

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

Presented by David Perks

SUMMARY

*Report 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 2024 to the writing of this report in March 2025.

2. DISCUSSION**Meetings**

- 2.1. I have attended two meetings in the last 12 months, the first in May 2024 and the second in November 2024. During that time the panel has been appointed an acting secretary, Mr Anthony Ang.

Panel administrative matters

- 2.2. This report marks my seventh year as the IFATCA Member, and fourth year as Chairman, of the SASP.
- 2.3. One of the most important roles of the Air Navigation Commission is to review the proposals for SARPs, procedures and guidance material from the various experts groups (panels, working groups, etc.) established for this purpose. The IFATCA Liaison Officer to the ANC plays an important role in providing information to Commissioners to inform their decisions.
- 2.4. As the Chair of the SASP, and on their behalf, I propose SARPs, procedures and guidance material to the ANC for their review and to ultimately either approve or recommend approval to the ICAO Council. In performing my role on the ANC, I would therefore also contribute to the review of the same proposals.
- 2.5. Therefore, as the IFATCA representative on the ANC and the Chair of the SASP, I would be in the position of both proposing and reviewing SARPs, procedures and guidance material for ANC.
- 2.6. This would not permit me to perform my role as the IFATCA representative on the ANC effectively as there could be the perception of bias for proposals originated in the SASP. As such, I have sought to resign as Chair of the SASP.

- 2.7. Due to a number of reasons, my resignation wasn't accepted and the President of the ANC has requested that I remain as Chair until a new Chair can be elected. At this stage, the next Panel meeting is proposed for May 2026. As panel chairs can only be elected at panel meetings (as opposed to working group meeting), unless anything changes, I will be remaining Chair until then.
- 2.8. In conjunction with the acting secretary, I have introduced a new structure to the panel and appointed a number of new rapporteurs and leads to better align our work programme with the job cards assigned to the panel from the ANC. I'm hopeful this will spread the workload more evenly and result in more significant progress on our work programme.

Job Cards

- 2.9. SASP has the following job cards
- SASP.002.04 PBN Separation minima for Terminal Airspace – RNP-1, A-RNP, RNP APCH, RNP AR APCH
 - SASP.005.04 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
 - SASP.007.03 Application of PBN based Lateral Separation Minima To Special Use Airspace (SUA)
 - SASP.008.03 Airspace planning guidance for implementing PBN tracks
 - SASP.010.03 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.016.02 Development of ATM-related provisions to support the conduct of operational trials
 - SASP.018.01 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
- 2.10. 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

- 2.11. I wrote or co-wrote the following papers on behalf of IFATCA:
- SASP WG/39 IP12 - 2 NM level flight requirement for independent parallel approaches;
 - SASP WG/39 WP07 - Issues with the requirement to 'designate' airspace or ATS routes for the application of some performance-based separation standards where RNP is specified;
 - SASP WG/39 WP02 - ICAO Doc 9689: current and proposed structure;

3. Work Program

Climb and Descent Procedure (CDP)

- 3.1. The separation minima used for CDP was re-visited using updated collision risk modelling. The panel concluded that the separation minima could be reduced. However, given the relatively small improvements in the separation minima, that CDP is not widely used, and finally it offers almost little improvement over the easier to use 20 NM performance-based longitudinal separation, some members of the panel, including me, questioned the utility of submitting a PfA.

Satellite voice

- 3.2. The intervention and timing model used in the collision risk model for the calculation of separation minima relies heavily on the communication method used. As such, the development of satellite voice communication has the potential to improve separation minima where VHF voice is currently not available. The SASP and the OPDLWG have agreed to continue information coordination between the groups with the potential to form a joint working group in 2026.

Terminal matters

- 3.3. The SASP is doing a considerable amount of work in the terminal area. A PfA is being developed to proposed new rules for independent parallel approaches to widely spaced parallel runways that will not require a monitor position and/or will permit automated monitoring.
- 3.4. Considerable work is also being undertaken to amend the 2.5 NM surveillance separation minima for aircraft conducting an approach. The current rule permits separation to be reduced from 3 NM provided a number of conditions are met including that the average runway occupancy time for all aircraft using the runway is 50 seconds or less.
- 3.5. It's been noted for a number of meetings that the runway occupancy time is not always a good criteria for reducing the longitudinal separation. While recognising that a go-around is not a dangerous procedure, the existing standard permits 2.5 NM separation even if the preceding landing aircraft has been shown to consistently occupy the runway for more that 50 seconds.
- 3.6. The panel has posited whether it would be better served for the runway occupancy time be aircraft specific. This would permit aircraft more suited to the separation minima to use it even if the average occupancy time is greater than 50 seconds. Likewise, it would prevent unsuitable aircraft from using it even if the average occupancy time is less than 50 second.
- 3.7. The panel also undertook to examine if the 10 NM from the threshold requirement is valid.
- 3.8. An update is also being planned for the Manual on Simultaneous Operations on Parallel or Near-Parallel Instrument Runways (SOIR) with a draft completed by May 2026.

HAPS (HAO) job card

- 3.9. The panel has been working with the secretariat to develop a job card for HAPS operations, specifically during the ascent and descent phases through controlled airspace. Several working papers from ANConf 14 also requested the Air Navigation Bureau start doing work in this area. The panel proposed a job card for ANC approval.

Guidance material

- 3.10. The panel finalised the implementation guidance material for the Implementation of Separation Minima Using ATS Surveillance Systems Where Very High Frequency (VHF) Voice Communications Are Not Available. Essentially, this is support the PANS-ATM separation minima that doesn't require VHF voice, including the 15 NM surveillance minima introduced in November 2024. This is currently with the secretariat and is expected to be published in 2025.
- 3.11. The panel is also progressing the guidance material for conducting operational trials. This is expected to be presented to the secretariat in 2025.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. The panel is 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 it's possible there may be some incremental improvements to other separation minimum including the climb-descent procedure using ADS-B.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. That this paper be accepted as information.

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