



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Aviation Security — Policy

UNILATERAL IMPLEMENTATION OF OSS BY PANAMA – LESSONS LEARNED

(Presented by Panama, and co-sponsored by 15 LACAC Member States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper describes the experiences and challenges Panama has faced in implementing a programme to recognize the equivalence of aviation security measures—one stop security (OSS)—unilaterally with several States in the region. In Panama's view, ICAO's guidance and assistance is essential to ensure that implementation is harmonized and uniform, guaranteeing security levels that would facilitate the implementation of these arrangements, for the benefit of the traveling public. It is also important to recognize Panama's efforts to address the deficiencies identified by the USAP-CMA programme. Currently, with available technology and the growth rate of aviation, the implementation of innovative measures to guarantee the sustainability and security of the aviation system is increasingly necessary.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) promote the benefits for States of having One Stop Security at the regional level and support States in their regional implementation, in order to increase the sustainability of aviation security, facilitation, and improvement of the passenger experience through collaboration and the appropriate use of resources;
- b) request ICAO to develop additional guidance material and provide complementary technical assistance for the implementation of recognition of equivalence processes and One Stop Security arrangements, in order to ensure harmonization and minimum levels of compliance with a view to increasing the sustainability of aviation security, facilitation, and improvement of the passenger experience through collaboration and the appropriate use of resources; and
- c) support efforts to harmonize processes that facilitate the uniform regional implementation of security measures, benefiting the facilitation of air transport.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goals <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> and <i>Economic Development</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Potential savings for airline operators, airports, and passengers thanks to shorter connection times and easier air travel.

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by Panama

² Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay

<i>References:</i>	- Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation - Recommendations of the Second High-Level Conference on Aviation Security - Directives of the Tenth Meeting of the NAM/CAR and SAM ICAO/LACAC Regional Group on Aviation Security and Facilitation - The report of the Seventeenth Meeting of Civil Aviation Authorities of the South American Region (RAAC/17). - Document 8973 – Aviation Security Manual, 13th edition, 2022 - Declaration to Promote Connectivity Through the Development and Sustainment of Air Transport in the Pan American Region, presenting the vision for the years 2020-2035, September 2018 - Recommendation A22-10 of the XXII LACAC Assembly
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation – Aviation Security establishes the requirement for all transfer passengers of commercial air transport operations, their cabin baggage and their hold baggage are screened prior to boarding an aircraft (or being loaded in the case of hold baggage), unless it has established a validation process and continuously implements procedures, in collaboration with the other Contracting State where appropriate, to ensure that such (passengers, cabin and hold baggage) have been screened to an appropriate level at the point of origin and subsequently protected from unauthorized interference (or accepted for carriage in the case of hold baggage) from the point of screening at the originating airport to the departing aircraft at the transfer airport. (Standards 4.4.3 and 4.5.5).

1.2 Annex 17 also recommends that States consider the advisability of entering into collaborative arrangements in order to increase the sustainability of the aviation security system by avoiding unnecessary duplication of security controls. The arrangement should be based on verification of equivalence of the security outcome ensured by the application of effective security controls at origin (Recommendation 2.4.9).

1.3 The benefits of the Recognition of Equivalence of Security Measures – One Stop Security, or OSS, are widely recognized by the industry. The elimination of transfer controls could allow for better allocation of scarce security resources to higher-risk areas, improved information exchange between States, increased operational efficiency at airports, reduced minimum connection times for airlines, and increased passenger satisfaction with a smoother transfer process, all benefiting the sustainability and competitiveness of air transport.

1.4 Recognizing these benefits and seeking to encourage implementation, ICAO has promoted OSS over the years. For example, the Second High-Level Conference on Aviation Security (HLCAS/2), held in November 2018, concluded with a recommendation for States to *“to enter into collaborative arrangements and implement one-stop security arrangements in order to increase the sustainability of the aviation security system, by avoiding unnecessary duplication of security controls...3”*

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 Due to its privileged geographical position, Panama has served the international community by connecting destinations that would otherwise have been very complex or unprofitable. Thousands of passengers in the region, approximately 70% of the more than 19 million passengers (by 2024), take

³ <https://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLCAS2/Pages/Report.aspx>

advantage of the connectivity offered by Panama through Tocumen International Airport, one of the main aviation hubs in the region.

2.2 According to a study by Oxford Economics for IATA⁴, aviation in Panama contributes 8.2% to the GDP, resulting in the generation of 194,000 jobs (directly and indirectly in related activities such as tourism, etc.), in a country of 4 million inhabitants (almost 5%).

2.3 Panama is currently in the process of implementing the Recognition of Equivalence of Security Measures unilaterally. That is, Panama unilaterally recognizes the processes of other States and, based on this arrangement, implements a One Stop Security, exempting passengers from validated origins from a secondary inspection at Tocumen International Airport.

