

Press Release: A review of the 2024 Standard of Excellence in Safety Management System programme



Amsterdam, Netherlands, 28 November 2024 - Representatives from NAV CANADA, HungaroControl and NATS met with the assessors and programme coordinators of the CANSO/EUROCONTROL Standard of Excellence in Safety Management System (SMS) (SoE) measurement programme. The meeting took place in Valencia, Spain in November and it aimed to review progress of the programme in 2024, gather feedback, and outline priorities for the 2025 launch.

The Standard of Excellence in SMS programme involves annual measurement which provides air navigation service providers (ANSPs) with a structured framework to evaluate their SMS maturity, identify key improvement areas, and enhance safety practices. By leveraging a 13-area questionnaire, ANSPs gain

valuable insights to guide their safety journey and ensure long-term sustainability in safety management and identify future improvements.

In 2024, the programme achieved significant engagement with 44 ANSPs completing the detailed assessment questionnaire. This strong turnout underscores the programme's importance in fostering collaboration and driving improvements across the industry.

The questionnaire acts as both a diagnostic and developmental tool, encouraging ANSPs to reflect internally on their SMS maturity and chart a clear pathway to improvement. To further assist participants, new support materials are being developed for the 2025 cycle, set to be demonstrated during the [CANSO Global Safety Conference](#) in March 2025 and launched in May 2025.

In addition, a robust onboarding process will enhance the next cycle and will incorporate several enhancements to ensure a smoother experience for participants:

- **Instructional Video:** A user-friendly guide to simplify the questionnaire process.
- **Improved Onboarding Support:** Tailored assistance, including walkthroughs for new participants.
- **Enhanced App Features:** Addressing access issues and improving functionality based on participant feedback.
- **Increased collaboration:** Enabling more participants from each ANSP to collaboratively complete the assessment by assigning sections to colleagues.

These updates aim to make the SoE in SMS programme more accessible and impactful, as well as encouraging broader participation from CANSO and EUROCONTROL member ANSPs.

As John Wennes, CANSO Safety Programmes Manager commented: “The SoE in SMS initiative offers ANSPs a unique opportunity to benchmark their progress, access expert resources, and contribute to a safer global airspace.” He continues: “We are delighted to have seen such a high number of participants in the 2024 cycle of the SoE in SMS. Meetings like this one allow us to collect feedback and ensure that each cycle is improved for the benefit of our members.”

Radu Cioponea, Senior Team Leader, Safety Tools and Just Culture, EUROCONTROL, adds: “Over the years, we have committed significant resources to run this programme on behalf of CANSO and EUROCONTROL. We shall continue to do so for the foreseeable future. One example is SKYbrary, which remains a key resource for the programme, offering an extensive repository of aviation safety best practices. ANSPs benefit from the platform’s insights, including the upcoming integration of an AI-driven Aviation Safety Assistant to make searching for guidance even more efficient.”

The 2025 cycle begins with a kick-off dedicated informational session in which handouts will be provided outlining steps to help those new to SMS get started on their journey at the March CANSO Safety Conference, followed by the formal launch in May 2025. All CANSO and EUROCONTROL member ANSPs are invited to participate and benefit from this structured approach to safety excellence.

ANSP’s wishing to complete the 2025 assessment please send your point of contact information to safety@canso.org

The current 13-study-area questionnaire will remain valid until 2027, serving as a consistent baseline for participants to track progress. As part of long-term planning, a new questionnaire is expected to be launched in 2028, reflecting industry trends and incorporating feedback. Discussions are already underway on human performance and other key areas to ensure the next iteration aligns with future challenges and opportunities.

[For more details or to register your interest please click here](#)

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CANSO – the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation – is the global voice of the air traffic management (ATM) industry and is shaping our future skies. Our members support over 90% of the world’s air traffic and include air navigation service providers, airspace users and operators, manufacturers and aviation industry suppliers. We raise the bar on global ATM performance by connecting the industry to share knowledge, expertise and innovation.

About EUROCONTROL

EUROCONTROL is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation. As Europe’s Network Manager, we play a central coordination role, using our technical expertise to support Member States and a wide range of stakeholders (air navigation service providers, civil and military airspace users, airports and aircraft/equipment manufacturers). We strive to make European aviation safe, efficient, scalable, cost-effective and environmentally

sustainable, partnering with the European Union to make the Single European Sky a reality.

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