



**INFORMATION PAPER**

RASG-PA /12 — IP/11  
07/11/22

**Twelfth Regional Aviation Safety Group — Pan America Meeting (RASG-PA/12)**

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 14 – 15 November 2022

**Second GREPECAS–RASG-PA Joint Meeting**

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 15 November 2022 (13h00 local time)

**Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business**

**IATA SAFETY AUDIT for GROUND OPERATIONS (ISAGO) COMPLIMENTING STATE SAFETY PROGRAM (SSP) OVERSIGHT FOR GROUND HANDLING**

(Presented by IATA)

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
<p>The IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) exists as an independent assessment of a ground handling service provider against industry-developed organization management, operational standards, and best practices.</p> <p>The continued adoption of ISAGO by the industry despite the impact of the pandemic, provides safety assurances of ground operations. Recognition of the ISAGO audit reports by the regulatory authority, will compensate for the lack of operator’s own oversight audits, and can provide additional data source to complement risk-based oversight activities of an operator. In addition, the ISAGO audits and audit reports provide safety assurances that contribute to a State Safety Programme, complementing aerodrome certification and aerodrome licensing requirements that are in alignment with the 2023-2025 Global Aviation Safety Plan.</p>	
<b>Action:</b>	<p>The RASG-PA plenary is invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and recognize the use of ISAGO by States to complement State Safety Programme and air operator regulatory activities as an acceptable means of oversight for ground handling service providers.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICAO Annex 19</li> <li>• ICAO Document 10121</li> <li>• 2023-2025 ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP)</li> </ul>

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Ground handling operations are performed by air operators with self-handling facilities or are outsourced to ground handling service providers contracted by the air operator. The ground handling operations are performed in accordance with, in most cases, procedures and standards based on industry best practices published by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). These procedures, standards and best practices are generated by technical groups of subject matter experts from both airlines and ground service providers.

1.2 State regulations usually make the contracting air operator responsible for oversight of the outsourced operations. To support and supplement the air operator's oversight, the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) exists as an independent assessment of a ground handling service provider against industry-developed organization management, and operational standards. Today, close to 200 ground handling service providers are currently registered under ISAGO. ISAGO audits have been performed in more than 270 ground handling service provider "stations" located at over 200 airports worldwide.

1.3 The publication of Doc 10121 demonstrated that ICAO acknowledges the safety implications in ground handling and its inclusion in a State Safety Programme. This position is acknowledged further by making ground handling a specific agenda item at the Third High Level Safety Conference, which has now been incorporated in the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021). The HLCC was held in October 2021 and as a result of the ground handling discussion States and industry were asked to continue to develop a flexible and balanced approach for the oversight of ground handling.

1.4 The Tenth Meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group Asia and Pacific Regions (RASG-APAG/10, held during December 2020) acknowledged the contribution of ISAGO in the oversight of ground handling and recognized the safety assurance benefits that ISAGO brings during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and encouraged States/Administrations to complement their State Safety Programme and air operator regulatory activities through recognition of ISAGO as an acceptable means of oversight of ground handling service providers.

## **2. Discussion**

2.1 The ISAGO auditing standards, outlined in the ISAGO Standards Manual, require a fully implemented Safety Management System, fully aligned with the corresponding ground handling service provider provisions specified in ICAO Doc 10121, Manual on Ground Handling, which was published in December 2019, and with ICAO Annex 19.

2.2 On average, 210 audits are completed each year, by accredited members of the IATA Charter of Professional Auditors (CoPA) who assess the management and oversight systems in place at the Ground Service Provider's corporate Headquarters and the implementation of ground operations processes and procedures at selected stations.

2.3 Recognition and increased utilization of the ISAGO audit reports by regulatory authorities can compensate for the lack of an air operator's own oversight audits and provide additional data source to complement risk-based oversight activities of an air operator. In addition, the ISAGO audits and audit reports provide assurances that contribute to a State Safety Programme (SSP), complementing aerodrome certification and aerodrome licensing requirements.

2.4 The goals of the Global Aviation Safety Plan 2023-2025 (ICAO Document 10004) include a call for all States to strengthen their safety oversight capabilities and expand the use of industry programs (GASP Goals 2 and 5). The ISAGO Program can be used to complement both goals by enhancing the safety performance of operations that are generally not directly regulated.

2.5 Regulators, air operators and airports can apply to IATA to gain access to ISAGO registration information and the ISAGO audit reports. The access is free for regulators and airports that support the ISAGO Program. Regulators and airports are also invited to observe ISAGO audits and participate in mutually beneficial activities through memorandum of understanding or similar agreements. The IATA regional office for the Americas can assist with this.

### **3. Action by the Meeting**

3.1 The PA-RAST is invited to:

- a) Note the information presented; and
- b) encourage and recognize the use of ISAGO by States to complement State Safety Programme and air operator regulatory activities as an acceptable means of oversight for ground handling service providers.