

**Report of the IFATCA Representative on the
ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP)**

Presented by David Perks

SUMMARYReport on the activities of the IFATCA Representative on the
ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP).**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The following is a review of my activities as the IFATCA Representative on the ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP) from the end of the IFATCA Annual Conference in April 2025 to the writing of this report in March 2026.

2. DISCUSSION**Meetings**

- 2.1. I have attended two SASP meetings in Montreal over the last 12 months, the 41st Working Group of the Whole meeting in May 2025 and the 42nd Working Group of the Whole meeting in November 2025.

Panel administrative matters

- 2.2. This report marks my eighth year as the IFATCA Member, and fifth year as Chairman, of the SASP.
- 2.3. As I mentioned in last year's report, it is my intention to stand down as Chair of the SASP at the full panel meeting planned for May 2026. The role as the Observer to the ANC nominated by IFATCA and the Chair of the SASP are incompatible as one of the primary roles of the former is to help review the work of the SASP as proposed by the Chair.
- 2.4. Mr Fernando Zeledon has been appointed as the new permanent to the Panel. Those of you attending conference this year will get the opportunity to introduce yourselves as he and Ms Crystal Kim will be attending. I'd like to thank the former acting-secretary, Mr Anthony Ang, for his efforts and guidance in helping me lead the panel.
- 2.5. The new structure we introduced to the panel, including rapporteurs and leads to better align our work programme is working very well. It is spreading the workload more evenly and resulting in more significant progress on our work programme.

Job Cards

2.6. SASP has the following job cards

- SASP.002.04 PBN Separation minima for Terminal Airspace – RNP-1, A-RNP, RNP APCH, RNP AR APCH (proposed to be closed)
- SASP.005.05 Stabilized RNP approaches to parallel runways
- SASP.006.04 Longitudinal and Lateral Separation Minima for Oceanic and Continental Airspace based on RNP-2, or Advanced – RNP (A-RNP) at RNP 2 and RNP 1 (proposed to be closed)
- SASP.007.03 Application of PBN based Lateral Separation Minima To Special Use Airspace (SUA) (proposed to be closed)
- SASP.008.03 Airspace planning guidance for implementing PBN tracks (proposed to be closed)
- SASP.010.04 Helicopter RNP 0.3 Terminal and En-Route Operations
- SASP.015.02 PBN Separation minima and route spacing for aircraft on SIDS/STARS (Standard Instrument Departures/Standard Terminal Arrival Routes)
- SASP.016.03 Development of ATM-related provisions to support the conduct of operational trials
- SASP.018.02 Expansion of upper limit of the Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM) band of flight levels
- SASP.020.01 Improving the sustainability and efficiency of terminal operations
- SASP.021.01 Updated guidance for airspace planning methodology for the determination of separation minima

2.7. As noted in the descriptions above, as part of an ongoing effort to rationalise the work program, the panel is planning to propose to the ANC to close a number of these job cards.

2.8. SASP has proposed the following job card and is *still* awaiting confirmation from the Air Navigation Commission (ANC)

- High Altitude Platform Systems (HAPS) (to replace SASP.013.03 Standards and Recommended Practices and guidance material to establish separation minima around medium and heavy unmanned free balloon operations).

Papers

2.9. I wrote or co-wrote the following papers on behalf of IFATCA:

- **SASP-WG/41-WP/14:** Proposal for amendment - 2 NM level flight requirement for independent parallel approaches
- **SASP-WG/41-WP/15:** Proposal for amendment – reduction in longitudinal separation minima based on distance using ADS-C climb and descent procedure (CDP); and

- **SASP-WG/42-WP/16:** Proposal for amendment for widely-spaced parallel runway operations and rationale for proposal for amendment for segregated parallel operations.

3. WORK PROGRAM

3.1. The following topics are ones that I believe will be of interest to air traffic controllers and have been grouped according to which of the four working groups they fall under; Terminal Matters, En-Route, Mathematician and Future Concepts.

3.2. Terminal Matters Working Group

Runway Occupancy Time Characterisation (ROCAT) and Reduced Final Approach Spacing

3.2.1. Current provisions in PANS-ATM (Doc 4444) allow separation to be reduced to 2.5 NM between succeeding aircraft within 10 NM of the threshold, provided the average Arrival Runway Occupancy Time (aROT) is proven not to exceed 50 seconds. To increase runway use, the application of reduced longitudinal spacing on final approach is being expanded based on the aROT for aircraft pairs.

