



**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**  
**AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP**  
**FIFTEENTH MEETING (APIRG/15)**

(Nairobi, Kenya, 26 – 30 September 2005)

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**Agenda Item 5.1: Unified Strategy for resolving safety-related deficiencies**

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH  
FOR THE CONDUCT OF SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDITS  
UNDER ICAO USOAP**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents a report on the implementation of the comprehensive systems approach for the conduct of safety oversight audits launched as of January 2005 under the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).

Action by APIRG is in paragraph 4.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The 35th Session of the Assembly (Resolution A35-6 refers) held in October 2004 resolved that USOAP be expanded to include the safety-related provisions in all safety-related Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The Assembly further requested the Secretary General, from 1 January 2005, to restructure USOAP to adopt a comprehensive systems approach in conducting safety oversight audits in all Contracting States. This paper presents information on the activities on the implementation of the comprehensive systems approach for the conduct of safety oversight audits launched as of 1 January 2005.

**2. A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR USOAP - CONCEPT**

2.1 Safety oversight audits were initially performed on Annex-by-Annex basis, starting with Annexes 1, 6 and 8 and with a view to progressively introducing other Annexes. While this approach served its purpose and proved effective for the establishment of the Programme and the initial audits, it had become clear that continuing along the same line to assess the capabilities of Contracting States for safety oversight and the implementation of safety-related provisions would be both lengthy and expensive.

2.2 The challenge faced by the Organization is to firmly establish and maintain an effective and efficient safety oversight audit programme, while keeping the overall operating expenses at an acceptable

level. On the basis of the experience gained, ICAO was of the opinion that it was time for USOAP to evolve from an Annex-by-Annex to a comprehensive systems approach, which would focus on the States' overall safety oversight capabilities. The comprehensive systems approach would cover all safety-related Annexes and would provide an improved and cost-effective approach to auditing.

2.3 The comprehensive systems approach to the conduct of safety oversight audits consist of two phases. In the first phase, the implementation of Annex provisions and the identification of differences would be determined through the review of duly completed State Aviation Activity Questionnaire and Compliance Checklists for all relevant Annexes, and through the review of documents developed by a State to assist it in the implementation of SARPs, as well as in maintaining an effective safety oversight system. In the second phase, the State being audited would be visited by an ICAO audit team, who would validate the information provided by the State and also conduct an on-site audit of the State's overall capability for safety oversight. This would include an audit of the organization, processes, procedures and programmes established and maintained by the State to help it fulfil its safety oversight obligations.

2.4 Audits under a comprehensive systems approach would be tailored to the level and complexity of aviation activities in the State to be audited, taking into account the mechanisms put in place by the State to carry out its safety oversight responsibilities. The duration and periodicity of the visits, as well as the size of the audit teams, would be determined through a review of the information contained in documents provided by the State, including the completed State Aviation Activity Questionnaire and the Compliance Checklist. As a basis, all Contracting States would be visited at least once in any six-year period, with follow-up visits conducted on a need basis.

2.5 Under the comprehensive systems approach, ICAO Regional Offices will play a major role in their respective regions. The main role of the Regional Offices will be to conduct follow-up missions to ascertain the status of implementation of States' corrective action plans, in addition to maintaining close contact with audited States as part of their regular mission. Technical staff from the Regional Offices will be trained as safety oversight auditors to assist in the conduct of audits and to conduct follow-up missions.

### **3. A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR USOAP - IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1 Audits**

3.1.1 Planning and activities for the implementation of the comprehensive systems approach started immediately following the endorsement of Assembly Resolution A35-6 in October 2004. All States participating in the 35th Session of the Assembly were provided with the tools required to prepare for the forthcoming audits in a CD-ROM, and were requested to submit a completed State Aviation Activity Questionnaire (SAAQ) and Compliance Checklists (CCs) by 31 May 2005. Some States that have requested an extension to complete the tools have been allowed to do so in consideration of the immense work which needs to be done in order to submit fairly accurate information. The analysis of the information submitted by States would enable ICAO to develop the audit programme to implement the requirements of Assembly Resolution A35-6.

3.1.2 Contracting States scheduled to be audited in 2005 (twelve States) were approached during the Assembly, and their agreement sought prior to publishing the schedule. Canada offered to be the first State to be audited. Accordingly, the audit of Canada was officially conducted from 11 to 22 April 2005. Because of the complexity of the process as well as the civil aviation system in Canada, some parts of the system such as the audit relating to accident investigation was conducted from 15 to 18 February 2005.

