



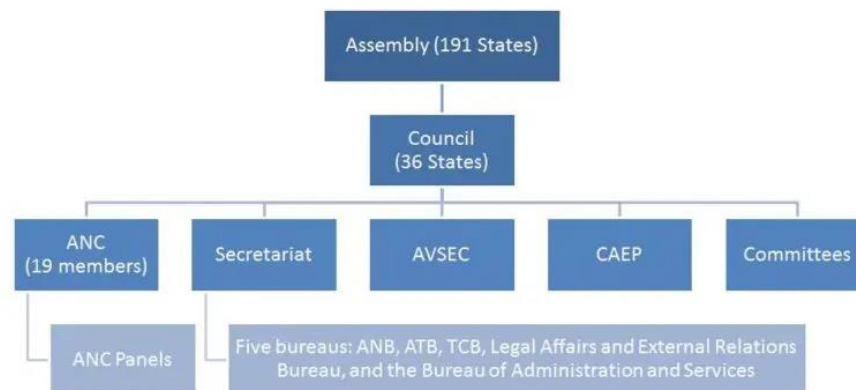
# ICAO, How it Works

## The Secretariat

The ICAO Secretariat is under the direct authority of the Secretary General. It consists of five bureaus: the Air Navigation Bureau (ANB), the Air Transport Bureau (ATB), the Technical Cooperation Bureau (TCB), the Legal Affairs and External Relations Bureau, and the Bureau of Administration and Services. IFATSEA mainly interacts with the ANB.

These five bureaus report directly to the Secretary General and each of them is supported by one or more Deputy Director. Depending on the bureau, there are also Chiefs for the different sections and a number of senior officers and technical officers.

The seven Regional Offices are also under the purview of the Secretary General and are supported by a Regional Director. The following chart describes the hierarchy in ICAO and the role of the Secretariat within the Organization:



The Air Navigation Bureau is divided into three different groups: monitoring and oversight, air navigation capacity and efficiency, and aviation safety. The work of the ANB touches four different elements:

Policy and Standardization

Safety and Infrastructure Monitoring

Safety and Infrastructure Analysis

Safety and Infrastructure Implementation

The ANB is also the focal point for the development and amendment of the Global Air Navigation Plan Portal (GANP) and the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP): these two global plans are affecting all sections of the Bureau, but also all the Regional Offices. This is why the ANB also coordinates with the different Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs), as well as with States and industry stakeholders when required in the various regions.



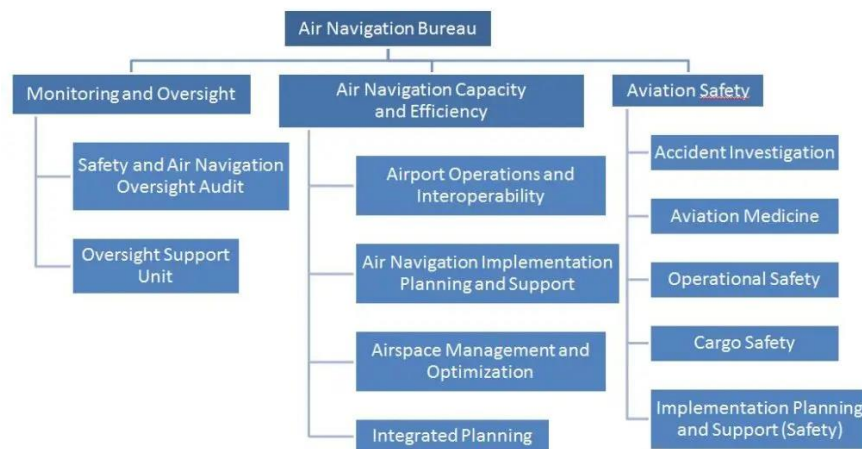
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## The Assembly

### Organization

Normally, the ICAO General Assembly is held every three years at the end of September and the beginning of October. The 41st session was held in 2022 and thus the next session is foreseen in 2025. All ICAO Member States and invited International Organizations gather in ICAO Headquarters in Montréal, Canada, and the duration is typically of two weeks.

The Assembly can convene extraordinary meetings in other locations and at other times than the normal three years interval, should special circumstances arise and require doing so. This special gathering would be decided by the ICAO Council if at least 20% of the Member States agree to hold such special meeting. These meetings are shorter (a few days) and the last such meeting was in 2003.



The bureau is also in charge of ICAO's response to the different crisis affecting aviation and is the lead for its contingency plan's development. The following chart describes the hierarchy within the ANB and its different sections.

