



Agenda Item 1A: Current situation and regional priorities

**EXPERIENCE OF ARGENTINA WITH USOAP CMA ACTIVITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED
IN THE PROCESS**

(Presented by Argentina)

SUMMARY	
<p>This working paper presents information on the experience of Argentina in the last Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) continuous monitoring approach (CMA) activity.</p> <p>It also sets forth the importance of capacity building and training of subject matter experts (SMEs) and auditors to improve the performance of States in USOAP CMA activities and support the achievement of the goals and targets of the South American Safety Plan (SAMSP).</p>	
<p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- South American Safety Plan (SAMSP), May 2019 edition; and- Doc 9735 — Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Manual	
<p>ICAO objective:</p>	<p><i>strategic</i></p> <p>Safety</p>

1. Background

1.1 The Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) was established by ICAO for the purpose of monitoring safety oversight obligations of all State entities and ensuring the implementation of all ICAO safety-related SARPs.

1.2 Originally, it consisted of periodic audits of member States. However, as of 2013, the continuous monitoring approach (CMA) was incorporated, involving the conduction of a series of activities to continuously monitor States' compliance with their oversight obligations and the creation of the on-line framework (OLF).

1.3 Argentina has received two USOAP CMA activities in the last six months: a full audit and an ICAO coordinated validation mission (ICVM).

1.4 Previously, the last full audit had been carried out in 2008 and the respective ICVM, in 2013.

1.5 Furthermore, the successive updates of the audit protocol and its questions during that period introduced substantial changes in the functioning of the processes and in the quantification of the effective implementation (EI) percentage.

1.6 The staff involved in the 2022 and 2023 activities--although highly trained in the technical areas and knowledgeable of the USOAP--had never experienced an ICAO mission.

1.7 Moreover, the lack of recent experience in audit activities deprived the State of an important tool for diagnosis and objective quantification of the level of compliance with ICAO SARPs in all areas, without prejudice to the self-assessments carried out through the self-assessment module of the OLF.

2. Discussion

2.1 Importance of USOAP CMA audits as a tool for monitoring compliance with ICAO standards and recommended practices

2.1.1 Argentina received an ICAO USOAP CMA audit from 22 June to 4 July 2022 for the ORG, LEG, OPS, AIR, AIG, AGA and ANS areas, and from 2 to 10 August 2022 for the OPS area.

2.1.2 Subsequently, an ICVM was conducted from 13 to 17 February 2023.

2.1.3 Preparation for the audit included remote assistance from the SAM Regional Office in 2016, as well as accompaniment by that Office throughout the process of the protocol questions (PQs) self-assessment, and formulation, and implementation of measures to address the non-conformities identified during the self-assessment phase.

2.1.4 Likewise, the State aviation activity questionnaire (SAAQ) module upload was updated and the evidence supporting those PQs that, in the State's opinion, were found to be satisfactory was uploaded to the OLF.

2.1.5 Intensive preparation included workshops conducted by the national continuous monitoring coordinators (NCMCs), as well as training and monitoring of the activity of the focal points in each area for the compilation of evidence.

2.1.6 At the end of the first stage of the full audit, which ended on 4 July 2022, it was noted that the auditors' comments provided invaluable feedback regarding compliance with SARPs, PANS, documents, and other ICAO guidelines, particularly, with respect to the criteria for interpretation of the PQs and their respective guidance.

2.1.7 This experience was quickly capitalised for the second phase, allowing a better compilation of evidence and a better understanding of the functioning of the audit system, which streamlined the process of exchange with the auditor and allowed for an optimisation of the working days.

2.1.8 The staff who participated in the exchange with the auditors acquired, in a short period of time, knowledge that far exceeded that obtained in the various face-to-face and virtual training sessions.

2.1.9 The exchanges with the Safety and Air Navigation Oversight Audit Section were particularly enlightening in terms of deadlines and applicable procedures, allowing for a better approach by State experts.

2.1.10 The transfer of experience through a more fluid contact among the different actors of the system through a permanent consultation mechanism allowing States, either through their focal points or their national continuous monitoring coordinators (NCMCs), to interact directly with auditors, advisers and subject matter experts (SMEs) would be particularly beneficial for those States that have not recently received audit activities.

2.2 **Training of subject matter experts (SMEs) and training of experts and auditors to strengthen State capacities and to strengthen the USOAP CMA**

2.2.1 The experience gained in the aforementioned activities shows that, in order to strengthen the State's capacities in the face of a USOAP CMA activity, staff training is essential, not only through courses and workshops, but also in technical assistance activities to third States and even in audits and ICVMs, in which they intervene as SMEs, or as qualified USOAP auditors. The experience of going through one or more audit activities is irreplaceable in terms of training experts.

2.2.2 Our country has highly trained personnel in the technical areas of auditing, but they have not yet completed the training process to become qualified USOAP auditors, or SMEs. Leveraging this technical capacity and the appropriate training of these human resources have great potential towards building the capacity of the State and, at the same time, ensuring USOAP sustainability and strengthening with experts from the South American Region.

2.2.3 To this end, it is of very importance that ICAO provide more training opportunities such as computer-based training (CBT) (Phases 1 and 2), the USOAP auditor preparation course, and the USOAP CMA and State safety programme implementation assessment (SSPIA) workshops, which allow States to properly train the aeronautical administration staff of the Region.

2.2.4 The importance of having a larger number of Spanish-speaking experts and auditors to facilitate exchange during assistance and audit activities should be highlighted. Argentina has received English-speaking auditors for both the full audit and the ICVM, due to the lack of qualified Spanish-speaking experts. While this did not present any inconvenience to the counterparts, not all States may have staff fluent in English and it is, therefore, of utmost importance to ensure that Spanish-speaking auditors, SMEs and advisors are available.

2.2.5 In turn, States should consider undertaking to nominate future auditors, SMEs and advisors to contribute to the sustainability of USOAP and to strengthen the system, with a view to achieving 95% EI by 2030 based on Target 2.1 of the South American Region Safety Plan (SAMSP).

3. **Suggested action**

3.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the contents of this working paper; and
- b) consider the convenience of establishing a permanent forum for consultation to allow States to interact directly with auditors, advisors and subject matter experts (SMEs).