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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU-AFRICA SAFETY IN AVIATION (ASA) PROJECT FOR REGIONAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT ORGANIZATIONS (RSOOS) – THE CURRENT PERSPECTIVE AND SUCCESSES

(Presented by the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) on behalf of 54 African States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the current perspectives and successes that the European Union – Safety in Aviation (EU- ASA) project has impacted towards the African continent especially with regard to strengthening of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and cooperative development of operational safety and continuing airworthiness programmes (COSCAPs). Since its inception, the EU ASA project has given the RSOOs the opportunity to strengthen their technical capabilities and internal mechanisms for operations of the regional organizations. As such, the group of States under RSOOs have benefitted through implementation of the activities under the EU ASA project. It is apparent that the project has been impactful in addressing various areas of needs depending on regional priorities. The paper concludes that the RSOOs, RECs and AFCAC should continue to work together with EASA in reinforcing the capabilities within the regional organizations. In addition, the paper urges the EU and Partners to consider extension of the project beyond year 2023 for purposes of enhancing the capabilities of the RSOOs, AFCAC, RECs and the implementing activities that were not achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency
<i>Financial implications:</i>	High
<i>References:</i>	Doc 9734, <i>Safety Oversight Manual, Part B — The Establishment and Management of a Regional Safety Oversight System</i>

¹ English and French versions provided by AFCAC.

² Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) initiated the EU-Aviation safety in Africa (EU-ASA) Project under the financing of the European Union for purposes of enhancing collaboration/cooperative environment with other global RSOOs and COSCAPs. The project is financed by the EU and it is structured to build capabilities and capacity of the RSOOs and the member States under the RSOOs. The project inception was achieved and formalized during the year 2019 and it is expected to run for a period of 36 months from September 2019 under the existing framework Contract between EASA and European Union Commission.

1.2 The specific objective is to assist African Member States to meet their obligations under the Chicago Convention in establishing an effective aviation safety oversight system. The project has particularly adopted a regional approach to reach this specific objective.

1.3 Among the most important organs in the inception, implementation and monitoring mechanism for the project is the involvement of African Union (AU) and African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). These two organs have been indispensable in bringing together the RSOO, RECs and COSCAPs for the purpose of implementation of the project. Through various fora and cooperation mechanisms, the AU and AFCAC has continued to provide support towards achieving the strategic objectives as well as monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the project based on aggregated assessment of performance over given period.

1.4 The key results areas (KRAs) from the project have been identified to address areas which are expected to deliver direct positive impacts for the benefit of RSOOs organizational competence to support their respective group of States:

- a) KRA 1: RSOOs are reinforced;
- b) KRA 2: The safety oversight regulatory environment is improved;
- c) KRA 3: Enhanced safety oversight is achieved; and
- d) KRA 4: The safety data collection and analysis is implemented.

1.5 These key results areas have been identified for the purpose of addressing the areas of great need among the Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), Regional Economic communities (RECs) and COSCAPS. A number of related activities have been identified, planned and implemented based on annual Framework Contracts between EU Commission and EASA.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 During pre-COVID-19 period, the RSOOs in the African continent developed project activities in cooperation and validation of EASA that suits the environment of the sub-region. The activities were aligned with the KRAs and intended to have direct trickle-down impact to African States through strengthened RSOOs, RECs and COSCAPs. Having recognized the priorities of the regional and sub-regional settings, the subprojects planned and implemented and finally evaluated under the following mechanisms that includes:

- a) **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** – Under the PSC, a high-level delegation of the Project steering committee team from EASA, AU, AFCAC, RSOOs, RECs and COSCAPs meet periodically to assess the level of implementation of the project, communicate on the EU present and future prospects as well making joint assessment on the successes and challenges to be addressed for continuous improvement strategy. However, project progress reviews and mutual agreement between the EACA and AU are achieved through this forum;
- b) **Project Implementation Annual Forum**– The annual fora among the EASA and regional organizations provide a platform on which EASA communicates with the RSOOs on the anticipated future Framework Contract, funding that may be available from the EU Commission to finance the project and projections of activities for the successive framework contract; and
- c) **Regional Organizations Meetings** – On assessment of the project, the parties agreed to establish regional organization meetings to enable RSOOs, RECs and COSCAPs to contribute and assess the prevailing needs, progress and any challenges that needs versatility in the execution of the projects based on project implementation principles. The beneficiary regional organizations have indicated that these interactive meetings are important for periodic improvements that may be required.

2.2 Among the beneficiary regional organizations from the African Continent include the following:

- a) African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC);
- b) Autorités Africaines et Malgache de l'Aviation Civile/African and Malagasy Civil Aviation Authorities (AAMAC);
- c) Agence Communautaire de Supervision de la Sécurité et de la Sureté de l'Aviation Civile (ACSAC) Currently operating as Unité Régionale de Supervision de la Sécurité et de la Sûreté de l'Aviation Civile (URSAC);
- d) Agence de Supervision de la Sécurité Aérienne en Afrique Centrale (ASSA-AC);
- e) Banjul Accord Group Aviation Safety Oversight Organization (BAGASOO);
- f) East African Community Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA); and
- g) Interim SADC Aviation Safety Organization (iSASO).

2.3 Through the EU-ASA project, the African regional safety oversight organizations have established strong cooperation mechanism by exchanging experiences, skills in organizational and operational practices of RSOOs including sharing and exchange of technical documents. This is a demonstrable achievement under the RSOO – Cooperative Platform (RSOO-CP) which has been successfully administered by ICAO Headquarters and EASA under the Ezulwini Declaration framework on establishing cooperative platform among RSOOs.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The inception, planning and implementation of the EU ASA project have given the opportunity to the RSOOs to strengthen their technical capabilities and internal mechanisms for operations of the regional organizations. In turn, the group of States under these RSOOs benefitted through implementation of the activities under the EU ASA project. The achievements include the following:

- a) development of policies and operational procedures of RSOOs;
- b) support on the establishment quality management systems (QMS) in line with ISO 90001;
- c) development and review of Regional civil aviation regulations;
- d) development and review of Regional civil aviation technical guidance material;
- e) capacity building training in various safety related areas; and
- f) technical assistance of EU experts (EASA) from various safety domains.

3.2 It is apparent that the RSOOs, RECs and AFCAC should continue to work together with EASA in reinforcing the capabilities within the regional organizations for the purpose of gaining and maintaining relevance and effectiveness towards the respective group of States.

3.3 In light of the foregoing, EASA is requested to extend the project beyond 2023 for the purpose of implementing next phase of activities that the African RSOOs can benefit from. It is apparent that, COVID-19 period caused a certain degree of disarray against the intended KRAs and objectives. This calls for consideration for extension of activities beyond 2023 and thus offering continued cooperation between African Union (AU), RSOOs and European Union.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the perspective, framework and achievements under the EU-ASA Project;
- b) encourage RSOOs to consider implementation of actions directed towards reinforcing organizational capacity and capabilities for purposes of directly supporting their group of States in the improvement of effective implementation of safety oversight system; and
- c) urge European Union to consider extension of the EU-ASA Project beyond 2023 for purposes of implementing pending and evolving objectives affected during the COVID-19 period and thus achieve the intended key results areas.