INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Second Meeting of the Africa - Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning and Implementation Group (AASPG/2)

Livingstone, Zambia, 2 - 6 November 2026

Agenda Item 5: Common implementation challenges

Title: Implementation Challenges of the AASPG

(Presented by Secretariat.)

SUMMARY
This working paper highlights key challenges affecting the implementation of AASPG programmes, projects, and decisions across the AFI region. It identifies common constraints related to capacity, funding, coordination, infrastructure development, and performance monitoring, and proposes measures to enhance implementation effectiveness. Action by the Meeting at **Paragraph 3.**
REFERENCE (S): • Doc 9750, Global Air Navigation Plan • Doc 10004, Global Aviation Safety Plan • Doc 7474, Air Navigation Plan — Africa-Indian Ocean Region • AASPG Procedural Handbook • AASPG/1 Report • AAO/SG, IIM/SG and SMO Meeting Reports

Strategic Goals	A. Every Flight is Safe and Secure B. Aviation delivers seamless Air mobility D. No Country Left Behind

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Africa-Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning Group (AASPG) plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of regional aviation objectives in the areas of safety, air navigation, aerodromes, and aviation infrastructure development.

1.2 The AASPG provides a platform for States, regional and international organizations, and industry stakeholders to coordinate efforts towards achieving regional and global aviation goals through its contributory bodies and implementation mechanisms.

1.3 Despite progress made in several areas, the implementation of AASPG programmes and initiatives continues to face limitations that affect the timely achievement of expected outcomes.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Safety related challenges

2.1.1 The AFI region comprises 48 States, two of which have not yet undergone a USOAP audit. To date, 77 USOAP CMA audits and 123 validation activities have been conducted in the region.

2.1.2 The average effective implementation (EI) score for the States is currently 61.75%, compared with the global average of 70.9%. Of these States, only 27.08% have achieved the 75% EI target set out in the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the AFI Regional Aviation Safety Plan (AFI-RASP). Two audit areas (LEG and AIR) and two critical elements (CE1 and CE2) are above the target of 75% EI.

2.1.3 The lowest-performing audit areas generally show improvements in EI since 2023, although OPS recorded a slight decline between 2025 and 2026 as follows:

- AIG increased from 44.03% in 2023 to 46.58% in 2025 and 48.39% in September 2026.
- ANS increased from 53.54% in 2023 to 57.61% in 2025 and 59.18% in September 2026.
- AGA increased from 47.60% in 2023 to 54.37% in 2025 and 55.22% in September 2026.
- OPS increased from 58.20% in 2023 to 63.12% in 2025, before declining slightly to 62.37% in September 2026.

2.1.4 Among the critical elements below the 75% EI target, CE-8 records the lowest score at 35.78%, followed by CE-7 at 50.07%, CE-6 at 60.56%, CE-4 at 61.01%, CE-5 at 66.44%, and CE-3 at 68.53%.

2.1.5 The AFI Region currently has 10,379 open USOAP protocol findings. In PEL, OPS and AGA, the largest number of findings relate to licensing, certification, authorization and approval obligations (CE-6), with 511, 722 and 1,004 findings, respectively. In ANS, surveillance obligations (CE-7) account for the largest number, with 1,003 findings. In AIG, the largest number relates to technical guidance, tools, and the provision of safety-critical information (CE-5), with 906 findings.

2.1.6 Some States have initiated certification processes for new air operators without sufficiently qualified personnel, adequate regulations, procedures and guidance, or effective coordination with the prospective operators.

2.1.7 States also continue to face challenges in conducting accident investigations and completing investigation reports due to the lack of independent accident investigation authorities with adequate funding, procedures, tools, and equipment and enough qualified investigators to fulfil their obligations under Annex 13.

2.1.8 Aerodrome certification in the AFI region faces several persistent challenges, largely stemming from infrastructural, institutional, and financial constraints. Many aerodromes operate with ageing or inadequate infrastructure that does not fully meet ICAO standards, making compliance difficult without substantial investment. Limited technical expertise and shortages of trained personnel within both civil aviation authorities and aerodrome operators due to poor succession planning, hinder effective implementation and oversight of certification requirements.

2.1.9 Many States are yet to effectively implement a risk-based surveillance system given the level of aviation activities prevailing and the limited resources they are facing.

2.1.10 There are 2 States with a total of 4 SSCs in the ANS domain, relating to the calibration of navigation aids and the validation of instrument flight procedures. Key challenges include shortages of qualified PANS-OPS inspectors and instrument flight procedure (IFP) design and inspection personnel; inadequate regulatory tools and oversight mechanisms; inspection checklists that are not fully aligned with regulatory requirements; delays in approving and promulgating national regulations that transpose ICAO Annexes 4 and 11; and difficulties in sustaining periodic navigation aid calibration.

2.1.11 The vision of the global aviation safety plan (GASP) is to achieve and maintain zero fatalities in commercial operations by 2030 and beyond. The region had no fatal accidents on scheduled commercial flights with aircraft over 5.7t in 2025. The accident rate stands at 3.88 accidents per million departures in 2025, reflecting a downward trend, while the five-year sliding average is 4.54. To align with the global accident rate and considering the traffic volume of the region, the yearly accident rate for the region should be between 0 and 2.68. At 3.88 accidents per million departures, the latest accident rate of the region is significantly higher than the global rate of 2.23 accidents per million departures.

2.1.12 In accordance with Goal 3 of the GASP 2026–2028 (Doc 10004), all States are required to assess the level of implementation of their SSP by 2026 (Target 3.1) to determine a baseline on SSP implementation, using the SSP self-assessment tool available on the USOAP CMA Online Framework (OLF); and by 2028, all States to establish an SSP (Target 3.2), including the establishment of a Safety Data Collection and Processing System (SDCPS) and a framework for the protection of safety data and safety information.

