COCESNA

P/01 Agenda Item 4

Harmonization of Civil Aviation Regulations in Central America

TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED

- Historical evolution and background of regulatory harmonization in Central America
- Concept, design, and objectives of the ARAC System
- General and key elements of the ARAC System
- Process for the development, approval, and adoption of regulations and associated documents
- Fundamental documents and commitments of the ARAC System stakeholders
- Benefits, implementation, and training within the ARAC System
- Deployment, development, and future evolution of the ARAC System

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND BACKGROUND OF REGULATORY HARMONIZATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

KEY MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN REGIONAL REGULATORY HARMONIZATION

Initial Situation in 1999

In 1999, all Central American States were under FAA IASA Category 3, restricting air operations in EEUU.

Establishment of ACSA in 2000

ACSA was established to assist COCESNA Member States in meeting international obligations, albeit with limited harmonization.

Progress in IASA Certification

Costa Rica and El Salvador achieved IASA Category 1 status, enhancing regional aviation safety.

Establishment of the Regional System in 2004

The original RAC 11 was approved, establishing a regional regulatory system with some national variants.

RESOLUTIONS, REGULATORY ADVANCEMENTS, AND RECENT REASSESSMENTS

2009 Resolutions

In 2009, the Board of Directors issued resolutions aligned with the expectations of the time and Stage 4.

2018 Approvals

In 2018, COMITRAN approved multiple MRAC and regulations previously endorsed by the Board of Directors.

Reassessments for 2028

By 2026, a reassessment of the MRACs is planned to adapt the regulations to emerging requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL REGULATIONS: STAGES AND ACTIVITIES

CAA Regulatory Systems	Objective	Regulatory Activities	Implementation Activities	Regional Joint Activities	Monitoring Activities
Stage 1	Different	ICAO Compliance	National regulation in compliance with ICAO	ACSA supports local certifications and provides technical personnel.	ACSA, through State audits, action plan implementation, local assessments, and provision of technical personnel, assists Member States in compliance with ICAO standards. Regulations and procedures in force in some States are used as reference for the needs of the others.
Stage 2	Equivalent	Harmonization	National regulation (ICAO) to MRAC	ACSA supports local certifications and provides technical personnel.	ACSA assists Member States in the transition to MRAC and RAC System standards.
Stage 3	Identical (RAC System)	Mutual Recognition	MRAC (Approved by COMITRAN)	Standardization (Joint technical assessments)	ACSA assists Member States in the implementation of MRAC and RAC System standards.
Stage 4	Identical (RAC System)	Regional certification as needed			SARPs Compliance

Current Status

REACTIVATION OF THE MRAC SYSTEM BASED ON AND IMPROVING THE EXISTING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION (RAC 11 AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS).

DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL ROADMAP FOR THE RE-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HARMONIZED REGULATORY PROCESS.

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE EXISTING REGULATORY MODEL AND IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS AND IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

CONCEPT, DESIGN, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ARAC SYSTEM

NEED FOR A FLEXIBLE AND STRUCTURED SYSTEM FOR THE REGION

Current Resource Limitations

The pandemic has generated resource restrictions, hindering the immediate implementation of the RAC System in the Region.

Need for a Flexible System

A flexible and structured system is required to harmonize common standards and procedures in regional civil aviation.

Suspension and Development of the New System

The RAC System is suspended and a new ARAC System is designed with updated and adequate documentation.

Harmonization and Cooperation

The new system seeks to progressively align with international standards, supported by projects such as those of ICAO, FAA, and EASA.

PRINCIPLES OF HARMONIZATION AND OPENNESS TO OTHER STATES

Harmonization System

The ARAC System is designed to harmonize civil aviation standards in Central America and facilitate regional cooperation.

Openness to Other States

The system is open to the participation of other States interested in integrating and collaborating on common standards.

SARPs Compliance

Harmonization is based on strict compliance with SARPs to ensure safety and efficiency in aviation.

DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF REGULATORY HARMONIZATION

Concept of Harmonization

Harmonization means bringing different regulatory systems closer together to make them equivalent or identical.

Main Objective

It seeks to eliminate differences to facilitate cooperation and compliance between regulatory systems.

GENERAL AND KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ARAC SYSTEM

COMMITMENTS, AGREEMENTS, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SYSTEM

Commitment and Agreements

Commitment and agreements establish the foundations for cooperation and the effective functioning of the system.

