



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
Twenty-Third Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group
(APIRG/23)

**Agenda Item 3: Update on the Safety Initiatives by States, Regional Organizations,
 Industry and Partners under the Context of COVID-19**

**GUIDANCE ON OPERATIONALIZATION OF REMOTE OVERSIGHT AND
 SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME**

(Presented by EAC CASSOA)

SUMMARY

This paper presents guidance on conducting remote auditing of aviation operations as necessitated by the emergence of adverse circumstances which may impede the conduct of on-site safety oversight activities; and highlights the importance of developing mechanisms for the conduct of remote oversight. The conditions and circumstances brought by the COVID-19 global pandemic have constrained civil aviation authority to explore and navigate on the alternative methods to ensure continuous compliance with regulatory requirements by all regulated aviation service providers, aviation operators, personnel and such other stakeholders. While the prevailing conditions that impede on-site oversight activities may be temporary in nature, the need for remote oversight regardless of the ensuing situation, may arise. Therefore, the need to establish a consistent, structured, reliable and timely regulated entity evaluation mechanism is critical for the successful implementation of effective remote oversight. In determining applicability of remote oversight or auditing on a particular entity, consideration should be given to effective Safety Management System (SMS) implementation, good compliance record/history and a sound safety culture in the performance of aviation activities.

Action by the Meeting is outlined under item 3 of this paper

<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	A – Aviation Safety D – Economic Development E – Environmental Protection
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None
<i>References</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICAO Doc 8335 - <i>Manual of Procedures for Operations Inspection, Certification and Continued Surveillance</i> • https://www.cassoa.org/covid19

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Remote oversight is one of the tools within the safety oversight tool kit. Remote oversight serves as a mitigation or contingency measure under adverse conditions and circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The components of remote oversight are comparable to the on-site oversight activities but do not replace the actual on-site inspections, surveillance and auditing of regulated entities for instance the qualification of Flight Simulation

Training Devices (FSTDs) that requires physical inspection and in contrast the oversight of online courses for distance learning can easily be carried out since the inspectors can join the lesson being delivered and assess its adequacy and mode of delivery. The focus, execution and challenges of these remote oversight activities differ and should be considered on case-by-case basis.

1.2 It is emphasized that inspectors at all times, in the execution of their oversight functions, comply with the relevant provisions of the applicable Civil Aviation Act, requirements of the applicable Civil Aviation Regulations and the guidelines provided in the Inspection Surveillance and Audit Manual (ISAM) and Inspector Handbook, as appropriate.

1.3 The remote oversight mechanisms may not be a one-size fit all operators, given the unique set-up and location of the different operators. The mechanisms for remote oversight such as Information Technology, may be lacking or inadequate or there may be no capacity to use the technology like Webex, Zoom or Microsoft teams.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Inspection, Surveillance, Audit (ISA) planning and scoping is critical in safety and oversight. Prior to conducting remote oversight activities, it is important to coordinate and plan with the regulated entity. The planning includes mutually agreeing on the scope and schedule and inspectors must explain the remote audit approach to the regulated entity. This should include an explanation of anticipated similarities and differences between face-to face oversight that stakeholders are accustomed to and remote oversight.

2.2 It is also important to discuss from the onset the limitations of remote oversight and explain that future onsite oversight activities may be required based on the findings of the remote oversight or once the physical site visit becomes possible. Based on the additional content and explanation, experience indicates that inspectors should allocate about twice as much time for a remote inspection, surveillance or audit planning meeting, compared to what is needed for the physical ones.

2.3 Based on foregoing, EAC CASSOA facilitated development of guidance material on remote oversight as an alternative mechanism of traditional oversight, where applicable. The guidance can be accessed through the CASSOA website www.cassoa.org/covid19.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of the availability of the guidance on conducting remote oversight activities under constraining COVID-19 conditions and circumstances;
- b) encourage AFI States to explore and implement oversight functions remotely, where this is applicable and practicable, as mechanism for assessing continued compliance with operational requirements in situations such as under COVID-19 pandemic.