



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 36: Aviation safety and air navigation implementation support

REGIONAL SAFETY PROGRAMME

(Presented by Costa Rica with support from the member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC)²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2010, the Agency on Aeronautical Safety for Central America (ACSA), as an agency of the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA), launched a voluntary assistance programme to help COCESNA member States with the implementation of their State safety programmes (SSPs). Recently, and as a result of the Port-of-Spain agreements, which are based on the GASP (Global Aviation Safety Plan), the previous programme was restructured and given a regional focus with the approval of the Governing Council of COCESNA, making the programme mandatory for the parties. This gave rise to the current project for assistance to States through a regional programme coordinated by ACSA/COCESNA. This working paper briefly explains the objective and scope of the Regional Safety Programme (RSP) for Central American States, as well as for other interested States or regions.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information in this working paper;
- b) help and support the Central American region with regard to the implementation of this project by participating in the project's activities, by contributing experts, training, and documentation, by sponsoring events, and by exchanging safety information, experience, and tools; and
- c) consider the Agency on Aeronautical Safety for Central America (ACSA) for the provision of assistance to other States and regions in the area of SSP implementation, including RSP development.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety Strategic Objective.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Additional resources are not required, since the project will be financed with local resources.

¹ Spanish version provided by Costa Rica

² Argentina, Aruba, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

<i>References:</i>	Annex 19 Doc 9859, <i>Safety Management Manual (SMM)</i> Doc 9734, <i>Safety Oversight Manual, Part B</i> Doc 10004, <i>2014-2016 Global Aviation Safety Plan</i> Central American RSP Manual (RSPM), Chapter 7
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 International civil aviation has been undergoing a significant transition for some years now. Many countries and cultures have found it difficult to understand the introduction of safety management systems (SMSs). An SMS includes novel concepts such as just culture, information sharing and protection, and safety performance. Such concepts have proven difficult to assimilate where there is a history of traditional rigid systems of civil aviation; in contrast, safety systems impart “flexibility” to safety management. Why this change? If we consider that safety is the state in which the possibility of harm to persons or of property damage is reduced to, and maintained at or below, an acceptable level through a continuing process of hazard identification and safety risk management, we can say that total elimination of accidents or serious incidents is, unfortunately, impossible, given that no human undertaking or man-made system can be free of risk or error. In light of this, ICAO has been evolving along with the industry; it has understood that it is more efficient to manage safety through a realistic implementation of the standards set than by trying to force strict compliance with all the rules. ACSA aims to help COCESNA member States, as well as other interested States and regions, understand and assimilate these changes and make an effective transition.

1.2 ICAO has required signatory States to implement State safety programmes (SSPs). As explained in section 1.1, to a certain extent, this has posed a significant challenge for the States and service providers having to do so; this is not so much because of the possible costs, but rather, because fundamentally this involves a change of culture, and such changes are always a challenge.

1.3 In the Central American region there has been little progress in SSP implementation. This is because the programme was initially voluntary and States approached it individually. It is also because the constant changes in leadership in the region’s States have prevented programme continuity and a regional focus. ACSA/COCESNA is familiar with the Central American context, aware of the need for change, and conscious of what is required for effective SSP implementation. In light of all the foregoing, and with the consent of the COCESNA Governing Council (see 2.2), ACSA/COCESNA has the responsibility to help and collaborate with States as much as it can, thereby assuming the leadership delegated by the States themselves to provide assistance with SSP implementation.

2. REGIONAL SAFETY PROGRAMME (RSP) DEVELOPMENT

2.1 In 2010, ACSA launched a voluntary Regional Implementation Plan for States; it was aimed at developing and implementing safety processes (SSP/SMS) throughout the region. The plan’s approach focused on States by means of SSP implementation, since SMS requirements, as part of the SSP, provide a structured framework which enables, on the part of both service providers and authorities, safety oversight and more effective reciprocal efforts to resolve safety problems.

2.1.1 As part of the Implementation Plan, in February 2010, there were seminar-workshops at which States conducted a gap analysis through which they were able to determine the maturity of their respective SSPs. Using this information, the participants developed draft implementation plans which were to be reviewed by the States' safety teams so that they could then be approved and so that ICAO could subsequently be informed of where and when the corresponding State safety programmes (SSPs) would be implemented.

2.1.2 During this first stage of the project, at the Fourth Meeting of North American, Central American, and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation (NACC/DCA/4), held in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, from 20 to 24 June 2011, there took place the presentation of a working paper which stated, "It is hoped that the States of the Central American region will soon begin this phase of implementation and thus, in collaboration with ACSA, achieve the implementation of their SSPs."

2.1.3 Unfortunately, these implementation plans were gradually forgotten because the programme was not mandatory and did not have an accountable coordinator, and also because of the constant change in leadership within States (see 1.1).

2.2 ACSA, as a Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO), in accordance with the powers vested by its establishing convention and through COCESNA Governing Council Resolution ROCD 191.12.2 of 28 and 29 August 2015 (which approves the "Safety Initiatives" project, which itself includes the Regional Safety Programme), has the obligation and mandate to help the States of Central America with the coordinated transition to SSP-environment implementation.

