



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 30: Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Policy

30.3 Relevant Outcomes of the High-level Conference on COVID-19, Safety Stream (HLCC 2021)

IMPORTANCE OF THE CULTURAL CHANGE STRATEGY IN SSP AND SMS IMPLEMENTATION

(Presented by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) with the support of Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname and Uruguay)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper elaborates on and emphasizes the importance of establishing and applying a safety strategy of cultural change in the implementation and maintenance of State safety programmes (SSP) and Safety management systems (SMS).

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information set out in this working paper;
- b) consider the suggestions made in this paper as forming part of the strategy for cultural change in organizations or interested parties;
- c) encourage and share successful experiences in States and regions in applying safety strategies of cultural change;
- d) consider developing or introducing standardized guidance material for States and regions.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective of Safety.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Doc 9859 <i>Safety Management Manual</i> Cir 302, <i>Human Factors Digest No. 16 - Cross-Cultural Factors in Aviation Safety</i>

¹ Spanish version provided by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The experience observed during the implementation processes and the results expected from maintenance of the SSP in States and SMS in industry presuppose a proactive role for all the individuals and work teams or task forces that play a part in these processes.

1.2 Although chapter 3 of Doc 9859 deals with the concept of safety culture in general terms and concludes that the improvement of safety performance in a State or specific aeronautical sector depends to a large extent on its safety culture, cultural change is not achieved as tangibly as other deliverables derived from other elements implemented and improved in the State SSP and industry SMS (such as documents, systems, manuals, tools, etc.).

1.3 According to ICAO Circular 302-AN/175, culture is defined in general terms as a shared system of growth (which is true), values (which is important), expectations and significance of behaviour (which implies participation in a specific action), as developed by a group over time, in order to comply with the requirements of living and operating in a (geographical) niche and provides us with a view of the settings (layers) that shape culture in various regions and States. This leads us to ask questions about the prevailing culture, its changes over time and its impact on State organizations that manage the State SSP and industry SMS.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 With the upcoming 2023–2025 edition of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and its effect on the corresponding regional and national safety plans needing development or amendment, we must not lose sight of the challenges posed by the GASP. In its section 3.2, with respect to SSP implementation, the GASP acknowledges that one of its challenges will entail a cultural impact on organizations in order for them to implement it more effectively.

2.2 The SAM Region recognizes this challenge in its SSP implementation process and considers that this challenge will continue to be a factor in maintaining that process and in the implementation of industry SMS and its impact on the achievement of safety performance targets.

2.3 In its quest for the best solution, the SAM Region consults materials that might offer more affirmative arguments and methodologies to guide States and industry in applying a strategy of cultural change.

3. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHANGE IN SAFETY CULTURE

3.1 Set out below are suggested steps and points to be taken into consideration if an organization needs to institute a positive safety culture alongside SSP or SMS, and so the following strategy is proposed:

- a) establishment of a coordination team responsible for carrying out the process:
 - 1) establish a steering committee to ensure the proper development of the process, guaranteeing the necessary collective commitment at the highest level. If the

State is implementing its SSP or an industry organization its SMS, it could be the same safety committee. For small organizations there would be specific appointments in line with the size and complexity of the organization;