Harmonization and Standards

Harmonization entails common standards and the elimination of national differences to facilitate integration.

Sustainability and Participation

The sustainability of the system depends on active participation and clearly defined operational functions.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE SYSTEM

ARAC System

The ARAC System integrates multiple stakeholders and organizations to coordinate specific tasks within the system.

Key Stakeholders

Includes key stakeholders such as CAAs, GT, and COCESNA/ACSA who play essential roles in the organization.

Other Components Involved

Various entities such as ICAO, FAA, EASA, and Industry also participate in specific functions of the system.

MAIN COMPONENTS AND COMMON REQUIREMENTS

Main Components

Include VN Control, PCCA, PRAC, agreements, and annexes that structure the system and its operability.

Commitments and Functions

Define clear responsibilities and establish commitments to ensure the effective operability of the system.

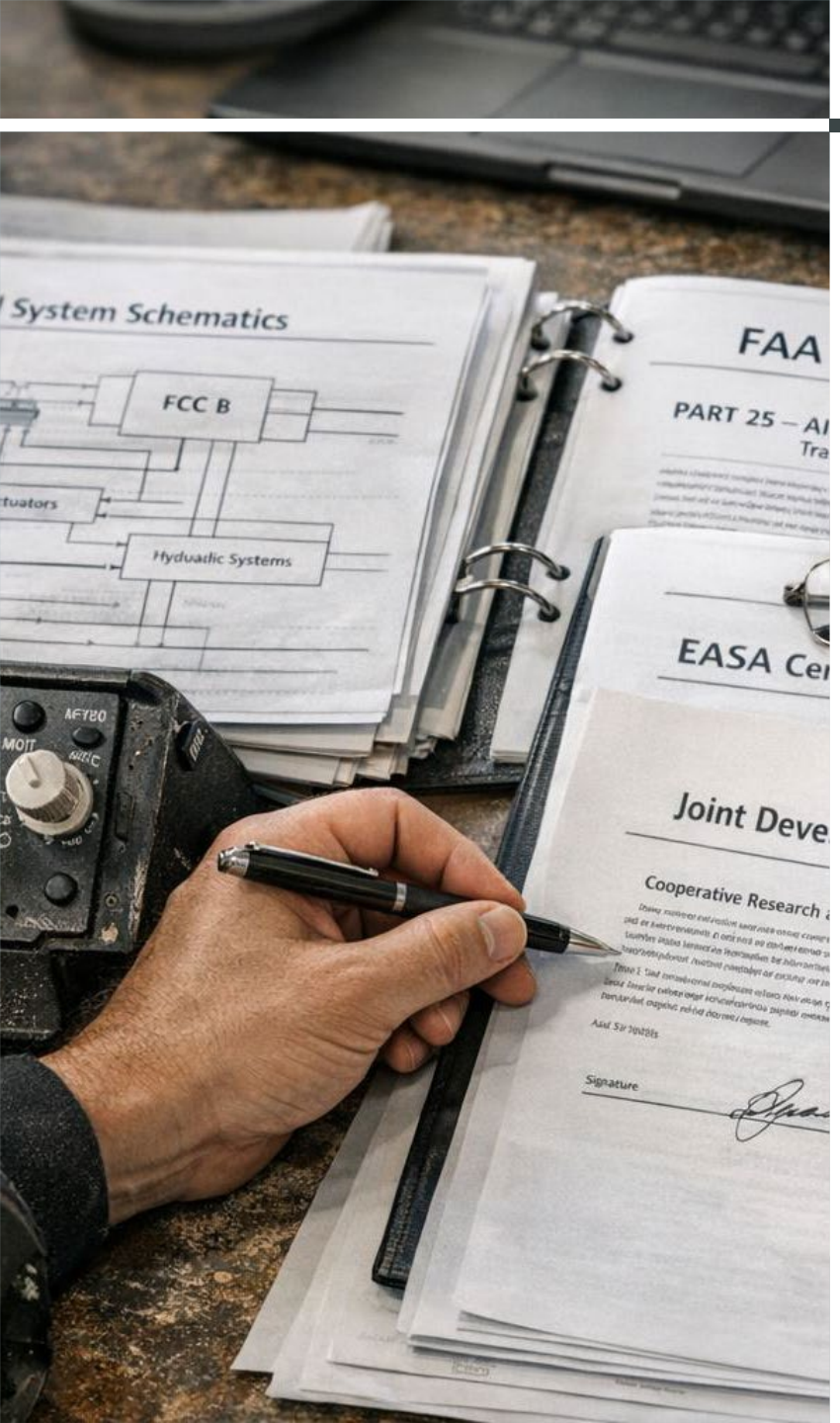
Common Requirements and Application

Focus on common interpretation, homogeneous application, and harmonization to eliminate discrepancies and ensure transparency.