2.2.1 Since a State safety programme (SSP) is a system for the management of safety within a State, part of ACSA's plan is to establish a regional platform managed by ACSA to ensure that States fulfill their safety responsibilities and obligations from a regional perspective.

2.3 In accordance with Doc 9734, Part B (Safety Oversight Manual – The Establishment and Management of a Regional Safety Oversight Organization), chapter 7, and following the example of Europe, as well as using other information, such as documentation from CASSOS, Spain, and Argentina, ACSA-COCESNA aims to establish an official RSP with the objective of better helping COCESNA member States to implement their respective State safety programmes.

2.3.1 The Central American approach to safety management seeks to deal with the aviation system in its entirety, recognizing that the components of this system (its products, organizations, operators, crews, aerodromes, ATM, ANS, both on ground and in flight) are parts of a whole which works as a network. The use, therefore, of the critical elements of a safety oversight system becomes the way to keep the network safe.

2.3.2 ACSA has developed a regional safety programme manual (RSPM) based on the four components of the SSP. The manual aims to provide States with guidance on the development of their own manuals and the implementation of an SSP. It also establishes ACSA as a body which monitors and tracks States' activities, especially those related to SSP implementation. As well, the manual contains Appendix A, which deals with the acceptable level of safety performance (ALoSP) and the Central American strategy for helping to establish ALoSPs.

2.3.3 Beyond ensuring simple compliance with the requirements established by ICAO for States, and subsequently, compliance of service providers in respect of States, both service providers and States need to assess whether their services are being provided safely.

Central American Regional Safety Programme (RSP)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STRATEGY (<i>LEGISLATIVE ROLE</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COMITRAN (<i>Managed by the COCESNA Technical Committee</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROGRAMME (<i>EXECUTIVE ROLE</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COCESNA (<i>Governing Council composed of States</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PLAN (<i>MONITORING ROLE</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACSA (<i>Regional assistance and oversight plan</i>)

2.3.4 The programme strategy is worked out at a very high level (legislative role). It is established by the Council of Regional Ministers of Transport (COMITRAN) and comprises a set of policies and objectives aimed at establishing the programme and implementing SSPs. Safety targets must be set at this level.

2.3.5 The safety programme is an integrated set of regulations and activities the objective of which is to improve safety. It is managed by the States (executive role).

2.3.6 Lastly, there is the safety plan, which is a high-level assessment of the eight critical elements of safety and related action plans. The safety plan is a key element for States and for ACSA. It facilitates risk mitigation and monitoring, as well as the gathering, storage, and management of information. ACSA is expected to process the data in order to manage a solution for the risks found and help to establish indicators and regional safety targets.

3. MAJOR CHALLENGES

3.1 The major challenges involved in this process include those described below.

- a) Some States occupy the roles of “regulating entity” and “service provider,” as is the case for air traffic services and aerodromes. In accordance with the legislative framework of the countries in the region, directors general of civil aviation are empowered to play the role of the accountable executive (AE) of both the SSP and the SMS of the services they provide. This creates a conflict of interest. It is recommended that service providers have their own independent AE, who should have sufficient economic and decision-making powers to effectively carry out the duties associated with the position and render accounts.
- b) The proper functioning of the system involves three basic factors, which States must work out at the highest level:
 - 1) accountability;
 - 2) compliance policy, which establishes what is to be sanctioned and what is not; and

3) data protection.

- c) The gap analysis conducted in all the countries in the region to determine the maturity of their respective SSPs, together with the information collected through audits such as those of the USOAP, revealed that certain components need to be strengthened. Such components include policy and State safety objectives. Within States, a prompt and timely proposal for the amendment of the law is required. The law must provide for the protection of sources of information, establish the functions and responsibilities of the accountable executive, and establish amendments to compliance policy. Also revealed was the need for greater commitment on the part of key persons within States in order to ensure speedier and more effective implementation of the SSP.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 ACSA/COCESNA has a regional safety programme (RSP), based on which it will provide the Central American States with assistance in the establishment of their own RSPs and the SSP implementation process.

4.2 The Central American RSP has three main parts, which are as follows: a) the strategy or legislative role (policies and objectives for establishing the RSP and implementing the SSP) carried out by the COCESNA Technical Committee through the delegation of COMITRAN; b) the programme or executive role (set of regulations and activities to improve safety) carried out by the COCESNA Governing Council; and c) the plan or monitoring role (assessment of the eight critical elements of safety and action plans) carried out by ACSA.

4.3 The activities of the RSP must include the establishment of a regional platform, which is run by ACSA and which includes the participation of States, so that States can fulfill their safety obligations.

4.4 ACSA's regional safety programme manual (RSPM) will serve as guidance for the region's States as they develop their own manuals and implement their own SSPs. ACSA will provide support by monitoring and tracking the activities carried out by States until the SSPs are effectively implemented.

4.5 A notable achievement for the region is the creation of the Regional Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Group (RAAIIG), which is in charge of investigating accidents and incidents.

4.6 Another important advance is the COCESNA Governing Council's resumption of the development of community regulations. As part of this process, the Central American States, in conjunction with ACSA, have established a common regulatory framework which will provide a foundation and serve as a "protective umbrella" with regard to safety risks.

4.7 This regional programme is an excellent opportunity to strengthen cooperation among the Central American States and with other regions in the world.