



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 14: Audit Programmes – Continuous Monitoring Approach

ADOPTING A COMPLIANCE MONITORING APPROACH IN PREPARING FOR ICAO AUDITS

(Presented by Jordan on behalf of Member States² of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) has positively contributed to enhancing Member States compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), provided for in the Chicago *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (Doc 7300) and its Annexes. ICAO USOAP is conducted on diverse entities that perform oversight functions at the national level, including dedicated aviation accident investigation agencies. Based on recent updates to Protocol Questions (PQs), audits were expanded to include State safety programmes (SSPs). Member States are therefore faced with a real challenge, namely the need to adopt preparatory methods aimed at ensuring sustained readiness, as well as the highest possible level of compliance with the requirements and standards outlined in the Chicago Convention and its Annexes.

This paper proposes the establishment of an administrative entity under the name of (compliance monitoring) within a State's organizational structure. The proposed entity would be tasked with Safety oversight system internal or national auditing, planning, coordinating and preparing for external audits, in addition to the periodic document review and internal performance evaluation. The paper also proposes adding a new job description under the safety oversight system; aviation safety auditor, to the job description cards of safety oversight personnel mandated with civil aviation safety oversight.

In addition, the paper draws a comparison between the conventional approach of forming ad-hoc teams to prepare for an ICAO audit, where work typically starts shortly prior to the audit, and the proposed harmonized and systematic approach of compliance monitoring approach that necessitates establishing a permanent unit to ensure continuous readiness.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request ICAO to establish, through relevant committees and working groups, harmonized criteria for creating national compliance monitoring entities to be permanently tasked with reviewing, planning, coordinating and preparing for ICAO audits, in addition to periodic review of documents and internal performance evaluation, as a step designed to streamline sustainability of the Continuous

¹ Arabic version provided by Jordan.

² Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Monitoring Approach (CMA); b) invite ICAO to develop guidelines that governs the mandates of national safety coordinators, according to Critical Elements (CEs), similar to the governance used to certify and appoint other safety oversight personnel (investigators and inspectors); c) urge States to take necessary measures so as to establish compliance monitoring entities, in view of the commendable results achieved in terms of continuously meeting international requirements and standards, in line with Member States's commitments established by the Chicago Convention and its Annexes.	
<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Goal <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Doc 9734, <i>Safety Oversight Manual</i> Doc 9735, <i>Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, Continuous Monitoring Manual</i> Doc 9859, <i>Safety Management Manual</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 External audits carried out by ICAO constitute one of the main tools used to assess Member States compliance with the requirements provided for in the *Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation* (Doc 7300) and its Annexes. In recent years, the process has undergone important updates, most notably the inclusion of State safety programmes (SSPs) in audits, along with other civil aviation safety technical fields.

1.2 Consequently, States are faced with a real challenge, i.e. enhancing institutional readiness at the national level and maintaining sustained readiness to meet ICAO's requirements, away from temporary measures that rely on *ad hoc* teams that are formed only prior to audit dates. Added to that are the legal and procedural challenges that accompany the preparation for external audits when multiple national agencies are mandated with civil aviation safety oversight, as well as the lack of relevant best practices.

1.3 In this context, this paper proposes the establishment of a dedicated organizational unit to monitor continuous compliance. The proposed Entity should include an aviation safety auditor, a specialized technical post, in an endeavor to institutionalize continuous follow-up, review, and coordination activities with all civil aviation safety oversight stakeholders, including the State safety programme (SSP).

1.4 The paper also calls for harmonizing the proposed approach at the international level through ICAO, and disseminating best practices that have proven effective in the ongoing preparation for external audits and achieving the highest possible levels of compliance with International Standards, thus contributing more effectively and efficiently to achieving the objectives set out in the global aviation safety plan, most importantly enhancing the level of effective implementation (EI) of safety requirements at the international level.