3.1.3 The audit schedule for States to be audited in 2005 and 2006 was published in December 2004, providing States adequate time to prepare for an ICAO safety oversight audit and to discourage States from requesting the postponement of the audit. Except for the States to be audited prior to October 2005, all other Contracting States have been given an advance notice ranging from a year to over two years. This advance notice would enable Contracting States to fully meet the spirit and intent of Assembly Resolution A35-6, Operative Clause 11, which urges States to accept audit missions as scheduled by ICAO in order to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Programme.

3.1.4 Nevertheless, requests for postponement have been received both from States scheduled to be audited in 2005 as well as in 2006. It should be recognized that all States cannot be audited in the last year of the audit cycle and that each request for postponement generates a negative impact on the Programme both in its effectiveness and efficiency. Each request is assessed for its merit. In the case of non-acceptance of postponement, requesting States are so advised and encouraged to reconsider their request and accept the audit as scheduled. All cases of States who did not withdraw their request for postponement will be reported to the Council, including the financial impact resulting from the refusal to accept the audit as scheduled.

### 3.2. **Training**

3.2.1 In preparation for the launching of safety oversight audits under the comprehensive systems approach ICAO has conducted seven seminar/workshops, one in each of the ICAO Regional Offices, directed at the National Safety Oversight Coordinators, ICAO Regional Office experts and other participants from Contracting States and regional and international organizations. A total of 437 participants from 111 Contracting States, 13 international and regional organizations and from the seven ICAO Regional Offices participated in these seminar/workshops. Also, regional office staff were provided with a detailed briefing on the comprehensive systems approach and the role of the regional offices in the implementation of USOP.

3.2.2 ICAO also conducted three auditor training courses: two held at Headquarters and one in the European and North Atlantic Office in Paris. A total of fifty-nine experts, including officers from ICAO Headquarters and Regional Offices, and officials seconded by Contracting States to ICAO to support the Programme on a long- or short-term basis, have been trained. Three additional auditor training courses will be conducted in three ICAO Regional Offices (Bangkok, Dakar, and Lima) before the end of 2005. Training in the remaining ICAO Regional Offices (Cairo, Mexico and Nairobi) is planned for 2006.

### 3.3 **Tools**

3.3.1 A series of audit tools was developed to assist both Contracting States and ICAO in the preparation for, and conduct of, safety oversight audits. These tools include the State Aviation Activity Questionnaire (SAAQ), Compliance Checklists for each Annex concerned and Audit Protocols for each area of audit. The SAAQ is available to all Contracting States through the ICAO-Net website in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

3.3.2 Compliance Checklists for each Annex concerned have been prepared to assist States in ascertaining the status of implementation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and in identifying any difference that may exist between national regulations and the corresponding ICAO Annex provisions. SAAQs and Compliance Checklists submitted by States will enable ICAO to prepare better for forthcoming audits and Compliance Checklists may also be used to enable ICAO to maintain an up-to-date database on the level of compliance by States with ICAO SARPs.

3.3.3 Audit protocols, which constitute the primary tool for the conduct of on-site safety oversight audits, have been developed for all areas of audit. Audit protocols enable auditing against the critical elements of a safety oversight system, and can also be used by Contracting States both in preparation for an ICAO audit and in the conduct of internal audits.

#### 3.4 **Staff**

3.4.1 ICAO has completed recruitment of all the required staff. With respect to short-term seconded staff, thirty-two experts from States have been already trained. Approximately sixty more will be trained in 2005 and another sixty are expected to be trained in 2006. Short-term seconded staff can contribute significantly to our effort of reducing travel cost and, therefore, no effort will be spared to train as many qualified short-term seconded auditors as possible.

3.4.2 With respect to long-term seconded officers, only four out of the eight promised last year will be able to join the Programme. This will put some stress on the Programme, as there will not be an adequate number of auditor staff at Headquarters to conduct the necessary analysis of information submitted by States on a timely basis.

### 4. **ACTION BY APIRG**

4.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information presented relating to the implementation of the comprehensive systems approach; and
- b) urge States to accept the safety oversight audit schedule as determined by ICAO, with reference to Operative Clause 11 of Assembly Resolution A35-6.

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