

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Seventh Meeting of the Civil Aviation Authorities of the SAM Region (RAAC/7)

(Salvador, Bahia, Brasil, 01 to 03 July 2002)

Agenda Item 5: **Participation of States in regional activities**

d) **ATS quality assurance**

(presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

In this working paper, the guidance material for air traffic service quality assurance programmes in the CAR/SAM Regions, approved by the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS) for use by the States/Territories/International Organisations, is presented to the consideration of civil aviation authorities of the South American Region.

References:

- Report of the GREPECAS/8 meeting;
- Report of the RAAC/6 meeting;
- Report of the CAR/SAM/3 RAN meeting;
- Report of the GREPECAS/10 meeting;
- Guidance Material for ATS Quality Assurance Programmes in the CAR/SAM Regions; and
- Assembly - 33rd Assembly.

1 Introduction

1.1 As a result of an increased awareness of ATS incidents and of their relationship with safety in the CAR/SAM Regions, the recommendations of the Eighth Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS/8) and ATS incident reports received by the Regional Offices, the ICAO NACC and SAM Regional Offices started a programme to reduce ATS incidents, which subsequently served as the basis for an ATS quality assurance programme for both Regions.

1.2 The Sixth Meeting of Civil Aviation Directors (Panama, 18-20 August 1999) discussed matters related to ATS incidents, and, with great concern, recognised the need to take concrete action to overcome existing deficiencies.

1.3 In this respect, and considering the benefits that could be derived from the implementation and/or enhancement of ATS incident investigation and ATS operational quality control programmes, the meeting adopted Conclusion 6/19 “Implementation of ATS Incident Investigation Programmes in the SAM Region”, aimed at the implementation of these programmes in all SAM States, and Conclusion 6/20 “Implementation of an ATS quality control programme” aimed at the implementation by SAM States, with the assistance of the ICAO South American Office, of an ATS quality assurance programme.

1.4 The concept of introducing an ATS quality assurance programme in the States was subsequently submitted to the CAR/SAM/3 Regional Air Navigation (RAN) Meeting (Buenos Aires, October 1999).

1.5 Following discussions on this subject, the RAN meeting recommended that ICAO develop guidance material for ATS quality assurance programmes for use worldwide (CAR/SAM/3 Rec. 5/36). It also approved Recommendation 5/38 urging States and ATS service providers to implement a quality assurance programme at all ATS units.

1.6 The drafting of the Guidance Material for ATS Quality Assurance Programmes in the CAR/SAM Regions has been the first phase in the development of this material for use worldwide, and can be initially used by CAR/SAM States/Territories and International Organisations as guidance material.

1.7 On the other hand, ICAO recently approved Amendment 40 to Annex 11, urging States to implement, by 27 November 2003, systematic and suitable ATS safety management programmes to ensure that ATS services continue to be provided safely in their airspace and aerodromes. These ATS safety management programmes are closely related to ATS quality assurance programmes.

1.8 Finally, the Assembly, at its 33rd Session (Montreal, 25 September to 5 October 2001), through Resolution A 33-8, resolved to extend the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme to Annex 11, Air Traffic Services, as of 2004.

2 **Analysis**

2.1 In order to meet the objectives of the recommendations of the CAR/SAM/3 RAN meeting concerning ATS quality assurance, the ICAO NACC and SAM Regional Offices held a Seminar on Air Traffic Service Quality Assurance Programmes (Mexico, 16-20 October 2000). The seminar was attended by more than 150 participants from 20 States and International Organisations, who went to learn the details of this ATS Quality Assurance programme. The draft Guidance Material for ATS Quality Assurance in the CAR/SAM Regions (version 0.1, October 2000) was presented for the first time at this seminar.

2.2 Following that seminar, the Secretariat reviewed the first version of the draft Guidance Material for ATS Quality Assurance in the CAR/SAM Regions, based on the comments received from some States, International Organisations, the ATM section of ICAO Headquarters and the experience gained by ICAO in regional ATM assessment missions.

2.3 Subsequently, and following a review by the ATM Committee of the GREPECAS ATM/CNS Subgroup, the Guidance Material for ATS Quality Assurance in the CAR/SAM Regions was submitted to the GREPECAS 10 for approval.