- 2) set up a team to direct operations (it is important that all parties be involved in the process: management, workers, technicians and, where appropriate, external consultants). They will be responsible for monitoring the entire process of cultural change;
- b) development of a logistical and sequential plan. It must be borne in mind that any change in organizational culture is a slow process and takes time to roll out. The process must therefore be extended gradually to the whole of the organization. If a State is implementing its SSP or an organization its SMS, this plan can be integrated simultaneously into its implementation plan. The following aspects should be considered:
- 1) choosing the most appropriate moment to prevent parallel phenomena from arising that might contaminate the process. Be assertive;
 - 2) determining the guidelines to be followed for rollout (what is going to be done);
 - 3) identifying the personnel responsible for rollout, as well as all the persons involved in the process and the functions to be developed. Preferably fully credentialed leaders;
 - 4) specifying whether or not an external service is needed, and its competencies;
 - 5) determining the material resources required to secure an outcome and the cost to be incurred, and making an economic assessment of the process (rollout cost);
 - 6) acquainting workers – before, during and after – with the entire process of cultural change and each member’s level of participation in the organizational system;
 - 7) establishing checks and realistic deadlines for attainment of a specific objective in the different phases of the process;
- c) analysis of the cultural situation in the organization. Safety culture is subject to many influences and organizations would need to have their safety culture analysed. An assessment of the level of maturity of the safety culture can provide valuable insights leading to administrative measures to encourage the desired safety behaviours. It should be pointed out that there is a degree of subjectivity in such assessments and that they may reflect opinions and perceptions obtaining only ephemerally on the part of the persons concerned. The analysis will help us to pinpoint the discrepancies between the situation identified and what is expected by the organization to determine cultural change. To carry out the analysis, Doc 9859 offers criteria for shaping the desired safety culture;

- d) awareness-raising, dissemination and “sales and/or marketing” of the cultural change process. Carry out the selection and training of possible agents of change in key areas. These include, depending on the size and complexity of the organization, team training managers and/or “process organizers” (leaders, guideline motivators, trouble-shooters). Each manager must be capable of generating interest in the basic groups, in promoting participation in change, and must help them see the need for change. To facilitate change, it is useful to have agents of change present in key departments; normally they should be natural leaders, respected and valued by their colleagues, who have the abilities and skills to provide the necessary support and promote the search for solutions and improvements in the work environment;
- e) recourse to leadership seminars, teamwork, and analysis of problems/prioritization of solutions/guidelines and directives. Through seminars all senior staff should be aware of the commitment to team requirements. Promote change, new management models with executive skills and aptitudes, participation, and teamwork. In particular, develop participatory leadership through training schemes such as introductory training, which is provided at the time of the worker’s entry into employment, in accordance with the experience and occupational profile of each new employee (internal rules, team presentation, explanation of functions, initiation and job-specific activities);
- f) implementation of techniques and new/revised safety management procedures. Since this is a social instrument to improve the system, priorities will be established with regard to the key safety management procedures (SMS/SSP) to be implemented and the strategy of personal, professional and organizational development for their gradual implementation. For this reason, guidelines must be established for their design and formulation, their dissemination and accessibility, the training to be dispensed, the necessary logistical support and their monitoring and control to guarantee certain activities perceived as reliable, effective, and efficient, and the optimal management of resources for all the teams;
- g) assessment and monitoring. On the basis of the above-mentioned guidelines and the steps to be followed in the process, it is important at all times to have clear and transparent criteria, through monitoring of the classic cycle of continuous improvement based fundamentally on the premise of motivating staff to achieve that which is necessary and desired, on the basis of past successes. Given that human actions are governed by motives, reward systems should be created that prompt responses focusing on steps towards sharing successes achieved in the performance of functions, and recognizing and attaching value to the work done;
- h) communication. For every SSP/SMS and cultural change implementation activity, periodic communication strategies should also be developed (with respect to the promotion component to be established or already established), and information provided on outcomes and future strategies; these would serve to facilitate communication at all levels of command. Usable communication channels include internal communiqués, meetings, emails, computer spaces, meetings (improvement teams), meetings of all staff, etc.

3.2 The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has developed an advisory circular with guidelines relevant to this topic and others associated with safety culture for interested parties. It can be viewed at http://www.inac.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/circular_CA_05_003.pdf.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 This proposal seeks to put forward a possible strategy for cultural change: organization of management and teams; implementation of a campaign guided by agents of change; training/further training of staff in specific skills to support cultural change; monitoring/assessment of anticipated change; and communication throughout the process.

4.2 If necessary, the cultural change strategy can be applied not only during implementation of the SSP/SMS, but also during their maintenance.

4.3 In view of the foregoing, the Assembly is invited to take the actions recommended in the executive summary box at the beginning of this working paper.

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