

CORPORACIÓN CENTROAMERICANA DE SERVICIOS DE NAVEGACIÓN AÉREA (COCESNA)

P/17 Agenda Item 6

Regional Search and Rescue
Framework in Central America



INTRODUCTION

Central America has developed a Search and Rescue (SAR) coordination framework that articulates States, their national SAR structures and COCESNA, with the aim of ensuring a timely, harmonized and effective response.

This regional approach is consistent with ICAO's Annex 12 provisions, which establish the need for States to organize and maintain SAR services, define search and rescue regions, and establish appropriate coordination mechanisms, including rescue coordination centres.

The current SAR regional framework is presented below, summarizes the role of COBUSA, describes the function of the RCC Central America and raises the need to keep the COBUSA Procedures Manual updated, to ensure its applicability and operational sustainability.

REGIONAL SAR CONTEXT

CONTEXT

- ❑ Aeronautical and maritime incidents can involve multiple jurisdictions and centres.
- ❑ The response requires rapid coordination, reliable communications, and clear assignment of responsibilities.
- ❑ Fragmentation delays location, search and rescue.

Central American Regional Focus

- ❑ The SAR Plan for Central America establishes regional coordination, cooperation among States, and the efficient use of resources.
- ❑ The Central American SRR is structured around centralized coordination and integration with national RSCs

Core Principle

Regional SAR coordination does not replace State sovereignty; rather, it complements it through a coordinating center that integrates information, activates communication links, and facilitates mission management with the responsible authorities.

REGIONAL SAR PLAN

- ❑ The Plan establishes the creation of the Regional Search and Rescue Committee (**COBUSA**), composed of the SAR Coordinators of the Member States and the RCC.
- ❑ It recognizes a regional structure in which the Central American States and COCESNA participate in a coordinated manner, with COCESNA serving as the regional authority acting as the **Central America Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC)**.



What is COBUSA?

The Central American Search and Rescue Committee (COBUSA)

Established as a regional SAR coordination committee responsible for:

Regional governance

Follow up on the SAR Plan for Central America.
Review SAR coverage and regional agreements.
Issue resolutions and technical recommendations.

Technical harmonization

Promote common manuals, procedures and formats.
Align SAR coordination.
Drive improvements in communications and SAR methods.

Cooperation and capabilities

Promote exercises, training and technical visits.
Facilitate the exchange of information and lessons learned.
Strengthen civil-military and inter-institutional cooperation.

Representation / link

Engage with ICAO/IMO and other observers.
Promote regional consistency in the face of international standards.
Channel regional SAR needs.

CENTRAL AMERICA RCC

- ❑ The Central America RCC is the Regional Rescue Coordination Centre for the Search and Rescue Region (RCC/SRR) of Central America, whose main function is to coordinate search and rescue (SAR) actions between the States of the region and their RSCs/SMCs, to ensure a timely, harmonized and effective response to emergencies.
- ❑ The Central American RCC serves as the main point of contact for the coordination of SAR operations with governments, RCCs, and International SAR services (e.g., COSPAS-SARSAT) outside of the Central American SRR.
- ❑ It serves as a SAR mission coordinator for cases involving more than one RSC.
- ❑ The RCC does not have SAR operating units, so they depend on the RSCs provided by these SRUs.
- ❑ The parties recognize COCESNA in the RSP as the operational manager of the regional RCC.

CENTRAL AMERICA RCC

1. Operational safety

- Reduce coordination and information transfer times in emergencies.
- Improves clarity of responsibilities between RCC, RSC and ATS/alert.
- It allows continuity of coordination in cross-border or multi-jurisdictional events.

2. Compliance and Accountability

- It materializes regional commitments of the SAR Plan and aeronautical publications.
- Strengthens alignment with applicable SARPs and SAR manuals.
- Reduces institutional risk arising from gaps between published provisions and available operational capabilities.

3. Regional efficiency

- Avoid duplication of efforts and improve use of available SAR resources.
- It facilitates standardization of procedures, formats and training.
- It concentrates technical expertise and coordination 24/7 as needed.

How is the Central American SAR System Organized?

States / National authorities:



Leadership and national responsibility.

COBUSA



Collegiate coordination, monitoring and regional harmonisation.

RCC Central America:

Regional coordination and interface between RSCs.

National RSCs:



SAR coordination within its national scope.

Roadmap for the Review and Update of COBUSA Procedures

Resolution ROCD 286.3.1

Resolution ROCD 286.3.1, through which the Board of Directors approved Agreement CT-161-2026-1, instructs the Civil Aviation Authorities to initiate the process of reviewing and updating the COBUSA Procedures Manual through COBUSA.

Prior to the start of the work, a working group must be formed with the participation of the States, responsible for developing a roadmap with activities, scope, responsibilities and deadlines.

This instruction responds to the need to strengthen operational efficiency, ensure coherent management of SAR services and optimize regional coordination between Member States and COCESNA.

Purpose of the Roadmap

Strengthen operational efficiency, ensure consistency in the management of SAR services, and optimize regional coordination.



Operational efficiency



Regional coherence



SAR Coordination

Its implementation will make it possible to identify gaps, update procedures, strengthen interoperability between SAR centers and ensure that the manual continues to be a useful, applicable tool aligned with current operational needs.

Scope of the Review Process

Technical aspects that must be analyzed and updated in the COBUSA Manual.

