



**Twenty-first Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group
 (GREPECAS/21)**

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 15 to 17 November 2023

Agenda Item 3: Global and Regional Developments
3.3 CAR/SAM Air Navigation Services (ANS) Implementation Level

**PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SEARCH AND RESCUE
 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CAR/SAM REGIONS**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
This Working Paper presents a report on the progress of activities to support the implementation of search and rescue in the CAR/SAM regions and requests the support of States to monitor their achievement.	
Action:	Suggested actions are included 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"> • Convention on International Civil Aviation • Annex 12 – Search and Rescue • International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR), Doc 9731 • Final report of the Twentieth Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS/20), Salvador, Brazil, 16 – 18 November 2022 • Preliminary report of the Fourth NAM/CAR North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Search and Rescue Implementation Task Force (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4) Meeting, ICAO NACC Regional Office, Mexico City, Mexico, and on-line, 9 to 11 August 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 The Contracting States recognize that the implementation of the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) included in the Annexes to the Convention guarantee operational safety levels in accordance with internationally required standards.

1.2 Likewise, they assume the commitment to save human lives, establishing aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services to address circumstances of lost or damaged aircraft.

2. Background

2.1 The GREPECAS/20 Meeting recognized the need to provide greater support to the implementation of the search and rescue service, evaluating current challenges and identifying opportunities for improvement. The CAR and SAM Regions have their implementation mechanisms for air navigation, which address the implementation of search and rescue (SAR) services separately. It was considered that GREPECAS would be the ideal means to promote the harmonization of the CAR/SAM Regions in SAR matters.

2.2 In this sense, through Decision GREPECAS/20/02, the project on the implementation of the search and rescue service (SAR) for the CAR and SAM Regions was approved. This project seeks to enable greater visibility and support for related activities, communicating to the ICAO Council in a more objective manner the progress of SAR implementation in the CAR/SAM Regions.

3. Activities to Support SAR implementation

3.1 CAR Region

3.1.1 Since 2017, the ICAO NACC Regional Office began the implementation of a renewed SAR support strategy, which allowed the approval of the CAR Region SAR Plan, the establishment of the NACC Task Force for SAR Implementation and the convening of annual meetings of SAR tracking.

Fourth Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Search and Rescue Implementation Task Force (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4)

3.1.2 The Fourth Meeting of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation Task Force of the North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4) was held at the ICAO NACC Regional Office, Mexico City, Mexico, and Online, from August 7 to 11, 2023. This meeting was attended by 50 delegates representing 24 States/Territories and one International Organization of the NAM/CAR Regions and the SAM Region.

3.1.3 As part of the activities of this Meeting, on August 7 and 8, a workshop on basic SAR concepts was held, focused on the coordination of search and rescue operations, and the deployment of SAR response mobile units, which was facilitated by the United States Coast Guard and the Central American Air Navigation Services Corporation. Similarly, the simulation of two SAR scenarios was carried out, applying the analysis concepts for the location of lost aircraft and coordination activities at the scene of an accident.

3.1.4 The Task Force maintains the provision of SAR services in the Eastern Caribbean as the main priority for the CAR Region, specifically in the Search and Rescue Region (SRR) of Piarco. The SAR provision in this SRR is quite complex, as it involves integration between several States and Territories at different service levels. The ICAO NACC Regional Office works with Trinidad and Tobago to verify the functioning of their RCC, which is essential to organize the SAR response. Likewise, information is awaited on the status of the signing of SAR agreements, particularly between RCC Piarco (Trinidad and Tobago) and the United States Coast Guard.

3.1.5 An interregional SAR exercise (SAREX) was reported to be being programmed by France for the month of May 2024. This SAREX will involve the SAR Regions of Cayenne, Paramaribo and Piarco, as well as the rescue sub-centres (RSC) of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The RCC Piarco, and the States and Territories under the Piarco SRR, were asked to actively participate in this exercise. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of SAREX as a tool to test SAR plans, with the objective of verifying the effectiveness of operational procedures, identifying existing weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

3.1.6 As part of the work to update the Volume I of the CAR/SAM Air Navigation Plan with the limits and responsibilities in terms of Search and Rescue, the discrepancy that exists between the limits of the aeronautical and maritime search regions has been identified. This is quite a complex issue with implications for territorial sovereignty, which is why the SAR Task Force suggests developing greater coordination with the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

3.1.7 The Meeting addressed the new capabilities in smartphones for automatic emergency notification, mainly those carried out via satellite. The potential benefit of this technology was analysed, as well as the possible challenge it could bring to search and rescue services, due to the increase in the reception of messages outside the channels established until now. In this sense, it was suggested to inform GREPECAS so that the other areas of air navigation services are aware of this technology and ensure that it is implemented in a responsible manner, allowing telecommunications authorities to take SAR Services into consideration when approving the implementation and use of these new functions.

3.1.8 The Meeting approved the incorporation into the CAR Region SAR Plan of a guide, prepared by the United States in response to one of the Task Force tasks, with basic guidelines of the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS), including the sequence of events of the activation of Autonomous Distress Situation Monitoring (ADT). Assuming that aircraft will fly with ADT devices in 2023, there is an operational urgency to provide basic procedures and guidance to air traffic services units and RCCs as soon as possible. The ICAO NACC Office, with support from the United States Coast Guard, plans to conduct another workshop on GADSS implementation in early 2024.

3.1.9 The Task Force approved the incorporation of the SAR Implementation Project for the CAR and SAM Regions approved by GREPECAS/20, in its work program, with the objective of being able to comply with the activities and deliverables associated with it.

3.2 SAM Region

3.2.1 In line with the recommendations of the NACC/WG/SAR/TF/3 Meeting (Mexico City, October 2022), an international SAREX exercise was carried out from July 24 to 28, 2023, with the participation of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, which covered the development and improvement of skills in search, location and rescue coordination in air emergencies.

3.2.2 Independent drills were carried out for each State during the first three days and on the fourth day a joint theoretical drill was carried out to evaluate and improve individual and collective capacities. As a result, the level of preparation of the services was demonstrated and cooperation between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay was strengthened.

3.2.3 The first week of August 2023, the South American Regional Office carried out a technical visit to the SAR services of Venezuela, located in the Maiquetía rescue coordination centre (RCC), as well as the mission control centre (MCC). The SAR has professional personnel trained at the University Institute of Civil Aviation (IUAC), rescue personnel, and specialists.

3.2.4 The ANS acts as the SPOC focal point for Venezuela and supports other maritime and land SAR entities. Institutional agreements have been implemented for cooperation with other State agencies (Armed Forces, civil defence, etc.). During the visit, a SAR response exercise carried out in the vicinity of the Maiquetía airport, on the coastline, was observed, demonstrating the level of preparation of the personnel and the procedures for the deployment of resources.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Encourage the coordination of operational procedures between the Piarco RCC, the RSCs under this SRR and the neighbouring RCCs, as well as the signing of the SAR agreements pending in the CAR and SAM Regions.

4.2 Promote the development of SAR exercises, mainly outside the vicinity of aerodromes, as tools to test SAR plans, with the objective of testing operational procedures, verifying existing weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

4.3 Support the CAR/SAM interregional SAREX organized by France for May 2024.

5. Suggested Actions

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) note of the conclusions and recommendations of section 4;
- b) support activities related to the SAR Implementation Project for the CAR and SAM Regions approved by GREPECAS/20; and
- c) suggest any additional action that is considered necessary.