# Safety Evolution Guide:

# Safety Policy, SA 2.2

# NATS Safety Strategy Implementation

An Evolution Guide for an SMS practice which has been recognised as Optimised by the CANSO Safety Standing Committee

# 1.  OBJECTIVE OF GUIDE

Members of the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) are committed to the improvement of their services.  As part of this commitment, organisations share their practices in efforts transfer learning across the industry.

This guide captures:

- The practices of an Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) in one element of the CANSO Standard of Excellence (SoE) in Safety Management System (SMS).  The practices of this ANSP have been recognized by their peers as being an optimised practice within the industry (see Figure 1).  The optimised practices have been selected on the basis of their novelty, innovation or the recognition of their potential to manage operational risks.



## Application of the Guidance

CANSO recognizes that this guidance will not be relevant to all ANSPs.  The maturity of any ANSP's Safety Management System will be dependent on their specific context.  This context will be a reflection of factors including the size and complexity of the organisation, domestic regulations and the risk appetite of the organisation.

ANSPs do not necessarily need to adopt all the practices and processes promoted by CANSO but may consider the relevance of the practices promoted in this guide to their operational environment.

# 2.  OPTIMISED PRACTICE

This guide addresses an SMS process which was identified in 2016 as being optimised, it details how one Air Navigation Service Provider, NATS, is actively implementing its safety policy through a safety strategy and associated implementation plan.  The approach was reviewed by a panel of experts from the Optimised Review Group of the Safety Standing

Committee. The approach meets CANSO's requirements for SoE in SMS Study area SA 2.2 (see below).

# 3. SCOPE OF GUIDE

This guide aims to provide an insight into what NATS has done in terms of designing and implementing its Safety Strategy and Safety Strategy Implementation Plan, detailing why this approach was taken. Examples of the type of activities are included throughout this guide to provide a starting point for other ANSP's wishing to adopt a similar outcome from implementation of a safety strategy.

# 4. APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

**CANSO Standard of Excellence in Safety Management Systems**

**SA2 Safety Policy**

| Objective | Informal Arrangements | Defined | Managed | Assured | Optimised |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2 The safety policy addresses key attributes of the organisation's approach to safety. These attributes will most likely include culture, visible endorsement, communication and safety reporting. | The organisation is considering which key attributes of its approach to safety should be included in its safety policy. | The organisation's approach to safety is reflected in its developing safety policy or related procedures. | There is a clear relationship between the organisation's safety policy and its SMS. The organisation's safety policy or related procedures determine how safety management is implemented throughout the organisation. The organisation's safety policy or related procedures define the procedures for safety reporting, including the types of behaviours that are acceptable and the circumstances under which disciplinary action might apply. | The organisation conducts periodic reviews of its approach to safety management and, where necessary, updates its safety policy and related procedures. | The organisation has set best practice(s) for safety management for this objective and is willing to share those with other ANSPs/organisations. |

Extract from CANSO Standard of Excellence in Safety Management Systems

https://www.canso.org/system/files/CANSO Standard of Excellence in Safety Management Systems.pdf

# 5. DESIGNING A SAFETY STRATEGY

The NATS Safety Strategy provides a vision of safety in 2030 outlining i) how we plan for our organisation and its capability to evolve and ii) making our ability to understand and manage safety more anticipatory. It comprises four themes to be embedded within the organisation:

1. People Create Safety - People are our strength, not our weakness. Safety comes from individuals taking personal responsibility and ownership. Our actions and behaviours reinforce the principles the company stands for. Safety comes from how we lead. Safety must be integrated into how we do business.

2. Safety Intelligence - Our performance is such that we must adopt new measures to understand how safe we are. We must redefine safety to mean 'as many things as possible go right', not just 'as few things as possible go wrong'.

3. Tailored and Proportionate - We need to understand the real risks and address them in a proportionate way – focusing on what really matters.

4. Challenging and Learning - We must improve how we learn from and collaborate with others to address the risks in ATM. We will create a culture of questioning and challenging in the organisation.

