



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACC/DCA/14 — WP/14
13/05/26

**Fourteenth Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean
Directors of Civil Aviation (NACC/DCA/14)**
St. George's, Antigua and Barbuda, 1 to 5 June 2026

Agenda Item 4: Collaborative Approaches to Safety

ADVANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION UNDER THE ICAO REGIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper presents the ICAO Regional Cooperation Framework, a global framework through which ICAO supports States and regional organizations worldwide in strengthening aviation safety oversight and aircraft accident and incident investigation through regional cooperation mechanisms such as Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs) and describes how this framework is being applied in the North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Region.

Action:	Suggested actions are presented in Section 4.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every Flight is Safe and Secure• No Country Left Behind
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICAO Assembly Resolution A42-10• <i>Safety Oversight Manual, Part B- the Establishment and Management of a Regional Safety Oversight Organization</i> (Doc 9734 B) ICAO/EASA 3rd RSOO and RAIO Global Forum for Aviation Safety

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Many States, particularly those with small administrations and limited resources, face persistent structural challenges in fully discharging their State safety oversight obligations under the Chicago Convention. These challenges include shortages of qualified technical and management personnel, constrained financial resources, fragmented oversight arrangements, and limited scalability of national systems.

1.2 The ICAO Assembly, through Resolution A42-10, has reaffirmed the critical importance of RSOOs, RAIOs, and Investigative Cooperative Mechanisms (ICMs), and has called upon States to actively support and effectively utilize these organizations as instruments for strengthening national and regional aviation safety and accident investigation systems. Specifically, regional cooperation mechanisms can help States to pool resources, strengthen technical capacity, harmonize regulatory approaches, and achieve economies of scale, while fully retaining responsibility and accountability for oversight and investigations.

1.3 ICAO plays a central role in advancing and supporting regional cooperation through a coherent framework that translates global policy into coordinated, practical, and scalable solutions at the regional and global levels. As described in this paper, the ICAO Regional Cooperation Framework establishes a clear strategic direction for regional cooperation aligned with Assembly priorities, while enabling States and regional organizations to assess their capabilities and performance in a consistent and objective manner.

1.4 The Framework further promotes the development of harmonized approaches, tools, and governance models across regions and supports the translation of identified gaps into targeted and coordinated improvements. Through this integrated approach, the Framework creates a continuous cycle linking policy, assessment, and targeted strategic support, thereby strengthening the effectiveness, credibility, and sustainability of regional cooperation mechanisms and enabling measurable improvements in States' safety oversight and accident investigation capabilities.

2. ICAO'S REGIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

2.1 ICAO's activities in regional cooperation are consolidated under the ICAO Regional Cooperation Framework, which aims to promote integrated, performance-based approaches and deliver measurable results through regional cooperation mechanisms.

2.2 Under this Framework, ICAO aligns and coordinates a portfolio of programmes and activities to support States and enhance their effective engagement with regional cooperation mechanisms. This includes:

- cooperation and targeted strategic support;
- RSOO/RAIO Assessment Programme (RRAP) assessments and monitoring; and
- harmonized guidance and tools.

2.3 Collectively, these efforts are designed to reinforce the effectiveness and sustainability of regional mechanisms and to measurably strengthen States' aviation safety oversight and accident investigation capabilities.

Cooperation and Targeted Strategic Support

2.3.1 ICAO advances effective regional cooperation by actively promoting and supporting RSOOs, RAIOS, and ICMS. To this end, ICAO has established the RSOO and RAIO Cooperative Platforms as structured, high-level mechanisms to facilitate coordination, information exchange, peer-to-peer support, and collective problem-solving among regional organizations.

2.3.2 Building on these efforts to promote coordination and cooperation, ICAO is organizing the ICAO/EASA 3rd Global RSOO/RAIO Forum for Aviation Safety which will be held in Georgetown, Guyana from 29 to 30 September 2026. The Forum will focus on advancing practical solutions to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and operational integration of RSOOs and RAIOS, including governance, delegation, capability development, and resource optimization. It will also support the transition from policy commitment to actionable, coordinated implementation at the regional level, including in the NACC Region.

2.3.3 Additionally, ICAO actively engages industry, donors, international organizations, and financial institutions to mobilize technical expertise and financing, strengthen programme sustainability, and avoid fragmentation and duplication of assistance efforts.

