resources, alignment with GASP and RASP priorities, and sustainable capability development, particularly inspector training as mentioned in para 2.2 of this Working Paper.

iv) Flexibility of Work Programmes

The Institutional Framework states that annual work plans are prepared by the CTA and approved by the Steering Committee<sup>9</sup>, and that COSCAP-SEA may deliver services requested by a Member State with the approval of the Chairman of the Steering Committee<sup>10</sup>.

While the Institutional Framework allows for flexibility in practice, however, annual work programmes are often treated as fixed once approved, limiting the ability to respond to emerging or urgent needs of Member States. It is therefore proposed that Phase VI should introduce a more formalised mechanism for in-year adjustments to the work programme, based on CTA recommendation and appropriate approval, to better reflect evolving priorities.

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<sup>7</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 1.2.6 *Assisting Programme Member States in the preparation for, and follow up on USOAP CMA activities, and provide guidance regarding the development and amendment/update of Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).*

<sup>8</sup> COSCAP-SEA Programme Document Phase V: 1.3. *SP1-related activities will aim at supporting States in: - identifying, through a thorough self-assessment of the concerned USOAP CMA Protocol Questions (PQs), especially the "Priority PQs", situations that may result in an immediate safety risk to international civil aviation; - adopting the appropriate corrective/ mitigation actions to address the identified safety risk; - ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation actions implemented, and adjust those mitigation actions if needed; and - take actions to prevent re-occurrence or similar types of situations in the future.*

<sup>9</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 3.1 *The work of COSCAP-SEA shall be decided upon by the Steering Committee & 6.5 Annual work plans shall be prepared by the Chief Technical Advisor/Programme Coordinator (CTA/PC) based upon the decisions taken and priorities determined by the Steering Committee, taking into account the immediate needs of the Programme Member States and the available funds.*

<sup>10</sup> COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework: 2.3 ii) *Services at request: Providing support to individual or groups of Programme Member State, as required and within available resources and the Programme timeframe, for: e) other purposes falling within the scope of the objectives of COSCAP-SEA, following requests by a Programme Member State or group of Member States and as decided by the Chairman of the Steering Committee.*



v) Strategic utilisation of available financial resources

As noted in Financial and Contributions Report, a substantial surplus of nearly USD 2 million has accumulated in the COSCAP-SEA accounts. This represents over 5 years of normal annual contributions from all Member States. This is attributable to the CTA position vacancy between 1 May 2022 and 26 July 2023 (USD 272,493 savings), COVID-19 travel restrictions, continued member State contributions, and significant donor contributions.

Despite regional demand for capability building these excess funds are not currently available to be utilised for implementation support<sup>11</sup>. These funds should be made available for implementation support. This provides an opportunity for the Meeting to agree on how such resources should be used strategically to support:

- targeted capability development,
- priority regional initiatives, and
- enhanced implementation support aligned with identified needs.

**2.3.2** Phase VI should establish clear principles for the strategic use of these resources to support targeted capability development, priority regional initiatives, and measurable implementation outcomes.

### **3 CONCLUSION**

**3.1** The proposed enhancements build on existing provisions within the COSCAP-SEA Institutional Framework and Programme Document and focus on improving their practical implementation.

**3.2** COSCAP-SEA remains an important regional mechanism for supporting the effective implementation of ICAO SARPs and strengthening oversight capability. Strengthening risk-based planning, enhancing competency-based inspector development, reducing duplicative work, and improving flexibility and resource utilisation would enable COSCAP-SEA to better respond to evolving regional needs while remaining aligned with ICAO global and regional safety priorities.

**3.3 The Steering Committee is invited to:**

- a) discuss the adjustments needed to strengthen COSCAP-SEA's effectiveness and responsiveness
- b) agree on the need to enhance the implementation of risk-based, flexible and capability-focused approaches within COSCAP-SEA; and
- c) agree to the incorporation of the following elements into the Phase VI Programme:
  - i. alignment of COSCAP-SEA activities with GASP, APAC RASP and Member States' NASPs and SSPs;
  - ii. introduction of structured capability needs assessment methodologies;

<sup>11</sup> As informed by the COSCAP-SEA CTA during SEARAST/24



- iii. utilise COSCAP-SEA resources to support participation in existing regional structured inspector training programmes;
- iv. coordinate with ICAO APAC office on USOAP activities and redirect primary focus to strategic capability development and implementation support aligned with regional safety priorities;
- v. introduction of formalised mechanisms for in-year work programme adjustments; and
- vi. recommend the integration of SEARAST and its functions into the established APRAST framework, and
- vii. reallocate COSCAP-SEA's excess funds (~ 2 million USD) to capacity building

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