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IATA SAFETY AUDIT FOR GROUND OPERATIONS (ISAGO)

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), in collaboration with the ground handling industry and other stakeholders, has taken the initiative to develop an Integrated Solution for Ground Operations that comprises the development of harmonized ground handling operations standards and procedures. A key component of the initiative is a safety audit program, the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO), designed to achieve safety and cost benefits and to eliminate the need to duplicate the audit of ground handling operations by airlines.

The support and the recognition of the IATA initiatives such as ISAGO by various industry stakeholders, including regulatory bodies, has bestowed international acceptability and credibility, contributing to a much-needed global standardization of ground handling activities. Appropriate regulatory input to the development of ISAGO is maintained and can be further expanded to ensure alignment. Hence, from the regulatory point of view, ISAGO, supported by an Integrated Solution for Ground Operations, could be regarded as an acceptable means of compliance to requirements for air operator oversight of ground handling operations.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This paper relates to the Safety, Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency and Security & Facilitation Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Annex 6 — <i>Operation of Aircraft</i> www.IATA/safety www.IATA/newISAGOmodel www.IATA/GroundOps www.IATA/GADM/GDDB

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ground handling operations are a source of significant personnel safety and aircraft/equipment damage concerns yet there are few global regulatory provisions in place. Furthermore, the complexity of ground handling operations has increased significantly with widespread airport development and traffic growth, corresponding to larger numbers and size of aircraft. Compounding the issue is the demand to achieve minimized turnaround and stand occupancy times, which also increases the concentration of simultaneous ground handling operations and more ground support equipment. Maintaining and improving ground operational safety is challenging in this complex environment. In addition, exacting security requirements have to be incorporated.

1.2 A shortage of global regulatory provisions does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of oversight of ground handling operations. Some states conduct their own oversight either directly of the ground service provider or through regulatory processes to assure the adequacy and appropriateness of outsourced services provided at airports or for air operators. Moreover, airline oversight of outsourced services is required as part of the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) program. As a result, ground service providers endure repeated audits and inspections, often covering the same areas.

1.3 At the request of its members, IATA addressed these concerns by bringing together the industry stakeholders (airlines, ground service providers, regulators, airports, cargo handlers and others) to develop a global standard for auditing and oversight of ground service providers. The IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) is part of an integrated solution that implements unified industry standards for the conduct, oversight and continuous improvement of ground handling¹ operations.

2. IATA SAFETY AUDIT FOR GROUND OPERATIONS

2.1 ISAGO is an audit program based on conformity with industry-accepted standards. It has a dual aim of improving safety and security in ground operations and reducing the burden and cost of airline oversight by audit sharing.

2.2 ISAGO is modelled on the IOSA and is conducted on a two-year cycle. The audits assess the organization and management of a ground handling company at its headquarters and the operational management and control of the ground operations and services it provides at a station (airport). The station audits are the backbone of the program, being the focus of the many redundant audits conducted today by airlines.

2.3 The ISAGO audits based on the assessment of conformity with industry approved standards for the following ground operations:

- a) load control;
- b) passenger and baggage handling;
- c) aircraft handling and loading;
- d) aircraft ground movement; and
- e) cargo and mail handling.

2.4 In time the scope of ISAGO is expected to be extended to include additional ground operations.

¹ In the context of this paper, the term “ground handling” is used as defined in ICAO Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft* as ‘services necessary for an aircraft’s arrival at, and departure from, an airport, other than air traffic services’.

2.5 A number of IATA Member Airlines worldwide have formed a “pool” to commit auditors to carry out ISAGO audits, according to internationally recognized safety standards, with the intention that Pool Members share audit reports, thereby saving themselves the cost and effort of conducting their own audits at all of their airports. The headquarters audits are usually conducted by IATA-accredited Audit Organizations.

2.6 The ISAGO audits provide the following benefits:

- a) standardized oversight and continuous monitoring of outsourced services;
- b) harmonized globally applicable safety standards and procedures for ground operations;
- c) implementation of SMS to ground handling operations, identification of hazards and risks;
- d) standardized approach to ground operations training requirements;
- e) reduced audit redundancy, thereby reducing costs; and
- f) reduced work complexity, consistent turnaround times.