3.2.2. Variable spacing (e.g., 2.6 to 2.9 NM) is based on the specific performance of aircraft pairs, such as specific aircraft types or wake turbulence categories. While this increases capacity, it may have an impact on approach controller workload unless appropriate tools are also introduced.

Triple Simultaneous Independent Parallel Instrument Approaches

3.2.3. Procedures are being developed to amend PANS-ATM to enable triple simultaneous independent parallel approaches, mirroring operations currently conducted in the United States. The procedures leverage off those currently applied to independent parallel approaches to two runways.

Widely Spaced Parallel Runways and Monitor Controllers

3.2.4. Another proposed change addresses the requirement for dedicated monitor controllers during simultaneous independent approaches to widely spaced parallel runways. The proposal aims to remove the requirement for a dedicated monitor controller for runways whose centerlines are spaced by 2 744 m (9 000 ft) or more. In these scenarios, the approach controller can monitor the approaches, provided that a system function is implemented to alert the controller of a deviation, allowing them to return the aircraft to its course or break out the adjacent aircraft before the deviating aircraft if required.

Removal of the 2 NM Level Flight Requirement

3.2.5. To permit more efficient vectoring for independent parallel approaches, the proposal has been finalized to remove the redundant requirement that aircraft must be established in level flight for at least 2 NM prior to intercepting the glide path. Controllers will still be required to ensure the final vector enables the aircraft to intercept at an angle not greater than 30 degrees and provides at least 1.0 NM of straight and level flight prior to the course intercept, ensuring approaches remain stabilized.

3.3. **En-Route Working Group**

Expansion of RVSM up to FL430

- 3.3.1. A feasibility assessment is underway to extend the RVSM band up to FL430 to accommodate the new generation of high-performing aircraft. If progressed it will provide additional options for traffic management. However, it will introduce a challenge familiar to those that were around when RVSM was implemented, that being managing a mixed-equipage environment. Controllers will need to handle traffic where some aircraft are certified for higher RVSM levels and others are not, constraining non-certified aircraft to lower levels. Implementation will also require updates to ATC flight planning systems to ensure conflict detection tools integrate the new flight levels.

3.4. **Mathematician's Working Group**

Controller Intervention and Timing Models (ITM)

- 3.4.1. The determination of separation minima relies heavily on a model developed by the SASP mathematicians called the Intervention and Timing Model (ITM). This model mathematically quantifies the time it takes for an ATCO to detect an aircraft deviation, formulate a resolution, communicate it to the pilot, and for the aircraft to manoeuvre. It has mostly been used in an oceanic environment where no VHF is available.
- 3.4.2. However, increasingly it is being adapted for other environments such as VHF (including satellite VHF) and for RPAS. The integration of RPAS introduces Command and Control (C2) link latency between the remotely piloted aircraft and the remote pilot. When controllers communicate with remote pilots either via VHF-voice or CPDLC, it is relayed through the aircraft with further latency affecting the separation being applied. The SASP has been working with members of the RPAS Panel to refine the ITM so that existing separation minima can be validated or new separation minima be created.

3.5. **Future Airspace Concepts and Operational Trials**

Helicopter RNP 0.3 Routes

- 3.5.1. To improve access and efficiency for helicopters and future Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) vehicles, SASP is developing lateral separation standards for parallel RNP 0.3 routes. Collision risk modeling indicates that a base separation of 1.3 NM is appropriate for parallel tracks. However, if the route involves a turn (especially turns larger than 50 degrees), the required separation increases depending on the aircraft's speed, the angle of the turn, and the controller's intervention time.

Conduct of Operational Trials

- 3.5.2. The SASP is developing new PANS-ATM provisions and guidance material to govern how operational trials are conducted. These provisions will mandate that trials must be coordinated with all relevant stakeholders, including ANSPs and controllers and that before a trial begins, clear protocols must be established regarding controller training requirements, communications reporting, criteria for the temporary or permanent suspension of the trial, and exact reversion procedures to return to normal operations if safety is compromised

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. The panel is in a phase where it is preparing a number of PfAs for the next full panel meeting of the SASP in May 2026. These will mainly affect terminal area operations although the operational trial proposal for amendment should be mature enough to progress.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. That this paper be accepted as information.

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