

## Key milestone achieved: Malawi parliament adopts Civil Aviation Act

### The IASOM project

At the end of 2013, EASA signed a grant contract with the EU Delegation to Malawi, to manage an EU Project for the improvement of Aviation Safety Oversight in Malawi (IASOM).

The overall purpose of the project was to support the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) of Malawi in complying with international aviation standards for safety oversight. EASA focused its primary actions towards two main objectives:

- 1) Contribute to the enhancement of the regulatory and institutional framework of the Malawi aviation sector;
- 2) Contribute to the technical and organisational capacity building of the DCA Malawi, as well as of other aviation stakeholders.

### Modernising the Aviation Act

The IASOM project reviewed Malawi's primary aviation legislation of 1970 that was still in place at that time. This Aviation Act was found to be heavily outdated and basically hindered the DCA in fulfilling its safety oversight functions.

The existing Act was missing the foundation to establish an autonomous organisational structure in order to strengthen and provide sustainability for its safety oversight capability, leading to the establishment of an independent civil aviation authority of Malawi (CAAM). One of the pillars of the IASOM project therefore was to support and contribute to the modernisation of the Malawi Aviation Act and directly support the promulgation of any draft proposed.

The IASOM project embarked on an extensive consultation process, never seen before in Malawi, in order to draft a proposal for the new Aviation Act. During the consultation meetings, held during the period January-May 2015, numerous national and international stakeholders were approached and consulted. EASA took into account all remarks and suggestions by all parties involved and worked in full transparency in order to get a buy-in from the start.

### Malawi's first International Aviation Safety Conference

The draft Civil Aviation Act ("Civil Aviation Bill"), as well as a roadmap for the establishment of an independent/autonomous Civil Aviation Authority were presented at the first ever international Aviation Safety Conference in Malawi in May 2015.

The participation of representatives of civil aviation authorities from the Southern African region, of which some underwent the same transition (from department into an independent CAA), and strategic (regional) decision makers, like ICAO, AFCAC, AFRAA, RSOOs (SASO, CASSOA) and EASA, provided the Malawian civil aviation community the opportunity to discuss and share their opinions on the need to reform the Malawian aviation sector.

After the conference, the IASOM project continuously followed-up with the Ministry of Transport (MoT), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and DCA on the progress regarding the further enactment of the draft Bill.

### Adoption of the Civil Aviation Act

A special committee of MoT, MoJ and DCA further reworked the Bill based on the draft provided by the IASOM project and finally submitted to the Malawi Cabinet in June 2016. The Cabinet unanimously approved the Bill for further enactment in Parliament in January 2017.

On 13 June 2017, the very last day of the IASOM project, the Parliament of the republic of Malawi promulgated the Civil Aviation Bill. The Bill, which would not have been drafted without EASA's commitment and support through the IASOM project, finally became an Act, which paves the way for the establishment of an autonomous CAA in Malawi with clear separation of responsibilities between the regulator and service provider.

The Aviation Act is only one of the great visible successes of the IASOM project. Through IASOM, EASA effectively supported the technical and organisational capacity building of the DCA Malawi through a high number of technical trainings and workshops and implementation of the SOFIA Programme. This will allow Malawi to effectively strengthen its safety oversight and form the basis for the further growth of its aviation sector.