



Agenda Item 6A: Governance

RESULTS OF THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY	
This working paper presents the results of the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Program in the SAM Region, including identified regional priorities.	
ICAO Strategic Objectives:	<i>A: Safety</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective 2 of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the SAM Region Safety Plan (SAMSP) 2023-2025 urges States to strengthen their safety oversight capabilities, achieving implementation milestones of 75% in 2024, 85% in 2026, and 95% in 2030. To achieve this, the implementation of the eight critical elements and the overcoming of institutional challenges are promoted, guiding each State in strengthening its civil aviation and safety oversight systems.

1.2 To support SAM States, during the Seventeenth Meeting of Civil Aviation Authorities of the South American Region (RAAC/17), held in Santiago, Chile, from April 10-14, 2023, the SAM Regional Office presented Working Paper 4, proposing the approval and implementation of the Continuous Improvement Program to strengthen the civil aviation systems of SAM States.

1.3 This program aims to strengthen the civil aviation systems of SAM States through on-site missions to review Protocol Questions (PQs) in all audit areas, followed by remote and/or in-person support activities according to a work plan agreed upon with each State. Details of the proposal can be found at the following link: https://www.icao.int/SAM/Documents/2023-RAAC17/RAAC17_NE04_Safety_final.pdf

The proposal was approved through RAAC17/02 Conclusion, "Approval of the Continuous Improvement Program for Strengthening the Civil Aviation Systems of SAM States," as recorded in the Final Report of the RAAC/17 Meeting:

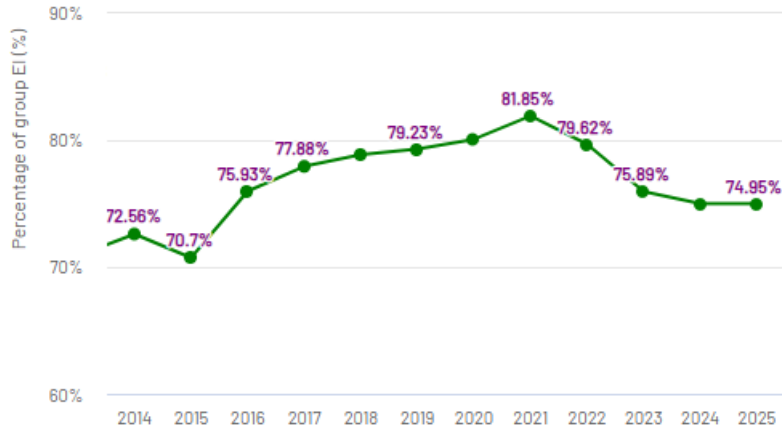
<https://www.icao.int/SAM/Documents/2023-RAAC17/RAAC17%20Informe%20Final.pdf>

2. USOAP Audit Cycle and Sustainability of Capabilities

2.1 The objective of ICAO's Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) under the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) is to promote global aviation safety through continuous monitoring and determination of the safety oversight and management capabilities of Member States.

2.2 For the SAM Region, the average time between full-scope audits (a USOAP audit type that covers PQs associated with an entire State's safety oversight and accident/incident investigation system) for the same State is 11 years. Additionally, it is important to note that 8 out of the 13 SAM States (61%) had their last full audit 10 or more years ago.

2.3 Due to the intervals mentioned above, it has been observed that States concentrate significant efforts on improving their competencies and capabilities in preparation for an audit. This preparation usually results in a significant boost in compliance levels, which, however, do not sustain over time. Once the audit is completed, there is a rapid and sustained decline in these capabilities, evidencing a recurring "boom and bust" cycle in system effectiveness linked to the presence or absence of audits.



2.4 This cyclical behavior is a clear manifestation of practical drift, where complacency and cumulative deviations set in after the temporary achievement of audit-required objectives. The lack of mechanisms ensuring continuous improvement and maintenance of standards and recommended practices poses a potential safety risk. Therefore, it is imperative to seek and implement solutions that, through continuous improvement strategies, mitigate this capacity loss and ensure that safety levels remain consistently high over time, avoiding the detrimental cycle of temporary improvement and gradual deterioration.