2.1.13 So far, only 23% of States have initiated the SSP self-assessment, and 15% have completed it. Overall, 77% of WACAF States and 87% of ESAF States have yet to complete the first step. This gap significantly undermines progress toward Target 3.2. Self-assessment is the essential foundation for the State's SSP implementation. States that do not complete it by the end of 2026 will be unable to demonstrate a credible pathway to SSP establishment by 2028, impeding the achievement of the regional target.

2.2 Air navigation-related challenges

2.2.1 The implementation rates of the Basic Building Blocks (BBBs) in the AFI region stand at 52.6% for AIM, 42.7% for AOP, 52% for ATM, 53.3% for CNS, 67% for MET, and 38% for SAR. MET records the highest implementation rate, while SAR has the lowest. The implementation of the Basic Building Blocks (BBBs) remains constrained by insufficient funding, weak prioritization of projects at the national level, insufficient training, and high turnover of technical personnel.

2.2.2 ASBU implementation, based on data submitted by States, remains low in all areas, with a regional average rate of 48% across the AFI region in 2025. This status and overall assessment of implementation is constrained by limited reporting and insufficient data from the States.

2.2.3 In air traffic management (ATM), the implementation of civil military cooperation/flexible use of airspace (FUA) remains low, with fixed special-use airspaces (danger, prohibited or restricted) still erected around major international airports. This situation hampers the optimization of departure and arrival of flight trajectories and affects safety, flight efficiency, and ATM performance.

2.2.4 Implementation of PBN departure and arrival trajectories with continuous flight vertical

profile at international airports remains low. Standard Instrument Departure (SID) with Continuous Climb Operations (CCO)-ASBU APTA B0/5 and the Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) with Continuous Descent Operations (CDO)-APTA B0/4 are both at 18.4% implementation in the AFI region.

2.2.5 In aeronautical information management (AIM), gaps persist in the provision of quality-assured aeronautical information, digital AIP data sets, and NOTAM improvements, while several other digital data set elements remain unimplemented.

2.2.6 In communications, navigation and surveillance (CNS), infrastructure funding and limited implementation of ATN/IPS data links remain challenges. Although ADS-B coverage is expanding, incomplete Mode S transponder equipage limits the full realization of its benefits.

2.2.7 In meteorological services (MET), further efforts are needed to improve the availability, quality and timely exchange of operational meteorological information, address infrastructure and service gaps, and strengthen regulatory alignment and quality management systems. Implementation of new information services and corrective actions also requires continued support.

2.2.8 In search and rescue (SAR), the main challenge is the signing of search and rescue agreement between States to ensure effective and timely cross-border SAR operations. The current SAR agreement signed in the AFI region stands at 15% in the AFI region.

2.2.9 Management of air navigation deficiencies requires clearer notifications, timely submission, and implementation of corrective action plans, and sustained follow-up.

2.3 Implementation Challenges of the AASPG

States

2.3.1 Disparities in technical capacity and institutional maturity among States affect the consistent implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and regional initiatives. National priorities and uneven States' experience in implementation also hinder progress towards common regional objectives.

2.3.2 Incomplete/outdated regulatory frameworks, limited institutional autonomy and weak safety oversight capacity delay airspace optimization, Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) implementation, aerodrome certification, and other safety and air navigation implementation related actions. Outdated CNS/ATM systems and inadequate aerodrome infrastructure constrain the implementation of modern airspace concepts and safe aerodrome operations.

2.3.3 Insufficient funding limits the ability of civil aviation authorities, accident investigation authorities, and service providers to fulfil their mandates. Competing national priorities and dependence on external funding to delay infrastructure upgrades, oversight activities and the implementation of corrective action plans.

2.3.4 Shortages of qualified personnel, limited training opportunities, and high staff turnover weaken technical capacity and institutional continuity. These gaps particularly affect airspace design, AIS/AIM services, instrument flight procedure design, validation and oversight, flight inspection of navigation aids, and aerodrome certification.

2.3.5 Coordination among States, service providers, aerodrome operators, airspace users and other stakeholders remains uneven. Differences in national priorities and implementation timelines, limited participation in regional activities, and insufficient consultation can delay

PBN and airspace projects, aerodrome initiatives and other work requiring joint action. Delays in sharing information and following up on agreed actions compound these difficulties.

2.3.6 Inconsistent safety data management practices and weaknesses in data collection, validation, and exchange limit States' ability to identify safety risks and provide reliable information for regional analysis.

2.3.7 Emerging priorities, including cybersecurity, digital transformation, climate resilience and the use of artificial intelligence in aviation, add to the demands on available funding and expertise.

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2.3.8 Challenges affecting performance and efficiency as well as timely achievement of AASPG objectives are as follows.

2.3.9 Translating the 16 restructured CNS, AIM, and MET projects into coordinated implementation outcomes remains a challenge. Following their launch in May 2026, Project Teams are reviewing project documents and developing implementation plans and roadmaps. Successful delivery will require sustained expert participation and effective coordination.

2.3.10 Effective coordination among the SMO/SG, AAO/SG, and IIM/SG remains essential. Gaps in coordination can hinder the identification of underlying causes, the provision of assistance, and the monitoring of corrective actions.

2.3.11 Follow-up on AASPG conclusions and decisions remains a challenge where timelines for progress reports are not clearly established.

2.3.12 Limited participation and availability of some Project Team members, together with internet connectivity constraints, hinder virtual meetings, continuity of technical exchanges, and timely completion of project activities.

2.3.13 Integrating emerging priorities into regional work programmes while maintaining progress on existing commitments requires careful prioritization and coordination of available resources.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) Take note of the information provided in this paper; and
b) Provide further guidance as appropriate.