### Powers And Responsibilities

The Assembly has many powers that it can exercise and many responsibilities to carry during its meetings. Namely, the Assembly oversees the election of the Member States that will be represented on the ICAO Council, of the examination and appropriate actions to be taken with regards to the reports the Council has produced, the approval of the budgets of ICAO, etc. The Assembly and its many commissions may also elect to refer specific matters to other bodies for action. It can also delegate to the ICAO Council certain powers. Finally, the Assembly can take care of any other matter not currently covered or assigned to the Council or to another group. The Assembly normally comprises five different commissions: technical, administrative, economic, legal, and technical cooperation. It is also during the Assembly that amendments to the Chicago Convention are approved and sent for ratification by States.



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## Documents And Outcomes

Documentation and outcomes relating to past ICAO Assemblies can be found on the ICAO website. Each session links to a complete list of the official Resolutions adopted by States during its ten-day proceedings, as well as to the Working and Information Papers submitted for the consideration of the contracting State delegations which participated.

## The Regional Offices

ICAO, on top of its headquarters located in Montreal, Canada, maintain seven Regional Offices worldwide that provide support and help coordination at the regional level for its Member States:

- ✓ Asia and Pacific (APAC) - Bangkok, Thailand
- ✓ Middle East (MID) - Cairo, Egypt
- ✓ Western and Central African (WACAF) - Dakar, Senegal
- ✓ South American (SAM) - Lima, Peru
- ✓ North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) - Mexico City, Mexico
- ✓ Eastern and Southern African (ESAF) - Nairobi, Kenya
- ✓ European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) - Paris, France

Regional Office oversee providing their member States with the following services. Their objectives are:

- To assist with, expedite and follow-up on the implementation of regional plans and supplementary procedures, as well as the implementation of ICAO SARPs.
- To oversee ICAO air transport policies and activities, encourage States to gather statistics and implement Annex 9 (Facilitation), to respond to economy-related surveys, etc.
- To encourage coordination amongst all stakeholders to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure global harmonization. This is done through cooperation with the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), etc.
- To manage and oversee Regional Scholarship Programs, assist with fellowship applications provide advice with regards to requests for regional projects and to ensure familiarization of newly recruited experts in the field of technical cooperation.
- To obtain and maintain current copies of regulations and laws of States under their jurisdiction, and to seek, when required, judicial information relating to aviation matters.
- To encourage and assist on security-related aspects of aviation, in accordance with ICAO policies and SARPs. This includes the required monitoring and follow-up when applicable.
- Other tasks and responsibilities, such as to report on implementation by States of Assembly and Council Resolutions regarding security, to relay information on accidents and incidents, to facilitate the distribution of ICAO publications and documents, to hold



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Regional Meetings, to manage media relations and provide presentations on ICAO activities.

## ICAO Air Navigation Commission & Panels

### The Technical Arm of the ICAO Council

The Air Navigation Commission manages the technical part of the ICAO Work Programs and acts under the authority of the ICAO Council. The ANC is therefore in charge of 17 of the 19 Annexes to the Chicago Convention and recommend SARPs adoption or amendment that are related to these Annexes. To learn more on how SARPs and PANS are developed (what is called the standards-making process), as well as how IFATSEA plays a key role in this very important mechanism, [click here](#).

The ANC normally meets for three sessions of nine weeks each per year to address those technical matters. Each session normally tables a large number of preliminary reviews (coming most of the time from Panels' work), final reviews (to include comments from States and International Organizations following the circulation of an ICAO State Letter) as well as Panels, PIRGs, RASGs and other reports.

### Expertise from States and International Organizations

The Air Navigation Commission is composed of nineteen commissioners, who have qualifications and experience in various aviation domains, as described in the Chicago Convention. Even though Commissioners are nominated by their State, they do not represent the interest of their State or any State or region: they act independently and utilize their expertise in the interest of the entire international civil aviation community.

Additionally, to these 19 Commissioners, several other representatives from States and 8 members from the industry are invited to take part in ANC meetings as observers. The International Organizations are represented by ACI, CANSO, IAOPA, IATA, IBAC, ICCAIA, IFALPA and IFATSEA.

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### Safety and Efficiency Through Innovation and Global Harmonization

As mentioned earlier, the ANC reviews, amends and eventually recommends SARPs and PANS for adoption or approval by the ICAO Council.