3. Results of the Continuous Improvement Program

3.1 Between 2023 and 2024, as part of the Continuous Improvement Program, the SAM Office, with the collaboration of State specialists and specialists from the Regional Safety Oversight Cooperation System (SRVSOP), carried out a total of 7 on-site missions to 7 States in the Region, completing around 1,720 man-hours of on-site assistance, complemented by thousands of additional hours of pre- and post-mission virtual assistance.

3.2 During each technical assistance mission, the status of all Protocol Questions (PQs) in the areas of LEG, ORG, PEL, OPS, AIR, AIG, ANS and AGA were reviewed together with State specialists, in order to provide recommendations for the solution of the missing items found. The States then prepared their corresponding response plan to these observations, which are currently being implemented.

3.3 In addition, between 2022 and 2024, 4 other SAM States, which did not receive a Continuous Improvement Programme mission, received a full-scope audit of the ICAO USOAP Programme, such that this Regional Office has collected data on the status of each PQ of the USAOP Protocol from 11 of the 13 (84.6%) States attached to the South American Office. The priorities resulting from this analysis are presented below.

3.4 From the analysis of the results of the Continuous Improvement Programme and the full-scope audits of the ICAO USOAP Programme carried out in the SAM region between 2022 and 2024 for a combined total of 11 States, common patterns were observed regarding the priorities identified.

3.7 While each State has its own challenges and priorities, the table presents relevant regional information that must be addressed in a timely manner, and which regional priorities and needs:

- **Updating Laws and regulations to reflect the latest amendments to ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.**

Development and implementation of regulatory processes; amendment of basic aeronautical regulations and legislation; identification and notification of differences and identification and publication of significant differences.

- **Human resource management – Calculation and adequate staffing of inspectors**

Improve methodologies for determining staffing needs.

Establish minimum competency requirements for inspectors and delegated staff.

Development of mechanisms to ensure that entities responsible for safety oversight and the investigation authority are able to attract, hire and retain sufficiently qualified and experienced technical personnel and to demonstrate that the State has the capacity to offer competitive employment conditions and remuneration packages.

Review or development of a procedure that will establish the way in which staff legacies will be developed, controlled and updated.

- **Human resources management – Qualification of inspectors**

Development of a training policy that complies with regulatory requirements.

Development of a document that clearly establishes the functions and responsibilities of each inspector.

Development of an instruction manual that clearly establishes the training policy, the criteria for the designation of instructors, and clearly establishes the times and criteria for establishing periodic training.

The instruction manual must establish entry and basic training, on-the-job training (OJT), periodic training and specialized or advanced training.

Establish a training control program that allows for adequate planning and monitoring.

Establish a system for defining and controlling competencies.

- **Management of certification processes for air service operators.**

Detailed review of the certification processes, including the granting of specific approvals.

Establishment of an adequate system of documentation and recording of all phases of the certification processes.

Review and update of the manuals and checklists used by inspectors to carry out the certification processes, including the procedures that involve coordination between different areas.

- **Surveillance management in all relevant areas**

Establish risk-based surveillance programs.

Development/review/update and implementation of the surveillance policy, program and plan in all areas.

Review and update of the manuals and checklists used by inspectors to carry out ongoing surveillance activities, including the procedures that involve coordination between different areas.

Implementation of a system for monitoring and follow-up of surveillance activities.

- **Timely resolution of operational safety problems**

Support in the development of effective and timely mechanisms for the resolution of operational safety problems, including compliance measures.

Implementation of a system for control, monitoring, documentation and registration of operational safety problem resolution processes.

4. Suggested action

4.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of the information presented in this Working Paper;
- b) States are urged to commit to using information from Continuous Improvement Program activities and/or USOAP Audits, as appropriate, to improve SARP compliance levels, and to identify and implement mechanisms to sustain competencies; and
- c) International Organizations, Industry and States that have tools to support the resolution of the priorities presented in this Paper, as well as other specific needs of each State, and/or that can support the implementation of mechanisms to develop, manage, and maintain competencies and capacities in States, are invited to coordinate the facilitation of this assistance with States or through this Regional Office.

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