

地勤業務復甦在即

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成功的地勤作業，對航空業界復甦十分重要。但2020至2021年航空旅遊崩解，卻讓數以萬計的機場勤務工作化為烏有。

現在正當各國政府逐步解除造成航空旅遊停滯的新冠肺炎相關旅遊禁令，訓練有素的地勤人員短缺，恐會阻礙業界復甦。

眼前任務艱鉅：恢復數以千計的地勤工作與人員復職，而他們卻無法受惠於永遠離開業界的前輩們之經驗傳承。

《國際航空運輸協會地勤手冊》(IATA Ground Operations Manual, IGOM) 係為提供安全、高效地勤作業而撰擬，可視為標準化且廣為國際間採納之框架，在現今環境中格

外重要。

《國際航空運輸協會地勤手冊》

過去10年來，《IGOM》為航空公司與地勤公司(ground services provider, GSP)的標準參考手冊，並定期更新指引，事實證明對如此高度分散的產業而言極具價值。

全球數百間公司採用此手冊，接受度高。在最近一項對200間航空公司進行之意見調查中，有133間選擇採用《IGOM》之

供應商。

該手冊亦在網路上設有入口網站提供服務，讓航空公司與地勤公司能夠現行運作方式與《IGOM》最新修訂版對照比較。其網路服務甚至能讓地勤公司可以取得各航空公司現行作業與《IGOM》差異情況的資料，也提供銜接航空公司與地勤公司間之簡便告知功能。

IATA 的地面營運總監 Monika Mejstrikova 女士(以下簡稱梅氏)指出：「IATA 理事會曾要求擬定全球策略，俾促進協調地勤營運。未來 3 年內，我方將設法縮減地勤實務之差異。這項策略有助於增進效能與訓練，將技能與最佳實務調合一致，定能刺激業界復甦。」

但是舊思維仍有待克服。某些地勤供應商與航空公司並未遵照《IGOM》行事之主因，可能只是該手冊建議採用的程序，與該公司根深蒂固之想法不同而已。

梅氏補述：「有時這些公司不過是想取得競爭優勢或為解決某項特定安全問題。但是他們必須瞭解《IGOM》涵蓋面甚廣，而且是內容取向。其內容採納各種不同的技術需求、裝備與特定狀況。《IGOM》入口網站提供之差異比較，可促進未來資料異動並充分結合實務。我方也計劃調整流程，確保手冊完整反映飛機整備作業。」

由所有相關參與者組成的專案小組會定期召開會議，每年更新《IGOM》內容。例如，當機身複合材料運用開始普及之時，手冊中指引即受修訂，以確保處理作業無虞，防止造成損壞。

國際航空運輸協會地面作業安全審查

與《IGOM》併行的是「國際航空運輸協會地面作業安全審查」(IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations, ISAGO)，ISAGO 是業界監督與稽核地勤供應商之全球標準，係對管理與提供各方面安全地面勤務進行之獨立評估。

目前可資分享的稽核報告超過 450 件，且數字正不斷增加。單以 2021 年為例，就曾進行近 300 次稽核。惟此如同《IGOM》，審查宗旨係在於奠定堅實基礎，為業界提供物超所值之服務。

與「國際航空運輸協會作業安全審查」(IATA Operational Safety Audit, IOSA) 一樣，ISAGO 為兩年一次由經驗老到、訓練有素的稽核員進行，可為各航空公司提供以下不同服務機會：

- 提供針對地勤公司、外站，以預防風險為本的監督制度相關補充資料；
- 減少監督工作之範圍、頻次與成本；
- 為地面作業風險提供多一層防護；
- 減少地勤公司訓練工作之範圍、頻次與成本；
- 與地勤公司進行議約或在不同機場尋求地勤公司時，提供採購需求支援；
- 對符合監督委外勤務之監管機關要求，提供可資採用之遵行方式。

從近期局勢可以瞭解，大部稽核工作皆循遠端連線進行，且從此經驗汲取的心得，亦將會妥善運用。或許最顯而易見的是，在稽查有紀錄之作業程序與《IGOM》執行情形時，採取遠端連線進行稽核的成效格外良好。即使在旅遊解禁時，使用電腦進行文件

審查的作法，仍將在所有稽核工作中佔比30%。

雖然《IGOM》主要關注的是航空器機翼下的勤務與其安全執行，ISAGO 以更宏觀的角度來檢視地面作業，其中包括訓練（認證《機場勤務手冊第 1100 號，AHM 1100》施行情形）與安全管理體系。地面支援裝備管理、裝載管制與保全亦在稽核之列。

另外，ISAGO 將納入 IATA「單一來源」(ONE Source) 專案。該專案係建立一個用於認證航空作業能力與基建項目資料之業界網路平臺。此舉可讓航空公司調查地勤供應商，以掌握其獲得認證項目之實際參數。

梅氏表示：「但是 IATA 為航空公司大幅減低 ISAGO 的價格，讓其即便遭遇預算緊縮之窘，仍能在此極為重要的領域（地勤作業）上維持安全可靠，可謂是最具意義之舉。航空公司集團申辦，另有折扣。」

隨 ISAGO 而來之挑戰，係為提高警覺意識，較不流於形式，因此航空公司就能為其地勤實務建立適切基準。梅氏強調，ISAGO 係為相得益彰的服務，無意為航空公司在地勤領域上越俎代庖。

但 ISAGO 可用以加強與簡化航空公司的監督專案，另有機會能減低成本，並將資源運用在需求孔急之處。

梅氏指出：「當我們都在設法引進並留用技術精良的人員，不能浪費資源在為稽核疲於奔命。」

地面作業目前仍相當分散，但《IGOM》與 ISAGO 可促進調和銜接，並讓航空公司能對獲得之服務具有信心。再者，這些作法亦旨在協助監管機關。採納或背書 ISAGO 與《IGOM》為業界標準，就能多一層安全防護，並能避免建立一個抄襲而來的監管制度所構成之經費負擔。

梅氏總結稱：「ISAGO 與《IGOM》皆為 IATA 參與地面勤務的一環。兩者攸關安全與效率，尤其是值此百業待興之際。當程序皆能標準化時，理當增進訓練效能。訓練成本得以減低，共同訓練專案能獲全球認同。關鍵在於降低風險與損害，並為協同一致與永續作業做好準備。」✈

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Ground handling set for take-off

IATA

Now, as governments remove the COVID-19-related travel restrictions that stifled air traffic, a shortage in experienced ground staff could put the brakes on the industry rebound.