This process can be sometimes challenging, as there are many stakeholders involved and several priorities to keep in mind, such as maintaining and improving the overall safety of



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aviation in general, the efficiency of the air navigation system, all this while also considering the increase of traffic demand and the associated pressure on the current aviation infrastructure.

There are also new and advanced systems to introduce risks to mitigate, all this while staying in line with global priorities highlighted in the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP). No doubt this requires a lot of coordination and effort!

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## Panels

The Air Navigation Commission has established several panels of experts in various disciplines, who are assigned specific tasks from the ANC work program. These panels are tasked to develop SARPs and PANS and to make sure that they are effective and practical for those who will have to use them. They are typically composed of experts from States and international organizations who are competent in certain fields of expertise to develop technical proposals.

All panels are supported by the ICAO Secretariat. This is done through the appointment of a Secretary (Technical Officer) and of a chairperson. The latter is elected from the panel membership.

### ANC Technical Panels

- Aerodrome Design and Operations Panel (ADOP)
- Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP)
- ATM Requirements & Performance Panel (ATMRPP)
- Flight Operations Panel (FLTOPSP)
- Frequency Spectrum Management Panel (FSMP)
- Information Management Panel (IMP)
- Personnel Training and Licensing Panel (PTLP)
- Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems Panel (RPASP)
- Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP)
- Safety Management Panel (SMP)
- Surveillance Panel (SP)



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## Making SARPS

Standards and Recommended Practices (also known as SARPs) and Procedures for Air Navigation (also known as PANS) are the basic elements that complement the ICAO Chicago Convention. SARPs can be found in the 19 Annexes to the Chicago Convention, and they are supplemented by six Procedures for Air Navigation:

PANS-ABC: Abbreviations and Codes

PANS-AERO: Aerodromes

PANS-AIM: Information Management

PANS-ATM: Air Traffic Management

PANS-OPS: Aircraft Operations

PANS-TRG: Training

SARPs and PANS are fundamental for all stakeholders from the aviation world (States and Industry) since they are the cornerstone of international harmonization of practices in terms of safety and efficiency, both at the airport and in the sky. Global harmonization can only happen if States implement these SARPS and PANS; they are essential to an adequate performance of the air navigation system and to a safe, orderly, and efficient flow of air traffic. ICAO Annexes and PANS contain nowadays over 12,000 SARPs, which are constantly maintained and evolved to support the latest developments and innovations in the aviation field. This work is done mainly through the ICAO ANC Panels.

The development and further amendment of SARPs and PANS is done in an extremely structured way, which allows for maximum transparency for all ICAO stakeholders. The process is constituted of many steps, often referred to as the “amendment process” or “standards-making process”. This mechanism involves many technical experts (some of them are nominated by and represent IFATSEA), both from within ICAO, Member States, and International Organizations.

It takes two years for the beginning of the process, where an initial proposal recommends either a new standard, recommended practice or procedure, or an amendment to an existing one, to be officially adopted or approved for inclusion in an Annex or a PANS. Sometimes, the time required needs to be expanded while some urgent circumstances dictate an accelerated process for other items: it all depends on the nature and priority of the proposal being considered.

This state-of-the-art system that is modern aviation involves a lot of procedures and systems; it is in fact one of the most complex man-made industries. To achieve such precision work, there is a need for a common language and a common understanding of who is doing what and when: this is what Standards and Recommended Practices, or SARPs, are made for. SARPs cover all technical and operational aspects of international civil aviation, such as safety, personnel





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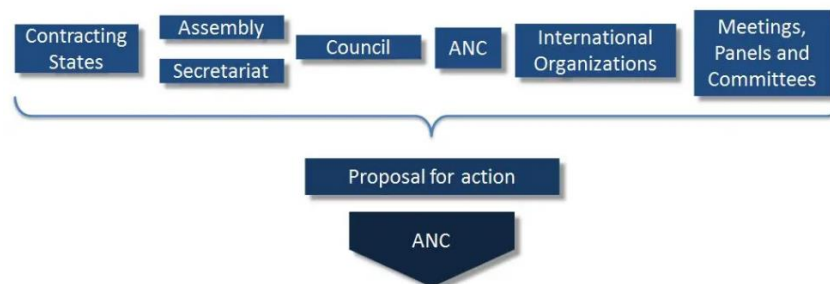
## What About SUPPs And Guidance Material?

