



WORKING PAPER

**ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND PREVENTION (AIG)
DIVISIONAL MEETING (2008)**

Montréal, 13 to 18 October 2008

Agenda Item 6: Regional cooperation in accident and incident investigations

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN INVESTIGATIONS

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper discusses regional cooperation in accident and incident investigations by the establishment of regional accident investigation systems.

Action by the conference is in paragraph 3.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 For the investigation of major accidents in States which do not have the resources to carry out the investigation, other interested States (e.g. the State of Design and Manufacture) may assist and provide support to the State of Occurrence. However, many States also lack the capability to investigate accidents other than the major ones, and to investigate serious incidents. For many of those States, the establishment of a regional accident investigation organization, or the creation of a regional pool of qualified investigators might be the only options to enable the establishment of an effective accident and incident investigation and prevention system.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Convention on International Civil Aviation allocates responsibility for aviation safety to individual States. Each State bears responsibility for the continuing airworthiness of aircraft; safe and efficient aircraft operations; the licensing and/or certification of personnel; safe air traffic flow within its airspace, sufficient airport infrastructure; and adequate investigations of aircraft accidents and incidents. At the November 1997 Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation, ICAO highlighted the findings of its safety oversight assessments, which indicated that a significant number of Contracting States were experiencing problems in implementing Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), recruiting qualified personnel and, in general, fulfilling their safety oversight obligations. Since SARPs are designed to ensure, inter alia, a minimum level of safety for international civil aviation, the lack of implementation of SARPs threatens the safety of aircraft operations.

2.2 ICAO has long been aware of the difficulties experienced by some Contracting States in implementing SARPs and has tried to assist them accordingly. Safety oversight audits conducted under the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) have highlighted the extent of deficiencies encountered by those States in meeting their safety oversight obligations. In many cases, these deficiencies are the result of insufficient resource allocation to the national civil aviation body. Consequently, such States are unable to comply in full with national and international requirements concerning the safety of civil aircraft operations.

2.3 In the area of accident and incident investigations some findings include, inter alia, the following: lack of training system for investigators; lack of equipment to conduct investigations and lack of procedures, processes and guidelines for accident investigations. Audit findings and other sources of information convinced ICAO that it should further assist Contracting States in the development of regional safety oversight systems as well as provide them with related guidance material to deal with identified deficiencies.

2.4 In 2006, ICAO published the *Safety Oversight Manual* and Part B — *The Establishment and Management of a Regional Safety Oversight System* (Doc 9734-part B). The manual provides guidance on the establishment and management of a regional safety oversight organization (RSOO) and outlines the duties and responsibilities of ICAO Contracting States with respect to the establishment and management of a regional safety oversight system. It is addressed to high-level government decision makers, as it highlights States' obligations as signatories to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) and provides information and guidance on the establishment and management of an RSOO to assist Contracting States in fulfilling part or all of their safety oversight-related obligations.

2.5 In many areas of regional cooperation, States can produce economies of scale leading to increased efficiency due to the possibility of sharing and pooling of human and financial resources. Participating States will also increase their capacity to develop harmonized regulations adapted to their local environment and in compliance with SARPs. In the international arena, the existence and effective operation of regional organizations is a demonstration of regional solidarity and increases the involvement of individual States in aviation activities relating to the region or subregion.

2.6 As far as accident and incident investigation is concerned, the expansion, since 2005, of the USOAP audit programme to all safety related areas has made available to ICAO a number of findings and showed the extent of the difficulties encountered by most of the Contracting States. The findings are associated with the lack of appropriate legislation and regulations, lack of organization for the investigation of accidents and incidents, lack of training system for investigators, lack of equipment to conduct investigations and lack of policies, procedures and guidelines for accident and incident investigations.

2.7 Doc 9734–Part B does not specifically address regional aircraft accident and incident investigations. The manual provides guidance on how to establish and manage a regional system within a particular region or subregion, should they wish to fulfil their obligations through such a system. The effectiveness of a regional safety oversight system, like that of an individual State's safety system, depends highly on the effective implementation of the eight critical elements (of which only six are applicable for the areas covered by Annex 13). Consideration should be given to the need to ensure that the establishment of a regional system for the investigation of accidents and incidents does not affect the independence of the investigation process, which is not a matter covered in detail in Doc 9734–Part B.

3. **ACTION PROPOSED**

3.1 The meeting is invited to approve the recommendation in the Appendix regarding the establishment of regional accident and incident investigation systems.

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APPENDIX

RECOMMENDATION OF THE MEETING

The 2008 AIG Divisional Meeting recommends that ICAO develop guidance for States on how to establish and manage a regional accident and incident investigation system, to be made available to States in an appropriate AIG document.

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