The task is enormous: restoring thousands of ground services jobs and employees without the benefit of the institutional memory of those who have permanently left the industry.

In this environment, the IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM)—a standardized and globally accepted framework for safe and efficient ground operations—is crucial.

The IGOM

For over 10 years, the IGOM has been the standard reference for airlines and ground service providers (GSP), its regularly updated guidance proving invaluable in a highly fragmented business sector.

There are hundreds of users worldwide and the adoption rate is good. In a recent survey that generated 200 airlines responses, 133 used or employed companies that used the IGOM.



Successful ground operations are essential to the industry recovery. But the collapse in air travel in 2020 - 21 resulted in the disappearance of tens of thousands of airport jobs.

There is also an online tool, the IGOM Portal, that enables airlines and GSPs to compare their current practices to the latest IGOM provisions. The tool even offers an opportunity for a GSP to access any airline's variations to the IGOM and a handy notification tool to connect airlines and GSPs.

“The IATA Board of Governors has asked for a global strategy that will see increasing coordination in ground operations,” says Monika Mejstrikova, IATA’s Director of Ground Operations. “We will drive down the number of variations in ground handling practices over the next three years. This will boost the industry recovery as it supports efficiency and training through the harmonization of skills and best practice.”

There is a legacy mindset to overcome. The main reason that some GSPs and airlines don't adhere to the IGOM is simply that it may suggest a different procedure to one that has become entrenched in a company's thinking.

"Sometimes they are looking for a competitive advantage or are dealing with a particular safety issue," adds Mejstrikova. "But they need to know that the IGOM is comprehensive and driven by content. It incorporates different technologies requirements, equipment, and specific circumstances. The IGOM Portal variations drive the future content update and relevancy. We are also planning to adjust the process flow to ensure it fully reflects aircraft turnaround activities."

A Task Force comprising all relevant stakeholders fields regular meetings and updates the IGOM annually. When airframe composite materials became commonplace, for example, guidance was updated to prevent damage and ensure their correct handling.

IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations

Overlaying the IGOM is the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO), which is an industry global standard for the oversight and audit of GSPs. It is an independent assessment of all aspects of managing and providing safe ground handling services.

More than 450 audit reports are available for sharing and the number is increasing all the time. In 2021 alone, nearly 300 audits were conducted. But, as with the IGOM, the aim is to build on an excellent foundation to provide even greater value to the industry.

Like the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), ISAGO works on a two-year cycle using experienced and trained auditors. It offers different opportunities for every airline, including:

- Complementary data to risk-based oversight systems on GSPs/stations
- Reduction of scope/frequency/cost of oversight activities
- An additional protection layer for risk in ground operations
- Reduction of scope/frequency/cost for GSPs' training activities
- Procurement requirement support during contract negotiations or when seeking a GSP at alternate airports
- Acceptable means of compliance to a regulatory requirement for oversight of outsourced services.

Audits have largely been done remotely in recent times for obvious reasons, and the lessons learned from this experience will be put to good use. Perhaps the most obvious one is that remote audits can work exceptionally well when assessing documented procedures and their IGOM compliance. Even as travel restrictions are lifted, a desktop documentation assessment can still comprise some 30% of all audits.

Though the IGOM is concerned primarily with below the wing activities and their safe implementation, ISAGO takes a broader look at ground operations, including training (validating compliance to AHM 1100) and safety management systems. Ground support equipment management, load control, and security are also addressed.

Additionally, ISAGO will be incorporated in the IATA ONE Source program. This is an online industry platform for validated aviation capability and infrastructure information. It means airlines will be able to check on GSPs and the exact parameters of their certifications/accreditation scheme.


“But arguably the most meaningful development is that IATA has drastically reduced the cost of ISAGO for airlines to support safety in this critical area even when finances are tight,” says Mejstrikova. “Further discounts are available for airline groups.”

The challenge with ISAGO is to increase awareness and to make it less generic so that airlines can properly benchmark their own ground handling practices. Mejstrikova emphasizes that ISAGO is complementary service and not intended to replace an airline’s own work in this area.

Rather, it is a tool to strengthen and simplify their oversight programs, including an opportunity for cost reduction and refocusing their resources on areas where they need them the most.

“As we all are struggling with skilled staff retention and attraction, we can’t afford to waste our resources on audit fatigue” says Mejstrikova.

Ground operations are still heavily fragmented, but the IGOM and ISAGO offer harmonization and ensure airlines can be confident in the service they will receive. Moreover, these initiatives assist regulatory authorities. By accepting and/or endorsing ISAGO/IGOM as an accepted standard, they will add a layer of safety while avoiding the financial burden of creating a copy-cat regulatory system.

“ISAGO and the IGOM are just part of IATA’s larger ground handling involvement,” sums up Mejstrikova. “But they are critical to safety and efficiency, particularly in recovery. Training efficiency is another logical gain when procedures are standardized. Training cost gets reduced and common training programs can be globally recognized. The key is to reduce risk and damages and prepare the way for harmonized, sustainable operations.” 

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