2.7 The ISAGO audit reports are available to regulatory bodies through their AOC holders or on request from IATA. The audit reports, used by airlines in lieu of and in support of their oversight of outsourced ground handling operations, outline the scope of the audits and the activities taken by the ground service providers to demonstrate full conformity with all applicable ground handling operational standards.

2.8 ISAGO is continually developed and aligned with regulatory provisions to ensure overall consistency and relevance of the policies, processes, procedures and oversight pertaining to ground handling operations. All interested stakeholders, including regulatory authorities and associated agencies and international industry representatives such as Airports Council International (ACI), are invited to participate in the work of IATA in ground handling to assure a consistent and collaborative result. IATA participates in the Aerodromes Design and Operations Panel, in particular the Ground Handling Task Force (GHTF), and the Safety Management Panel. IATA’s aim is to raise awareness of industry-lead solutions that ICAO and regulatory authorities may utilize for the enhancement of safety, efficiency and harmonization of ground handling operations globally.

2.9 Significantly, ISAGO has recently established a strategy for the mandatory implementation of a safety management system (SMS) in ground handling operations by 2019. The SMS requirements are fully compliant with global regulations applicable to civil aerodrome and air operators. Details of the strategy and guidelines for the audit of a safety management system (SMS) within ISAGO are outlined at Appendix A to this paper.

2.10 Since its inception in 2008, over 1200 ISAGO audits have been performed. In 2015 IATA embarked upon a ‘root and branch’ review of the audit program, which will culminate in 2017 with the introduction of improvements, focussed on providing higher quality and more efficient audits, to provide greater assurance of meeting the objectives.

3. THE IATA INTEGRATED SOLUTION FOR GROUND OPERATIONS

3.1 ISAGO is one component of an ‘Integrated Solution for Ground Operations’, a coordinated effort to combine IATA’s ground handling initiatives into a set of tools that ensure ground handling operations at airports are conducted in a safe, orderly and efficient manner, thereby minimizing the risk to both people and equipment. The other components include the development of harmonized ground handling operations standards and procedures published in the Airport Handling Manual (AHM) and the IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM), and the establishment of a data-driven IATA Global

Aviation Data Management (GADM)/Ground Damage Database (GDDB) system to perform comprehensive safety analysis and monitor safety performance.

4. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

4.1 The support and the recognition of the IATA initiatives such as ISAGO by various industry stakeholders, including regulatory bodies, has bestowed international acceptability and credibility, contributing to a much-needed global standardization of ground handling activities. Some airports and civil aviation authorities have acknowledged the benefits gained and have adopted ISAGO.

4.2 Appropriate regulatory input to the development of ISAGO is maintained and can be further expanded to ensure alignment. Hence, from the regulatory point of view, ISAGO, supported by an Integrated Solution for Ground Operations, could be considered by a State as an acceptable means of compliance to requirements for air operator oversight of ground handling operations.

APPENDIX

ISAGO SMS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This strategy establishes a timetable for all the ISAGO SMS provisions currently in Edition 5 of the ISAGO Standards Manual (GOSM) to be elevated from Recommended Practices to Standards by 2019. The SMS strategy is primarily intended to allow Providers to establish implementation plans (and to budget for resources accordingly) to raise their level of safety investment and commitment to equal that required of their customer airlines, as per IOSA ORG 1.1.10. Moreover, from September 2016 the 10th Edition of the IOSA Standards Manual introduces a new standard (ORG 3.5.5) applicable to Operators for the management of safety risks associated with outsourced operations.

The strategy may be viewed and downloaded from the IATA website:

<http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/safety/audit/isago/Documents/isago-sms-strategy-march-2016.pdf>

Guidelines for the audit of a SMS within the ISAGO program are also published on the IATA website:

<http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/safety/audit/isago/Documents/isago-sms-audit-guidelines-gosm-ed5.pdf>



ISAGO SMS IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Plan for Upgrading ISAGO SMS Provisions

1ST EDITION EFFECTIVE MARCH 2016