On top of SARPs and PANS, regional Supplementary Procedures (SUPPs) and Guidance Material (GM) are published by ICAO. SUPPs are like PANS in essence but are applied in the ICAO region for which they have been designed, therefore they do not have worldwide applicability. Guidance Material complements SARPs and PANS and contains information to ease implementation by States. It can be contained in Attachments to Annexes or exist as a separate document (manuals, circulars, etc.) Normally, Guidance Material is released at the same time as SARPs and PANS and can be amended as necessary. Circulars are an exception: they are not normally updated.

## Four Phases of SARP Development

### 1. ORIGIN

Where do SARPs come from? How do we make sure that they are effective today and tomorrow? SARPs are created to maintain a safe, efficient, and orderly flow of air traffic for international civil aviation's, considering the forecasted growth for the years to come. Typically, the origin for their development (or amendment) comes from a proposal to solve a problem identified by ICAO, by a State or by an International Organization, such as IFATSEA. It can be proposed during a Panel meeting, at the Assembly, or be suggested work from the Secretariat, the Council, or the ANC. Other ICAO meetings can also raise issues that would lead to SARPs development.



### 2. DEVELOPMENT

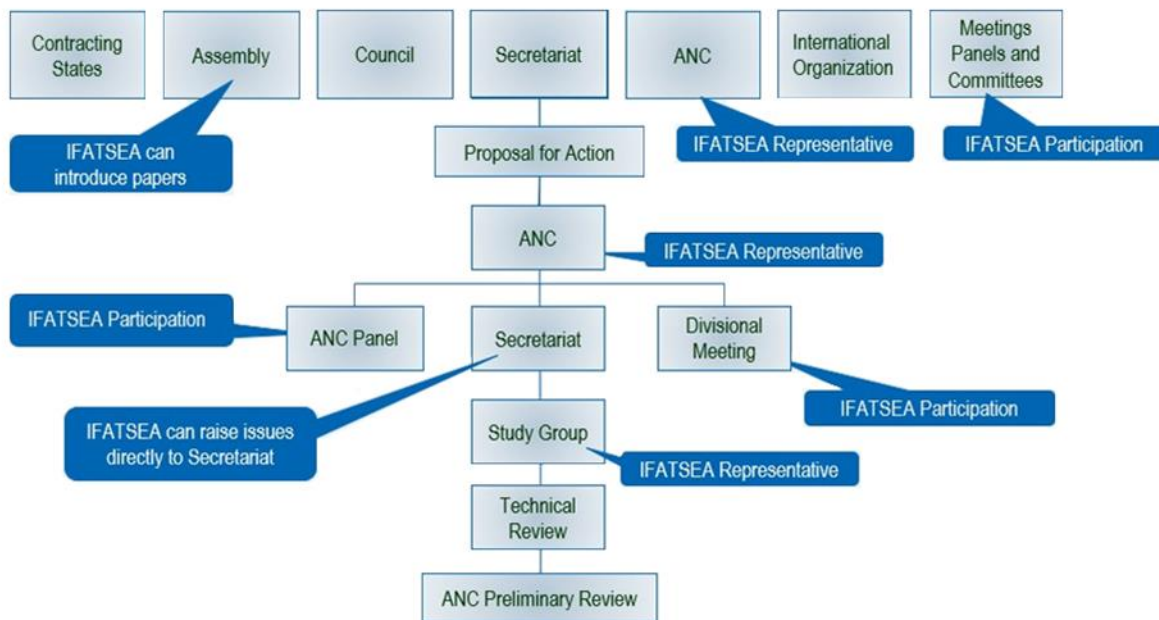
For Panels and other groups of experts to work on a specific issue, the related work program item must be approved by the ANC. As mentioned previously, proposals for action have various origins. They can even be of such a large spectrum that they are discussed in a divisional-type meeting devoted to the topic, such as the Air Navigation Conference (AN-Conf). Approval of work program items is done normally through the Job Card approval process: a tool used to describe the problem statement, the steps to solve it and the associated timeline. Once approved by the ANC, the Panel or working group can start its work, both during meetings and between meetings, by correspondence. Once the group has reached consensus and the work is





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mature enough, it is deemed ready for presentation to the ANC. It is important to note that depending on the complexity of the topic, items can be assigned to Panels or dealt with by the Secretariat directly. For complex and technical issues dealing with a specific subject and requiring detailed examination, the ANC will normally refer the matter to an ANC Panel. For less complex issues, the Secretariat may elect to create a Study Group to deal with the topic. ANC Panels are composed of qualified technical experts, who are expected to advance issues within a specified timeframe. Their meetings are relatively formal and follow the procedures described in Doc 7984. Study Groups formed by the Secretariat are normally smaller and the rules governing their conduct are normally more flexible. They typically have a sunset too, when the issue for which they have been created has been solved