2.4 Recently, during the review of the programme's implementation, a concern arose regarding the model adopted in Panama, since the need was identified to ensure that the effort carried out was not a one-off effort but, on the contrary, could be sustained over time with the objective of ensuring that passengers and their carry-on baggage were properly inspected at the point of origin and then protected against unauthorized interference to strengthen the Panama programme.

2.5 As a strategy to mitigate the identified concerns, several actions were implemented, allowing the programme to gain significant momentum. With the assistance of the ICAO South American Regional Office and other specialists, the processes and their implementation were reviewed.

2.6 Among the restructuring actions, the following can be listed:

- a) Teams were increased to improve critical analysis of evaluations and strengthen the validation process;
- b) The OSS Office was moved from the Aviation Security Directorate to a new office directly attached to the General Directorate;
- c) 100% inspections of passengers, hold baggage, and carry-on baggage from non-validated origins were implemented, in conjunction with the Tocumen Airport operator;
- d) Coordination with the Tocumen Airport operator was improved to increase security screening capacity and utilize contingency structures;
- e) A course for ICAO national AVSEC inspectors was coordinated in Panama;
- f) Manuals, procedures, and checklists were updated to align them with ICAO documentation and improve their level of detail;
- g) An international Aviation Security specialist was hired to support the CAA team in the proper execution of processes, making improvements, and supporting the prioritization analysis;

2.7 In addition, Panama has prepared a template memorandum of understanding (MoU) based on the one contained in Document 8973 in Appendix 28 but adjusted for unilateral recognition. As a suggested action for this working paper, Panama requests that the States to which it has conducted missions consider signing the proposed MoU in alignment with AN17 Recommendation 2.4.9, seeking to strengthen and improve the equivalence recognition process with greater clarity and transparency regarding the actions to be taken by the parties.

2.8 Panama is also in the process of reviewing Brazil's⁵ proposal (WP17), presented at the recent ICAO AVSECP/35 meeting, for a uniform checklist based on USAP protocol questions. This would greatly facilitate the implementation of processes at the regional level, ensuring harmonization and strengthening

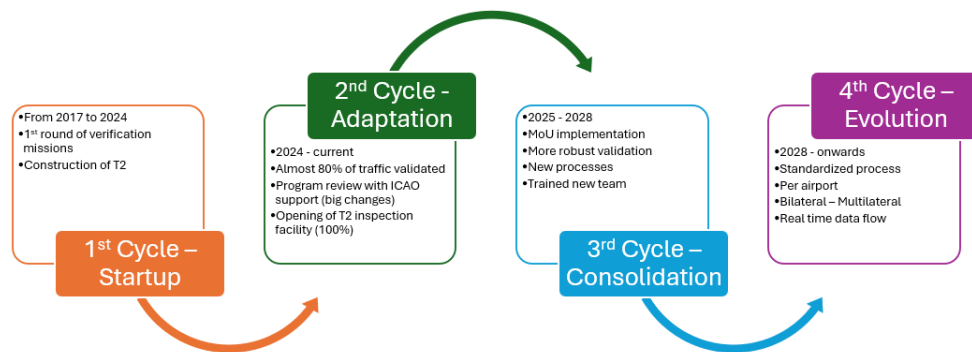
⁴ <https://www.iata.org/en/publications/economics/reports/value-of-air-transport-country-reports/>

⁵ Working Paper 17 of the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Aviation Security Expert Group (AVSECP/35), submitted by Brazil.

the system. It also includes other recommendations, such as the one presented at the recent AVSEC/FAL/RG/12 (WP05) meeting, for a continuous notification document.

2.9 In the next programme cycle (Cycle 3), the programme is expected to achieve a level of consolidation that will allow for process improvements.

Program Cycles



2.10 At the recent meeting of the regional group AVSEC/FAL/RG/13, Panama presented this working paper, gaining the support of several States present at the meeting. A detailed account of the discussions can be found in the meeting report.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Based on Panama's experience implementing this concept, it can be concluded that it is important to involve not only ICAO but also Member State specialists to define, in a harmonized manner, mechanisms that allow for the benefits of these implementations at an appropriate cost.

3.2 Although States have different security processes based on their different realities and threat/risk levels, it is important that the implementation of an OSS consider these differences and propose innovative measures to mitigate them. In the next cycle of the programme, work is being done to apply the lessons learned from the first cycle.

3.3 Despite the implementation challenges, the benefits of the concept are undeniable, and the business case demonstrates benefits, including shorter connection times between flights and operational and efficiency advantages for airports and airlines, including lower costs in inspection processes and greater connectivity in the region.

3.4 With the increasing implementation of risk-based processes, new predictive technology, and greater use of data and communication tools, cooperation between countries is essential to strengthen these processes for the benefit of the traveling public.