PPCI and Training

Include emergency preparedness and training programs to ensure the effectiveness and compliance of the system.

PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL, AND ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS



ESTABLISHMENT OF BASIC ELEMENTS AND JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATIONS

Basic elements of the system

The fundamental elements and commitments that ensure the proper functioning of the aviation system are established.

Joint development of regulations

Joint procedures are approved to create Civil Aviation Regulations and associated documents.

Operability and homogeneous application

The operability of the system is defined with common requirements, interpretation, and uniform application among States.

Training and procedures

Joint procedures and training are established to ensure the proper implementation of the system.

AMENDMENT PROPOSALS AND NOTIFICATION TO THE STATES

Joint development of amendments

Amendment proposals are jointly developed with high safety standards adapted to regional needs.

Availability for States

The amendments are available for States to incorporate into their national legal framework.

Key main elements

Elements such as VN Control, CCAs, NPE RACs, procedures, and commitments ensure homogeneous application and transparency.

Formal notification to States

States are formally notified of the amendments in accordance with modern and regional standards.

KEY DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY OF THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Decision in the process

The opinion of the COCESNA/ACSA Manager marks the conclusion of the development of a PRAC, PCCA, or PPCI, enabling its adoption.

Formal adoption

The Technical Committee adopts PRAC, PCCA, or PPCI following the Manager's opinion, enabling their subsequent approval.

Final approval

The Board of Directors officially approves the PRAC or amendments following the corresponding adoption and opinion.

DOCUMENT APPROVAL TABLE AND STAKEHOLDER ROLES

GT	URA	GSA	CTC	CDC
MR	Report	Proposed Agreement	Agreement	Resolution
PRAC	Report	Proposed Agreement	Agreement	Resolution
PCCA	Report	Proposed Agreement	Agreement	Resolution
PPCI	Report	Proposed Agreement	Agreement	Resolution

FUNDAMENTAL DOCUMENTS AND COMMITMENTS OF THE ARAC SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS

REGIONAL REGULATORY MAP AND BASE DOCUMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Regional Regulatory Map

The ARAC System regional regulatory map is based on ICAO USOAP/USAP areas and contains MRAC and RAC.

Base Document for Development

A document approved by CDC with content and divisions that serve as the basis for regulatory development and amendments.

Agreement for the ARAC System

The agreement establishes the harmonization of civil aviation regulations with commitments and participation of CAA, COCESNA/ACSA, and stakeholders.

Provisions and Annexes

Includes definitions, records, information management, and development of proposals in annexes and additional provisions.

GENERAL COMMITMENTS

Key general commitments

Collaboration in safety and efficiency to develop regionally standardized regulations and documents.

Approval and regulatory process

Approval and adoption of regulations through entities such as COCESNA, CT, and CD to ensure compliance.

CAA commitments

Active participation, issue reporting, regulatory compliance, and follow-up on consultations for effective management.

COCESNA/ACSA PARTICIPATION AND ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Compliance and cooperation

COCESNA/ACSA adjusts its methods to ensure compliance and cooperates internationally to harmonize certifications.

Regulatory management and training

Update regulatory maps, manage documents, and develop training to strengthen the region.

Additional provisions

Include transition mechanisms, flexibility, access to information, and participation of third countries and experts.

BENEFITS, IMPLEMENTATION, AND TRAINING IN THE ARAC SYSTEM

BENEFITS FOR AAC AND THE REGION

Updated standards and procedures

CAA will have standards and procedures updated in a controlled manner.

Efficient support and collaboration

CAA will receive efficient support from COCESNA/ACSA and other States, improving regional cooperation.

Competency improvement

Teamwork will increase CAA personnel competencies, strengthening their institutional capacity.

Efficient information exchange

Harmonization will enable efficient exchange of safety information through common computer applications.

TRAINING PROGRAM AND COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

PRAC training program

The PRAC program offers structured training to improve professional competencies and technical skills.

