Agenda Item: B.3.1.5	INFORMATION PAPER	WP No: 80 IFATCA'26

ICAO CP-OPDLWG UPDATE

Written by Markus Johnston

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the current progress of work being undertaken by the ICAO Communications Panel – Operational Data Link Working Group (CP-OPDLWG).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Communications Panel – Operational Data Link Working Group (CP-OPDLWG) continues to manage a complex portfolio consisting of four core project streams: Air-Ground Data Link, Ground-Ground Data Link, Performance-Based Communications and Surveillance (PBCS), and Voice Communications, a snapshot of each is provided in this report.

1.2 The OPDLWG meets twice a year holding weeklong meetings. Outside of this, work is progressed by smaller project teams.

1.3 A major theme across our previous two meetings was the preparation for the May 2026 Panel Meeting, where it is hoped that proposal for amendments to Annexes and PANS as well manuals containing guidance material are slated for delivery.

1.4 The Panel Meeting also marks a significant leadership transition; the group is set to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair following the retirement of the long-standing incumbents.

2. AIR-GROUND DATA LINK

2.1 **Global Data Link Implementation Strategy**

2.1.1. The OPDLWG has identified that an existing Job Card to create a "Global Data Link Implementation Strategy" is functionally obsolete and fails to reflect the current ATM landscape. Given that work on this Job Card has never commenced, the group has decided to recommend retiring the old Job Card and is in the process of writing a new Job Card to replace it which focuses on a "Harmonization Strategy" realising that Data Link has already been implemented in many parts of the world.

2.1.2. It is envisaged this Job Card would lead to development of a roadmap that stops the further global fragmentation of Data Link technology adoption and eventually leads to universally accepted usage and equipage that better supports both pilots and controllers in managing workload more safely and efficiently.

2.1.3. This new Job Card is expected to be finalised at the Panel Meeting before proceeding to the ANC for consideration. Data Link is noted as being a key enabled for modern concepts such as System-Wide Information Management (SWIM), Trajectory-Based Operations (TBO), and Flight and Flow Information for a Collaborative Environment (FF-ICE).

2.2 ATS Baseline 2 Revision C

2.2.1. The OPDLWG has been advised that RTCA/Eurocae is creating a Revision C for ATS Baseline 2 and has been requested to provide input into this work. At a minimum, Revision C is expected to address the lack of Airborne Response Timers and additional enhancements to support TBO.

2.2.2. The OPDLWG envisages that as this work progresses, amendments to the Global Operational Data Link (GOLD) Manual (Doc 10037) will need to be made, and this will likely result in the creation of a Job Card to create the 3rd Edition of the GOLD.

2.3 Complex Route Clearances

2.3.1. It has been identified that there is currently no published guidance on the use of and execution of complex route clearance CPDLC messages. Complex being defined as a route clearance message that contains vertical, speed and/or time requirements as part of the route clearance message (e.g. for issuing a SID or STAR in its entirety).

2.3.2. As some States look to implement the use of such complex messages, a Job Card is being drafted for consideration by the ANC to create this guidance material which may also result in consequential amendments to Annexes and PANS.

3. GROUND-GROUND DATA LINK

3.1 The OPDLWG has been waiting for inter panel coordination to occur with its proposed amendments to Annexes and PANS relating to Ground-Ground Data Link provisions.

3.2 Unfortunately, this has been stalled for the last 12 months, likely due to resourcing constraints of the ICAO secretariat team within the ATM division. It had been envisaged that this package of work would be completed and submitted to the ANC following the OPDLWG panel meeting in May, however this now seems very

unlikely. Whilst it is acknowledged that this team works extremely hard, it is disheartening when these types of setbacks occur.

4. PERFORMANCE BASED COMMUNICATIONS & SURVEILLANCE (PBCS)

4.1 Work has progressed well on the 3rd Edition of the PBCS Manual (Doc 9869) in the past 12 months with agreement reached by OPDLWG on the proposed changes.

4.2 This version includes both RCP130 and RSP160, however as the new Voice RCPs currently under development have not yet reached a level of maturity, it was decided by OPDLWG not to delay this edition of the PBCS Manual any further, and instead to include the new Voice RCPs in a future edition.

4.3 The manual is currently pending inter-panel coordination, however it should be noted that similar to the inter-panel coordination for Ground-Ground Data Link amendments to provisions, this too has met some delays within the secretariat pool. It is hoped though that this will be overcome, and the PBCS Manual will be mature enough to progress to the ANC for publication later this year.

5. VOICE COMMUNICATIONS BY DATA LINK

5.1 Dual SATCOM

5.1.1. The OPDLWG continues to monitor the work coming out of EUROCAE WG82 / RTCA SC-222 regarding the development of monitoring and switching requirements to enable dual dissimilar SATCOM as a sole means of long range communication system (LRCS). Essentially this would permit an aircraft to carry two separate SATCOM systems for remote/oceanic airspace communications and no longer having to carry HF radio. The OPDLWG will continue to mature its work in this space as the technological capabilities are developed, and we envisage working collaboratively with SASP to realise the benefits such developments may enable.

5.2 New Voice Specifications

5.2.1. The group is developing two new performance standards for voice:
- **V1:** Designed for simplex/push-to-talk applications.
- **V2:** Designed for full-duplex applications, such as SATVOICE.

5.2.2. Currently development of V1 is on hold as more current use cases for V2 currently exist, therefore this work is being prioritised.

5.2.3. The proposed total RCP time for V2 is 80 seconds. However, technical data shows that while the network can notify a flight deck in roughly 6 seconds, the current "call setup" allocation is 30 seconds. This has caused some concern that allowing such a large window might discourage some ATSPs from investing HMI that supports functions such as automated dialling,

potentially leaving controllers to manually dial numbers during critical operations. This concern is currently under review.

5.2.4. A highly complex operational safety assessment for V2 is currently underway, utilising existing methodologies from RTCA/Eurocae data communication standards and adapting these for the voice environment. The group is leveraging a massive dataset of approximately 13,000 SATVOICE calls provided by Collins Aerospace during a trial conducted in the USA to validate these safety requirements.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The OPDLWG is meeting in May and November this year to continue progressing the work outlined in this report.

6.2 I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Civil Air (Australia) and IFATCA for supporting this work and my membership on OPDWLG.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that this report be accepted as an information paper.

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