



**Twentieth Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group
 (GREPECAS/20)**

Salvador, Brazil, 16 – 18 November 2022

Agenda Item 3: Second GREPECAS-RASG-PA Joint Meeting
 3.1 Follow-up on the GREPECAS and RASG-PA Conclusions and Decisions

**UPDATE OF THE CAR/SAM REGIONAL GUIDANCE MATERIAL ON AIR TRAFFIC
 SERVICES QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Air Traffic Services (ATS) quality assurance program can improve safety by supporting the ATS SMS. The fourth edition of Document 9859 addresses integrating the different management systems in service providers so the QA program can be integrated into the ATS SMS, strengthening the safety of the ATS services. To achieve the integration would be necessary to update the QA guidance material to ensure its validity, considering all the changes to the SARPs in recent years.

This Working Paper presents a proposal to update the CAR/SAM regional guidance material on air traffic services for the implementation of the quality assurance (QA) program in response to the changes in the ICAO documentation, including Annex 11 and 19 and Doc. 4444 and 9859.

Action:	Suggested actions are presented in Section 5.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GREPECAS 10 Report • CAR/SAM Regional Guidance Material On Air Traffic Services Quality Assurance Programmes

1. Introduction

1.1 At the Third Caribbean/South American Regional Air Navigation (CAR/SAM/3 RAN) Meeting held in Buenos Aires, Argentina (October 1999), the issue of air traffic services (ATS) quality assurance programmes was discussed. It was considered that one purpose of a quality assurance program was to provide specific guidance on reporting, investigating, and resolving various types of ATS incidents that impact the quality of ATS.

1.2 As part of the discussions, it was established that the program should be designed to work in conjunction with the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as with the national regulations of the States.

1.3 Based on the discussions, it was recommended that ICAO develop guidance material on ATS quality assurance programmes for worldwide use (CAR/SAM/3 Recommendation 5/36). This document is the first phase in the development of the guidance material and will initially be used as regional guidance material by States/Territories and International Organizations in the ICAO CAR/SAM Regions as approved by the Conclusion 10/18 of the GREPECAS/10 Meeting held in Canarias, Spain from 22 to 27 October 2001

2. Scope

2.1 According to the CAR/SAM regional guidance material for the implementation of quality assurance programs in air traffic services, the main objective of the QA program is to reduce incidents; and improve the services through the implementation of various processes as part of the program.

2.2 Although most of the processes aim to improve the quality of the ATS, it is recognized that the program could also help to enhance safety in the ATS.

2.3 With the promulgation of the ATS safety management system (SMS ATS) requirements included in Annexes 11 and 19, and with the updating of documents 9859 and 4444, it is necessary to revise the QA document to ensure full integration of all processes within the service provider including safety and quality assurance.

3. Discussion

3.1 Between 2002 and 2012, the Quality Assurance Program (QA) represented one of the ATS's most important management programs to ensure service quality. The program's main objective was reducing ATS incidents through six essential processes included as part of the QA program. These processes address specific areas of air traffic services:

- i. Controller proficiency checks
- ii. Air Traffic Incident Reporting, Investigation, and Investigation Teams
- iii. Air Traffic Incident Prevention Programme
- iv. Air Traffic Services Evaluation Program
- v. Quality Service Improvement Program
- vi. Proficiency Training Program

3.2 Since 2005, the SMS has become the principal management system following the issuance of the SMS requirements, and the relevance of the QA program became secondary, even disappearing in many states or service providers. Although it is recognized that the SMS is an integral-holistic management system that addresses safety aspects in air traffic services, the QA program (or specific processes), in addition to improving the ATS quality, may also have an impact on safety.

3.3 Considering the above, it is important that States and service providers continue (or resume) the quality assurance program or those processes that can be integrated with the SMS processes in support of safety, mainly the proficiency checks, Air Traffic Incident reporting and investigation, air Traffic Incident Prevention program, and the Quality Service Improvement program.

3.4 States and service providers could benefit from a full implementation or specific processes contained in the QA Guidance Material. Depending on the arrangements of the States and ATS service providers.

3.5 It is important to note that since the publication of Guidance Material on ATS QA, twenty years have passed; during this period, the Standards and Recommended Practices related to air traffic services have undergone significant changes, including the promulgation of the SMS requirements in Annex 11 and Annex 19 and the update of Doc. 4444, and Doc. 9859. Therefore, the secretariat recommends a review of the Guidance Material to ensure its validity and facilitate integration with other management systems, such as the SMS in the ATS.

3.6 It is essential to recognize that the Guidance Material for the QA program represents a valuable reference document for implementing important tasks within air traffic services (Example: ATS incident investigation), so updating this document would have significant relevance.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The quality assurance program (or specific processes) can contribute to the ATS safety improvement by integrating with the SMS processes. The fourth edition of document 9859 addresses integrating the different management systems in service providers, so implementing the QA program (or specific processes) would reinforce ATS safety. To achieve the integration between the QA and ATS it is necessary to review the guidance material to ensure its validity, considering all the changes to the SARPs in recent years.

4.2 It is important to remember that the QA in ATS is supported by a regional agreement with the GREPECAS Conclusion 10/18.

4.3 For the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraphs, it is recommended that States and ATS service providers keep the QA program in place or those processes that could impact the quality and safety of ATS.

5. Suggested actions

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information included in this working paper;
- b) consider the recommendation of the establishment of an Ad hoc group for the review and update of the CAR/SAM regional guidance material for the implementation of quality assurance (QA) programs in air traffic services;
- c) States and service providers should implement or continue the QA program or those processes that could contribute to the ATS quality and safety.