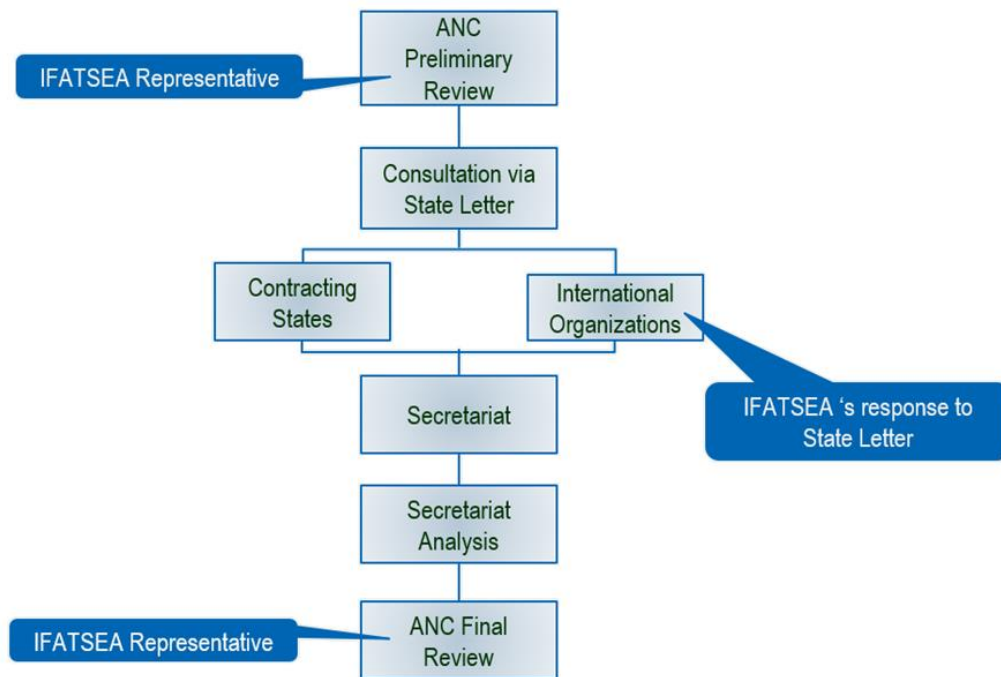
### 3. REVIEW

Once a Proposal for Amendment (PFA) - it can be either a new or amended SARP - is deemed mature enough to be sent for consultation to States, it is presented to the ANC in what is called the Preliminary Review. The review of the proposal will normally be limited to consideration of controversial issues which, in the opinion of the Secretariat or the Commission, require special attention before being circulated for comments in an ICAO State Letter. Once the preliminary review is completed, the PFA is then submitted to States and International Organizations for comments in an official ICAO State Letter. Recipients normally have three months to respond. These comments are gathered and analyzed by the Secretariat and presented in a working paper to the ANC for Final Review. The Commission will then establish the final text of the PFA, considering States' comments and recommendations from the Secretariat. Once finalized, the



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PFA, if modifying an Annex, is presented to the Council by the ANC for adoption, in a Report to Council. PANS are approved directly by the ANC without the intervention of the Council.



## 4. ADOPTION & PUBLICATION

Within two weeks of the adoption of an Annex amendment by the Council, an interim edition, the "Green Edition", is made available to States. States have three months to disapprove. With a further one month for preparation, it makes the Effective Date four months after adoption by the Council (provided a majority of States have not disapproved it). There is normally an additional four months between the Effective Date and the Applicability Date. On the Notification Date, one month prior to the Applicability Date, States must notify ICAO of any differences. After the Effective Date, a State Letter announces that the amendment has become effective, and the Secretariat then issues the "Blue Edition" which is the final version of the amendment. To limit the amount and frequency of amendments, ICAO has established that there would be a common applicability date every year for all documents. This date matches the AIRAC scheduled date of November. Overall, it takes more or less two years from the moment a PFA is presented to the ANC for preliminary review to the moment it becomes applicable. Although it may seem very long, the goal of the whole process is to provide a maximum number of opportunities for States and International Organizations to comment and participate in the elaboration of fair, logical and consensus based SARPs and PANS.



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## From START TO FINISH



This information contained within this document was sourced from the IFATCA (International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations) website with their explicit permission.