2. COMPLIANCE OVERSIGHT: AN ORGANIZATIONAL PROPOSAL

2.1 The paper proposes the establishment of dedicated and permanent organizational entity within the organizational structure of aviation safety oversight system, that an potentially be named compliance monitoring (CME), to be tasked with:

- a) thoroughly preparing for ICAO audits, including through coordination with all concerned stakeholders;
- b) conducting internal audits on all national civil aviation safety oversight system concerned agencies, in accordance with ICAO USOAP-CMA in order to monitor levels of compliance across institutions, organizational units and technical programs;
- c) reviewing and updating manuals and documents in accordance with ICAO PQs and updates;
- d) managing correspondence with ICAO regarding audit requirements and action plans;
- e) consolidating reports and responses in a more coordinated and harmonized manner that reflects the State level of readiness; and
- f) acting as national CMA Coordinators, including handling tasks such as data collection and self-assessment.

2.2 An aviation safety auditor would be assigned to the proposed unit, as a core function, with a job description, professional requirements, training and occupancy qualifications set out in line with *Safety Oversight Manual* (Doc 9734) and *Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Manual* (Doc 9735), and in conformity with the qualifications and training of inspectors in civil aviation safety oversight system related entities.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING AN AVIATION SAFETY AUDITOR POST

3.1 Adding a position of *Aviation Safety Auditor* to the organizational structure realizes several benefits, such as:

- a) ensuring sustained compliance monitoring processes at the institutional level, rather than having to rely on temporary solutions;
- b) enhancing the quality of audit preparation by employing qualified and dedicated staff;
- c) accelerating response to ICAO updates and keeping up with newly introduced requirements;
- d) boosting the level of integration and coordination among aviation safety authorities; and
- e) enhancing a State's readiness to provide consolidated up-to-date reports.

4. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CONVENTIONAL APPROACH AND THE COMPLIANCE MONITORING APPROACH

4.1 In comparing the conventional approach to the compliance Monitoring approach, pre-audit preparatory practices which may affect the effectiveness and quality of audits can be evaluated based on several key aspects. The table below lists the main characteristics of both approaches, which offer a useful basis for a revealing comparison:

Aspect	Orthodox Approach	Compliance Oversight Approach (as an organizational Unit)
Organizational Structure	Forms ad-hoc committees during the audit period or immediately prior to it	Establishes a specialized Unit with an ongoing task of ensuring sustained readiness (the Unit may be part of the organizational structure of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or independent of it, in addition to the possibility of mandating already existing institutional internal auditing units in aviation authorities, as a national requirement, to carry out compliance monitoring tasks)
Data and Evidence Management	Limited in scope and restricted to the audit period or the period immediately leading up to the audit, which in turn impairs the quality and level of coordination required during the audit	Promotes regular data collection and updating, ensuring that all evidence and documentation is always ready for review at any given point during the audit
Stakeholder Coordination	Limited due to the formation of a team shortly before the audit	Effective integration among all civil aviation safety stakeholders
Response to updates	Slow or disorganized, updates are usually addressed shortly before an audit	Guides and documents are continuously updated in response to new changes by ICAO
Leveraging expertise (knowledge transfer/knowledge incubation)	Difficult to dedicate expertise to regional or international consultations and support missions due to the workload of civil aviation safety inspection and oversight functions	States can benefit from experience and knowledge sharing with states that have adopted the proposed approach, consequently improving readiness and facilitating preparation for external audits
Consolidation of evidence and reports	Gathering evidence and answering PQs are often handled individually by stakeholders, which can lead to inconsistency in report responses and lack of harmonization in content or wording	Answers and reports are drafted in a standardized and harmonized manner, making them easier to understand and evaluate by ICAO

4.2 In light of the above-mentioned criteria, it can be concluded that the compliance monitoring approach is superior in many aspects to the conventional approach, including continuous coordination, periodic updating of manuals and documents, and sustained readiness. The compliance monitoring approach ensures a faster and more effective response to ICAO new requirements, as well as enhanced integration among safety stakeholders. By adopting the compliance monitoring approach, States can ensure ongoing compliance with all international civil aviation safety SARPs, which in turn contributes to improving the results of external audits.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Assembly is invited to endorse the actions set out in the Executive Summary above.

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