

Evolution from voluntary assessment to mandatory audits

Experience of the International Civil Aviation Organization

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

ICAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection.

International aviation is arguably the largest and most complex system ever created consisting not only of aeroplanes and airports but also air traffic control and navigation systems. Aeroplanes are taking off virtually every second somewhere in the world. Without international standards, travelling by air would be at best chaotic and at worst unsafe. Ensuring safety in aviation is critical to the world's well-being and progress.

TRANSITION FROM VOLUNTARY TO MANDATORY PROGRAMME

In 1995 some States expressed concern that ICAO had no mechanism to ensure that all States met their safety oversight obligations as called for by the Convention. A Voluntary assessment programme was established, funded by voluntary contributions by member States. The objective of the Voluntary programme was to assess those States willing to be subject to an assessment limited to Annexes 1, 6 and 8 (i.e. personnel licensing, operations and airworthiness of aeroplanes, considered the exportable activities) to determine if in fact there was a problem for States to meet their oversight obligations. Within a two year period 67 Assessments were conducted. The results in fact confirmed a safety oversight problem worldwide. The results were shared at the 1997 DGCA conference which produced 38 recommendations, which included the need to develop a mandatory audit programme. The rationale being that if the audit programme was funded by the regular budget and applied to all States, then all States would be subject to the same audit criteria and methodology. The methodology would be agreed upon by a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) to be signed between ICAO and each member State. The generic MoU approved by the ICAO Council was then required to be signed by all ICAO member States without the possibility of any modification. All States were to be audited within a three year period and then all States were subject to an audit follow up to confirm if in fact progress was made to resolve the deficiencies.

ICAO UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME

The ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) was launched as a mandatory audit programme on 1 January 1999 following a resolution by the ICAO Assembly and on the basis of recommendations made by the 1997 Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Conference on a Global Strategy for Safety Oversight. The objective of USOAP was to promote global aviation safety by regularly auditing ICAO Member States to determine whether the critical elements of a safety oversight system have been implemented effectively i.e. to assess their capability for effective safety oversight by determining the State's level of implementation of all safety-related ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS), associated procedure, guidance material and practices.

TRANSPARENCY

ICAO recognized transparency and sharing of safety information to be one of the fundamental tenets of a safe air transportation system, the more transparent the results the more effective it was to get quick resolution by States. Since the inception of the audit programme, transparency has increased.

1997 - Assessment Programme : The results were shared only with the member State that was assessed.

1999- The audit results were shared with the audited State; however a summary report was shared with all member States on an ICAO secure website

2004- Audits expanded to include all safety provisions in all safety annexes: The entire audit report would be shared with all member States, a summary of the audit results are also shared on the public website. States were also encouraged to share their entire audit report to the public.

2007 - Following the High Level Safety Conference (HLSC) and the 36th ICAO Assembly, States called for the development of an additional mechanism in the audit programme to identify significant safety concerns (SSCs), that would require States to immediately resolve the deficiency. Unresolved SSCs would be immediately published for all Member States to see.

Present - The 37th Assembly in 2010 mandated the ICAO Council to develop a mechanism to make the SSC public.

CONTINUOUS MONITORING APPROACH (CMA)

A resolution was approved at the 36th ICAO Assembly in 2007 calling on the Secretariat to develop a new methodology to be considered following the end of the CSA cycle of audits in 2010. Accordingly, during the 37th Assembly, a new Resolution A37-5 evolving the USOAP to a Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) which will incorporate the analysis of safety risk factors.

The CMA is designed to be long-term, cost-effective, flexible and sustainable, generating valuable data and contributing to the improvement of global aviation safety. This will be accomplished by using a harmonized and consistent approach to monitoring the safety oversight capabilities of Member States on an ongoing basis. The CMA will identify safety deficiencies, assess associated safety risks, develop assistance strategies, and enable the prioritization of assistance. CSA audits will continue to be carried out by ICAO and will be tailored to the level and complexity of aviation activities in a particular State and could be either full scale or of limited scope. Additional activities are envisaged; which will include, but not limited to, safety audits (CSA audits carried out at the request of States and on a cost recovery basis) and ICAO Coordinated Validation Missions (ICVMs).

USOAP began a two-year transition period to the CMA beginning in 2011, gradually implementing the various CMA activities, with the full implementation of the new approach for 2013.

Further information can be found on <http://www2.icao.int/en/CMA%20Forum/default.aspx>.