2.4 GREPECAS 10 examined the document and highlighted the quality of the guidance material, recognising that it was a very useful tool for the implementation in each State of a programme aimed at attaining service excellence. Accordingly, through Conclusion 10/18, it approved its use by CAR/SAM States/Territories/International Organisations.

Objectives and structure of ATS quality assurance programmes

2.5 Quality assurance has been recognised as a dynamic process of continuous improvement in an ATS system. Although service quality will continue to be measured using some method based on historical data, such as the number of ATS incidents, delays, feedback from ATS officials and users, there are also other factors and deficiencies that should be taken into account but which are not so readily measurable.

2.6 Quality assurance programmes should focus on identifying and correcting deficiencies before they result in an ATS incident or an accident. They should also contribute to improve the quality of the air traffic services.

2.7 One of the goals of the quality assurance programme is to provide specific guidelines for reporting, investigating and resolving different types of ATS incidents that affect the quality of ATS services. The programme should be designed to work together with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices and State regulations. Nevertheless, the main objective of the programme should be to prevent ATS incidents.

2.8 The regional Guidance Material has been designed for use by ATS systems with different levels of complexity. It consists of eleven chapters containing very useful information on the ATS Quality Assurance programmes that could be used by States for complying with Rec. 5/38 of the CAR/SAM/3 meeting. For better reference, the **Appendix** to this working paper describes the contents of said guidance material. The complete guidance material is available at the website: www.lima.icao.int

3 ATS quality assurance activities of the ICAO SAM Office

3.1 Since it is a CAR/SAM regional programme, activities related to ATS quality assurance are carried out jointly with the ICAO NACC Office. An ATS quality assurance workshop in English was held in December 2001 in Trinidad and Tobago, while an ATS quality assurance workshop in Spanish was organised and held in June 2002 in El Salvador.

3.2 Likewise, a quality assurance seminar will be held in Lima, Peru, on 14-18 October 2002, to report on the experiences that States within and outside the CAR/SAM Regions have had in this field and to make the Guidance Material for Air Traffic Service Quality Assurance available to aeronautical authorities. It is hoped that the application of this important material will continue to be promoted through future workshops.

3.3 The SAM Office will soon begin an ATC unit assessment programme aimed at implementing the ATS Quality Assurance Programme jointly with the States of the Region.

4 **Conclusions**

4.1 Quality assurance has been recognised as a dynamic process used for the continuous improvement of ATS systems. These programmes should focus on identifying and correcting deficiencies before they result in an ATS incident or an accident.

4.2 One of the goals of the quality assurance programme should be to provide specific guidelines for reporting, investigating and resolving different types of ATS incidents that affect the quality of ATS services. The programme should be designed to work together with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices and State regulations.

4.3 All CAR/SAM States/ATS providers should implement an ATS quality assurance programme. The programme should set forth its purpose, objectives and responsibilities within the State or within the ATS service provider, and should be established by each ATS unit.

4.4 The implementation of a quality assurance programme will allow civil aviation authorities of the South American Region to meet the first objective of the programme, that is, to minimise ATS incidents while improving the quality of air traffic services.

5 **Suggested action**

5.1 The meeting is invited to take note of the information provided in this working paper, and if deemed advisable, approve the following draft conclusion:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/X - ATS QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES

That SAM States:

- a) based on the guidance material for ATS quality assurance programmes approved by the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group, implement a quality assurance programme at ATS units and designate the person responsible who will also be the focal point and coordinator of the programme;
- b) inform the ICAO SAM Regional Office about such designation; and
- c) participate actively at all events that seek to disseminate, provide training in, and implement ATS quality assurance programmes.

APPENDIX

GUIDANCE MATERIAL FOR AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES IN THE CAR/SAM REGIONS

Version 1 of the Guidance Material for Air Traffic Service Quality Assurance Programmes in the CAR/SAM Regions is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1. Definitions
- Chapter 2. Background
- Chapter 3. ATS Quality Assurance Programmes
- Chapter 4. Verifying the competence of controllers
- Chapter 5. Reporting, investigation and equipment for the investigation of air traffic incidents
- Chapter 6. Air traffic incident prevention programmes
- Chapter 7. Air traffic service assessment programmes
- Chapter 8. Service quality enhancement programmes
- Chapter 9. Training programmes for the development of competencies
- Chapter 10. ATS safety management
- Chapter 11. Human factors

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