2.3.4 Through these coordination and cooperation mechanisms—ranging from structured regional platforms to multi-stakeholder engagement with industry and donors—ICAO establishes the conditions necessary for sustained, trust-based collaboration at the regional level. This cooperative foundation creates a shared operating environment in which regional capabilities can be understood, aligned, and strengthened in a systematic manner.

2.3.5 Building on this foundation, ICAO is implementing the RRAP as a standardized means of assessing the capability and qualification of regional organizations. By providing a common, objective basis for assessment, the RRAP supports effective delegation, strengthens confidence among States, and informs the prioritization of targeted strategic support.

2.3.6 In the NACC Region, ICAO is providing targeted strategic support to the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) and the Central American Agency for Aeronautical Safety (ACSA) to strengthen regional cooperation arrangements and enhance both safety and aviation security oversight capabilities. This support includes guidance to improve organizational and governance arrangements, legal and regulatory harmonization, capacity-building initiatives, and preparatory activities linked to participation in ICAO programmes. In parallel, ICAO is providing guidance to strengthen regional approaches to accident and incident investigation, including through cooperation with the Regional Aviation Accidents and incidents Investigation Group (GRIAA), and is exploring opportunities to support similar cooperative arrangements in the Caribbean. The RRAP may serve as a valuable means to inform, prioritize, and align this support, ensuring that assistance is delivered in a consistent manner and aligned with ICAO Standards and guidance.

RRAP Assessments and Monitoring

2.3.7 As directed by the ICAO Assembly, ICAO is transitioning from the former Global Aviation Safety Oversight System (GASOS) to the RRAP. The RRAP is a programme to objectively assess RSOOs' and RAIOS' compliance with applicable ICAO requirements related to tasks and functions they are providing to their Member States. It thereby identifies areas for improvement and enables targeted actions to enhance their effectiveness in supporting Member States.

2.3.8 The revised RRAP will serve as a quality assurance mechanism for States, providing assurance and confidence that the RSOOs and RAIOS to which tasks and functions are delegated, are competent, capable, and operating in accordance with ICAO Standards and guidance. The RRAP is evolving to strengthen synergies with, and complement, the USOAP Programme.

Harmonized Guidance and Tools

2.3.9 ICAO is continuously developing and updating guidance material to support the establishment, management, and sustainability of regional cooperation mechanisms. Updated guidance, including revisions to the *Safety Oversight Manual, Part B- the Establishment and Management of a Regional Safety Oversight Organization* (Doc 9734 B), will equip these organizations to enhance efficiency, optimize resources, and help States meet regulatory and oversight responsibilities.

2.3.10 As part of this effort, ICAO is developing a governance framework for delegation to guide States in delegating tasks and functions to RSOOs and RAIOS in a structured and accountable manner. To support the implementation of this framework, ICAO has established the *Workshop on Effective Delegation and Regional Cooperation*, which clarifies the distinction between State responsibility and delegated tasks and functions, explains the different levels of delegation that may be applied, and addresses the legal and institutional prerequisites for delegation. The workshop further reinforces the need for effective State oversight and accountability for all delegated tasks and functions.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 RSOOs and RAIOS play a key role in supporting their Member States by pooling expertise and resources and promoting the harmonized delivery of safety oversight and accident and incident investigation functions. To support States and regional organizations in fulfilling this role, ICAO is developing the Regional Cooperation Framework as a structured and integrated approach encompassing coordinated and reinforcing components, including cooperation and targeted strategic support, RRAP and monitoring, and harmonized guidance and tools aimed at strengthening these capabilities at the regional level.

3.2 Continued leadership and engagement by Directors General of Civil Aviation are essential to ensuring the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of regional cooperation mechanisms.

4. SUGGESTED ACTIONS

4.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) *provide* sustained political commitment to actively participate in and *utilize* regional cooperation mechanisms;
- b) *establish* and *maintain* robust legal frameworks and formal delegation arrangements that enable effective, accountable, and scalable regional cooperation; and
- c) *promote* and *support* the active participation of regional organizations in ICAO programmes, including the RRAP, as a means to strengthen transparency, capability, and mutual confidence, while providing States with assurance that delegated functions are performed effectively and in accordance with ICAO Standards and guidance.

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