The strategy has been endorsed by the NATS Safety Director and the NATS Safety Steering Group which is committed to its implementation and delivery. It represents an optimised practice as it was developed from a detailed review of the academic safety literature and an examination of how other safety related industries manage safety. It has since been adopted by CANSO Europe and forms the basis of the CANSO Europe Safety Strategy.

This is an evolution of the previous NATS Safety Strategy, first published in 2014, and continues to drive the core themes identified above. However, it also responds to criticisms of the previous strategy that the document was too conceptual, by setting out 35 desired safety capability outcomes to be achieved by 2030. The outcomes make it clear what we are trying to achieve without prescribing the means by which it should be achieved as this is best decided by each of the business areas.

The NATS Safety Strategy is available to be downloaded from
https://www.nats.aero/safety

The CANSO Europe Safety Strategy is available to be downloaded:
https://www.canso.org/canso-europe-strategy-future-safety-atm

# 6.   IMPLEMENTING A SAFETY STRATEGY

## 7.1   SAFETY PLANNING

The NATS Safety Plan is the means by which the strategy is cascaded into the business and will result in action within business areas. The plan has been issued every three years since publication of the strategy in 2014. It has resulted in an ambitious programme of tactical and strategic safety improvements. Highlights of these activities are listed below:

- Incorporation of the strategy into the company values and the setting up of a companywide initiative to ensure all staff understand the part they play in keeping us safe.

- Development of dynamic safety dashboards of normal work to help with consistent safety decision making.
- Exploration of success base measures of safety.
- Initiation of a major programme to update our SMS to be more tailored and proportionate.
- The setting up of a "Safety 2" programme to examine the value of augmenting our existing processes with Safety 2.
- Development of safety capability training for senior staff to ensure they are competent to discharge their safety accountabilities.

## 7.2 PROMOTING THE STRATEGY

For the strategy to be successful it has to be visible and engaging to a wide range of staff in the organisation. To do this we have a dedicated intranet site which covers:

- A safety strategy on a page – for quick reference and staff who don't have much time to spare.
- Blog style videos for those with a little more time.
- A description of the Safety Capability outcomes we want to achieve by 2030.
- A set of Frequently Asked Questions.
- A Yammer! Internal company social media site where we can promote ideas and hold discussions.

In addition to providing information for staff to find if they are interested, we also spend time in the organisation actively promoting the materials and using existing processes to ensure compliance:

1. An ongoing series of face-to-face briefings and focus sessions with the ATC units to promote awareness and gather ideas for safety improvement.
2. Unit Safety Plans will follow a template designed by the safety strategy team and will show clear links to the strategy outcomes and what each ATC unit is doing to promote them.
3. Safety strategy outcomes are embedded in major investment programmes as strategic project requirements.
4. Investment benefits panels are used to ensure that safety strategy outcomes are delivered by projects.
5. Key Performance Indicators are placed on business areas to measure compliance.

# 6. SAFETY STRATEGY VISUALISER

It is essential to be able to measure progress and track the implementation of a safety strategy that runs for a number of years. A key component of success is to enable staff to visualise the elements of the strategy that relate to their job functions, therefore NATS is developing a Safety Strategy Visualiser using Microsoft Power BI which will take the place of our existing paper based Safety Plans.

The Visualiser will allow users to view all the activities and plans from around the business that are supporting safety strategy implementation. They will be able to query this information from a variety perspectives, whether that be by safety capability outcome or by business area. The Visualiser will become a central resource for staff to wishing to understand and query all the activities that relate to safety strategy delivery. It will also allow better connection of units and business areas and sharing of best practices.

Crucial to its success, the Visualiser does not contain any databases or plans itself. It merely acts as a safety portal providing a safety window on existing databases and plans from around the business. This means the Visualiser does not require regular updates as it will always present information that is the single point of truth and will not contradict other reporting mechanisms.

The screenshot below shows a prototype of the Visualiser for information.



# 7.   SUMMARY

The practices in this guide present an example of how one ANSP has designed and implemented a safety strategy across all business areas. The strategy sets a number of desired outcomes that create the environment for safety to improve between now and 2030.

A key component of a successful safety strategy is communicating it to gain staff engagement and support, and in embedding the desired outcomes in existing business processes to ensure it is delivered.