Implementation plan

A clear plan with specific dates is established to effectively implement the training program.

Program development

The program is continuously developed to adapt to changing needs and ensure optimal results.

IMPLEMENTATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND FUTURE EVOLUTION OF THE ARAC SYSTEM

SYSTEM DESIGN, ACTIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE

ARAC System design

The structured design of the system is established to harmonize civil aviation standards in Central America.

Definition and development of actions

Specific actions are defined and the necessary documentation is developed for proper system implementation.

Approval and acceptance process

Approval, non-objection, and resource allocation processes are carried out to ensure full acceptance of the system.

Communication with ICAO

Constant communication is maintained with ICAO to report and coordinate on the development and acceptance of the ARAC system.

DOCUMENTATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF APPROVALS

Documentation development

Creation of key documents such as agreements and development plans to support regulatory processes.

Submission for approval

Preparation and formal submission to obtain the necessary regulatory approvals.

Regulatory map and European standards

Identification and compliance with applicable European standards and regulations in the process.

Communication with ICAO, FAA, and EASA

Interaction with committees and regulatory agencies for advisory support in the development.

ROADMAP: NEEDS, EVOLUTION, AND FUTURE PROPOSALS

Exploration of needs

Identify and understand current and future sector demands to guide development.

System evolution

Evaluate how the system can adapt and grow to respond to new conditions and technologies.

Future proposals

Develop innovative strategies and solutions to meet the identified needs.

Current Project Status

STRATEGIC PLANNING — COMPLETED

Regional roadmap

Full development of the roadmap for modernization and streamlining of the RAC System

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK — COMPLETED

MRAC strategic review

Assessment of the MRAC framework and its regional implementation mechanisms

INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT — IN PROGRESS

COCESNA–SICA coordination

Official Letter DE-CEO-0334/2026 sent to SG-SICA — Proposed meeting: May 5, 2026

REGIONAL COORDINATION — IN PROGRESS

Streamlining mechanisms

Coordination to establish agile amendment and entry-into-force processes for MRAC

HARMONIZATION AND COMPLIANCE — IN PROGRESS

Regulatory strengthening

Improvement of compliance with Critical Elements assessed by ICAO and FAA standards

CURRENT STATUS — MAY 2026 — IN PROGRESS

Coordination of meeting with SIECA

Objectives: 1. Eliminate the need for advisory opinions. 2. Empower COCESNA through the Board of Directors for the approval of regulations. 3. Include COCESNA on the COMITRAN agenda.

CONCLUSION: CONSOLIDATING HARMONIZATION FOR A SAFE AND EFFICIENT CIVIL AVIATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Evolution of the ARAC System

The ARAC System has evolved to harmonize civil aviation regulations in Central America, enhancing regional cooperation.

Benefits of harmonization

Harmonization ensures common regulations, promoting safety, efficiency, and sustainable development in civil aviation.

Future challenges

The continued evolution of the ARAC System is crucial for addressing future challenges in the Central American aviation sector.

Acronyms

- **AAC** – Civil Aviation Authority (Autoridad de Aviación Civil)
- **ACSA** – Agencia Centroamericana de Seguridad Aeronáutica
- **ARAC** – Sistema de Reglamentos Aeronáuticos Centroamericanos
- **CD** – Board of Directors (Consejo Directivo)
- **COCESNA** – Corporación Centroamericana de Servicios de Navegación Aérea
- **COMITRAN** – Council of Ministers of Transport of Central America (Consejo de Ministros de Transporte de Centroamérica)
- **CT** – Technical Committee (Comité Técnico)
- **GSA** – Gerencia de Seguridad Aeronáutica
- **GT** – Working Group (Grupo de Trabajo)
- **ICAO** – International Civil Aviation Organization (OACI in Spanish)
- **MRAC** – Master RAC
- **PCCA** – Proposed Joint Advisory Circular (Propuesta de Circular Conjunta de Asesoramiento)
- **PPCI** – Proposed Joint Implementation Procedure (Propuesta de Procedimiento Conjunto de Implementación)
- **PRAC** – Proposed Civil Aviation Regulation (Propuesta de Reglamento de Aviación Civil)
- **RAC** – Civil Aviation Regulation (Reglamento de Aviación Civil)
- **SICA** – Central American Integration System (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana)
- **SIECA** – Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (Secretaría de Integración Económica Centroamericana)

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Thank You