



ICAO

**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**

**Eighth Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI/8)  
Kigali, Rwanda, 7-11 November 2022**

**iSASO Safety Initiatives**

*(Presented by Interim SADC Aviation Safety Organisation)*

<b>SUMMARY</b>	
<p>This information paper presents activities that have been carried out in the SADC region by iSASO to promote and facilitate the safety and efficiency of civil aviation. The organisation, with the support of member States and various stakeholders has managed to initiate and participate in programmes aimed at improving aviation safety in the region. This paper highlights the experiences of iSASO, the capacity building needs, the need for publication of specific guidance material and continued support for the improvement of civil aviation in developing States.</p>	
<p>Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3.</p>	
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	Safety

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Interim SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (iSASO) is a precursor to the SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (SASO). The organisation was borne out of the COSCAP-SADC project and has been operating as an Interim entity while awaiting the final signature to its charter. It currently operates on a Hosting Agreement which was entered into between SADC and the Kingdom of Eswatini. There exists hope that the final signature will be appended to the charter in the very near future.

Full swing operations of the Interim SASO commence in the third quarter of 2021 after the recruitment of the Executive Director and regional staff. Since that time, activities to establish the organisation and begin operations have been ongoing and have resulted in a positive impact to the member states.

**2. DISCUSSION**

2.1. Successes

2.1.1 Regulations – Quite a number of the SADC member states are using outdated regulations to regulate their industry. In order to harmonise the regulatory framework within the region, iSASO embarked on a project to review the SADC aviation generic regulations. This project is being sponsored by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The project commenced in March

2022 and is so far 75% complete. Even though the current mandate of iSASO covers the areas of Airworthiness, Flight Operations and Personnel Licencing only, the development of generic regulations has been expanded to Aerodromes and Air Navigation Services.

The project is being undertaken by the National Safety Inspectors nominated by the member states with the assistance from a group of experts sponsored by EASA. These experts were the same ones that were used to develop generic regulations for the East African Community (EAC) and the EAC regulations were used as a starting point for developing the SADC regulations.

2.1.2 Development of Trainers – The lack of appropriately qualified safety oversight inspectors poses a major constraint for safety oversight in the SADC region. The cost of sending one inspector overseas to acquire the necessary training is too expensive considering the economical benefits of doing so. In most cases, the states lag behind in that area of training.

Realizing that gap, iSASO has promoted the emergence of trainers among its National Safety Inspectors (NSI). So far, 10 NSIs have been trained and qualified as ICAO certified instructors. iSASO will utilize these instructors to provide needed training to the SADC member states. Therefore, instead of sending one inspector overseas for training at a huge cost, iSASO can send an instructor to a state to train multiple inspectors at very little cost.

2.1.3 Collaborative Assistance to Member States – In order to improve the assistance provided to the member states, it is necessary for RSOOs in the region to align their programmes and minimize duplication of efforts.

iSASO has been collaborating with other RSOOs, and other partners especially AFCAC, to enhance effective planning of its assistance missions. Where AFCAC has missions planned for the SADC region, the two organisations collaborate to make the most effective use of resources while avoiding duplication of efforts.

2.1.4 National Safety Inspector Programme – iSASO managed to launch its NSI programme as from December 2021. SADC member states were invited and they nominated inspectors from all the five safety oversight domains. These were trained in the processes and procedures of iSASO.

Since their training, assistance has been provided to at least three member states. The NSIs have been busy drafting the generic regulations. By the end of October 2022, three meetings of the NSIs to draft regulations would have taken place in-person in Eswatini.

2.1.5 Support from Partner Organisations – iSASO has benefited a lot from the European Union – Aviation Safety in Africa (EU-ASA) project.

This technical assistance project is designed to support the African region to improve aviation safety. It more specifically aims to assist African States to meet their safety oversight obligations under the Chicago Convention in establishing an effective aviation safety oversight system. The project has been targeting a regional approach to reach its objectives and has been closely working with Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (including iSASO), ICAO regional offices, and AFCAC.

This EU-ASA project has given the opportunity to iSASO to strengthen its technical capabilities and internal mechanisms. It is hoped that EASA will extend the project beyond the year 2023.

2.1.6 MOUs with African RSOOs – Since iSASO is a newer RSOO when compared to the rest

of the African RSOOs, it was imperative that iSASO went into agreements with these more established RSOOs so as to tap into their already developed processes. For example, rather than develop regulations from scratch, iSASO utilized the regulations developed by CASSOA as base documents.

The Memorandums of Understanding have so far been signed with CASSOA, BAGASOO and AFCAC and are producing immense benefit to iSASO.

## 2.2 Recommendations and the Future

2.2.1 Training for Aviation Lawyers – Given the need for harmony and seamless working relationship between inspectors and aviation lawyers in safety oversight, there is need for establishing a structured training programme for aviation lawyers which is similar to the aviation inspectors' training programme.

SASO will work with other African RSOOs who have already embarked on similar projects to attain this objective.

2.2.2 Operations of Unmanned Aerial Systems – The civilian use of unmanned aircraft has exponentially increased in the years to date. The research and development into civilian applications of unmanned aircraft is a dynamic and rapidly evolving subject. Tasks that were once unachievable, expensive or involved too much risk are now possible with the use of unmanned aircraft. Consequently, these unmanned aircraft are increasingly being operated in both controlled and uncontrolled airspace where they introduce the possibility of interfering with conventional aircraft.

Reports have shown that only a very small percentage of unmanned aircraft are at the least registered with their Civil Aviation Authorities. In most cases, their pilots are recreational enthusiasts who do not hold pilot licences to operate these aircraft. There is a need for a regional campaign to sensitise the public with respect to the registration of unmanned aircraft, their airworthiness, pilot licencing, insurance, airspace management, security and so forth.

A few states have promulgated regulations to govern unmanned aircraft operations, however, with the rapidly evolving UAS industry, these regulations are quickly outdated unless they are constantly revised.

2.2.3 Cooperative ANS Flight Calibration Scheme – Inputs from SADC air navigation (ANS) experts have shown that it is (1) costly and (2) complicated to have a state's ground-based navigation aids calibrated. There are a limited number of providers of such a service and the result is usually higher costs to have it done by the available providers.

African states could benefit from having a cooperative flight calibration scheme. It is apparent that unless a state has many airports, it is uneconomical to invest in flight calibration equipment. At the same time dependency on those few flight calibration service providers pushes the costs very high. The matter would be different if a group of states contribute and invest in flight calibration aircraft and equipment which will be made available for use by any of the contributing states when needed. Such an arrangement brings the costs down and will promote independence in that subject.

**3 ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a. Note the information contained in this paper