Regional SAR System

SRR, RCC/RSC, 24/7 operation and responsibilities.

Cooperation between States

Fast entry, coordination of resources and cross-border support.

Operating procedures

INCERFA, ALERFA, DETRESFA, LKP, SMC/CO search and coordination areas.

Communications and technology

121.5 MHz, 243 MHz, 406 MHz, COSPAS-SARSAT y SAR Tracking System.

Training & SAREX

Periodic exercises, operational roles, and continuous improvement.

Technical documentation

SITREPs, logbooks, forms and normative references.

Technical Reference Framework

Main references

ICAO Annex 12 — Search and Rescue.
IAMSAR Manual, Volumes I, II and III.
COBUSA Regional Procedures.
Applicable Civil Aviation Regulations.

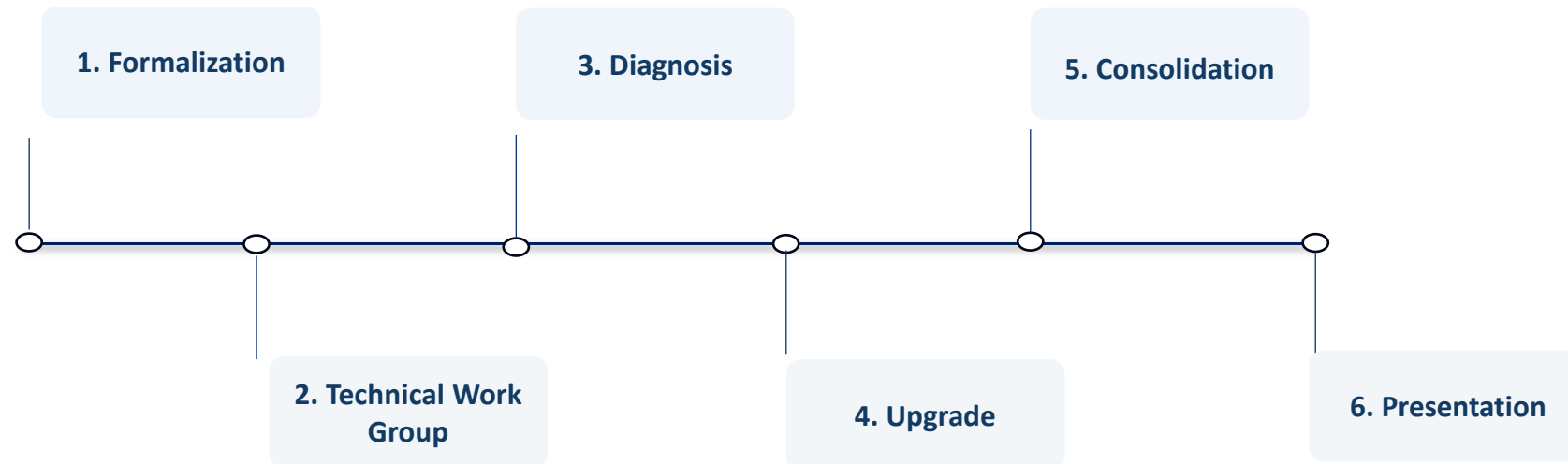
Tools and operational coordination

SAR Tracking System.
COSPAS-SARSAT / alertas 406 MHz.
Locator Aircraft Distress Repository (LADR).
Coordinación RCC/SPOC COCESNA y Estados.

This approach will allow the updating of the manual to be carried out on a sound technical basis and consistent with international best practices.

Proposed Methodological Approach

Workflow to transform the resolution into an executable technical process.



Esta lógica permite mantener trazabilidad entre el mandato, la designación de responsables, la revisión técnica y la presentación del resultado ante el Comité Técnico.

Executive Timeline

Expected Result

Regional working group formed.
Defined scope and ToR.
SAR gaps identified.
Proposal to update the consolidated COBUSA Manual.
Document submitted to the Technical Committee.

Support Required

Validate the roadmap and facilitate the formal appointment of SAR representatives of the States to initiate the technical review process.

The roadmap enables an orderly, traceable regional review aligned with the applicable SAR technical framework.

Conclusions

- ❑ Central America has a formally established SAR regional framework, based on the SAR Plan for Central America, the *RCC–RSC* structure and regional coordination between States and COCESNA.
- ❑ COBUSA is the regional coordination and monitoring body, key to the harmonization of procedures, capacity building and the continuity of the regional SAR system.
- ❑ The RCC Central America is an essential piece of the regional scheme, as it allows coordination between RSCs, the articulation of the response in multijurisdictional events and the reduction of delays due to lack of liaison or clarity of responsibilities.
- ❑ The validity and effectiveness of the regional SAR system depend on the updating of the documentary framework, especially the COBUSA Procedures Manual, to reflect the current operating environment, clarify competencies and strengthen regional SAR governance.

Action Requested

- ❑ Take note of the presentation on the Central American Regional Search and Rescue (SAR) Framework, which articulates the participation of the States, their national SAR structures and COCESNA, with the objective of ensuring a timely, harmonized and effective response to aeronautical and maritime emergencies within the region.
- ❑ Support the strengthening of the Central American regional SAR framework, including the initiation of the review and update process of the COBUSA Procedures Manual, in order to maintain its alignment with ICAO provisions, Annex 12, the IAMSAR Manual and the applicable regulations of the Central American States.

Thank You